

D. of Pride 541

Chapter 541 541- Clash- Simon Vs Valdris

Simon instead of dodging the attack decided to take it head-on. His attitude seemed to have delighted the other, the respect in the eyes of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon increased. It gave a ferocious smile like that of a wild beast and opened its mouth wide.

If one looked carefully, in the depth of its mouth, amidst those sharp spear like teeth, there was a faint light slowly accumulating. That light slowly became stronger and stronger until it was as glaring as the sun hanging in the middle of the sky itself.

Breath Attack... one of the strongest attacks of the dragon clan. Its might was so powerful that it was enough to flatten the lands and crumble mountains.

Whether it be its power or lethality, everything was on a different level compared to all the other attacks the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon had thrown at him. It was its magnum opus.

This attack by the dragon indicated that their battle had come to a finale. Whoever would survive this, would be the winner of this bout.

Simon took a deep breath and conditioned his body. He gulped down a few vials of elixirs and focused his attention on the attack. The last time he had seen that attack, it had raised all the hairs on its body. It was like an omen of death, one that he had no chance of surviving if it hit him.

Yet after over a year he was back in the same lands, facing the same enemy and the same attack. Simon felt some nostalgia. However, he was done running away this time.

Although he sensed danger from that attack and his senses screamed at him to dodge it, Simon was after all under the effects of pride. He wouldn't do something as cowardly and spineless as dodging it when the other party has clearly issued a challenge.

Dodging was out of the option, if he did that, he might win the battle but he would lose the war. Thus there was only one option from the start, endure the attack and assert who was the superior one.

"Here it comes... huff... [Thermal Breath]"

While Simon was preparing himself, the light inside the wide open mouth of the earth shattering lower dragon became extremely intense and soon after, a wide beam of light was spat out.

That beam of light was glaring and packed a ridiculous amount of power and heat behind. It travelled in a straight line, decimating and evaporating everything around it and in the blink of an eye, it was upon Simon.

Simon grit his teeth, his body was covered by the infernal fire and a small golden stone was held in his hand. When the [Thermal Breath] was just upon him, he broke the stone and a golden halo quickly enveloped him.

BOOMMM...

The breath enveloped the demon and continued its advent in a straight line. Be it mountains or forest, everything exploded apart in front of its might. The beam continued for dozens of kilometres before coming to a stop after crashing into the cliff face far into the distance.

Dust and smoke were razed in the path where the beam travelled and settled down only after a while.

"Did it work?" the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon watched the crumbling mountains in the distance and wondered aloud. Its body shook heavily from the exhaustion and drowsiness could be seen in its eyes.

Just as it was observing, the dust in the distance was swept away by a gale and a bloody figure slowly emerged from underneath the debris.

The state that the figure was in could only be described with one word, horrendous. His skin was burnt, blood flowed out from every part of his body dyeing him a colour of red, his wings were almost just bones and deformed greatly.

Even the pair of horns that Simon was proud of and that decorated his head like a crown, only one of them could be seen intact on his head, the other one had broken apart and fallen off.

No matter how one looked at him, he appeared to be extremely miserable at his moment. Yet amidst his hurriedly growing hazy mind, there was this faint smile of victory on his face.

"Now my turn—[Infernal Sword]"...

As those words fell from his lips, the sun in the sky blazed and a light dropped down from it. It quickly descended and finally appeared in front of the astonished face of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon.

The light that came from above, was an enormous golden sword wrapped in flames. BZZZZ... it carried an infernal amount of heat powerful enough to distort the air and leave behind a trail of golden light.

The sword slowly dropped down, its target the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon.

"It looks like it's my defeat" the dragon closed its eyes and accepted its defeat. Since it was a challenge, it couldn't avoid the attack.

There was no way it would be able to stay standing after that attack. The dragon prepared to take on the infernal sword when suddenly the space around him distorted and a middle aged man with a pale yellow clothes appeared on top of him.

They clenched one of their hands and a gigantic draconic claw made of yellow gold energy formed in the air and collided heavily with the descending [Infernal sword].

RUMBLE... RUMBLE... just the sound erupting from the two attacks, were like deafening thunderclaps resounding across dozens of kilometres of land.

A wild surge of fire erupted from the infernal sword and slowly chipped away at the strength of the yellow gold claw. However, this stalemate didn't last long, when the middle aged man clenched his hand, the gigantic claw also followed his actions and clenched shut.

CRACK...

Immediately, numerous cracks appeared on the golden sword and after a while, with a bang it burst apart.

A powerful heat swelled out from the explosion and blanketed the sky in fire. The might of advanced magic was in full display.

After stopping the Infernal sword, the yellow gold claw also disappeared. The middle aged man standing in the sky on top of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon's head also placed his hand back at this moment. There was some shock in his eyes with which he used to observe the demon.

"So you are finally willing to show up huh?"

Simon commented, he had already flown back. Numerous runes covered his right index finger and he was riding on a gigantic pale grey finger.

Valdris was startled for a moment when he heard the words of the demon and couldn't help but ask "You were aware of my presence?"

Simon simply smiled, he quickly chugged down the contents of the vials in his hand one after another.

There was an additional shock in the eyes of Valdris as he watched the demon's unafraid attitude. Not only the latter was aware of his presence, he still dared to approach him while knowing that. This demon who looked extremely injured was for some reason giving him a faint sense of danger.

The shock in Valdris' heart couldn't be any more intense. However, he was somehow able to suppress it and appear calm on the surface.

"You have won this bout. Since that is the case, let's end this here" Valdris spoke in a stern manner that left no room for discussion.

The earth shattering lower dragon on the ground frowned when their battle was interrupted; nonetheless, he knew better than to anger this elder. Although unwilling the dragon promptly nodded.

Seeing that one party has shown their agreement, he turned towards the other. However, the demon only had a faint smile on his face.

"I cannot do that" Simon did not appear frightened in front of the yellow robed man who had intervened in their battle.

"Just because you said that the fight is over, doesn't mean that I have to accept it. This fight won't be over unless one of us submits" Simon declared, his crimson eyes stared resolutely at Valdris.

He was here to subdue the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon, how could he simply back away after all the effort and time he put into it? The latter would become quite an asset in the upcoming defence of the dungeon. Thus he must get him on his side no matter what, even if it meant offending an adult dragon.

Simon could feel a vast pressure boring down on him just by looking at his person, it could be imagined how powerful he was. However, Simon wasn't like he was completely out of options. He was ready to use the [Ancient Draconic Compel] if the need be at any moment.

This legacy technique was passed onto him by Lucine and created by Adalinda. According to what Lucine said, this legacy technique has a strong compelling effect on dragons or on beasts having dragon bloodline.

As could be seen from the behaviour of the lightning draconic serpent, this technique was the bane of the dragons. Even if his opponent was an adult dragon it should have some effect right? Simon was ready to put his fate into this one technique

"Young fellow, you shouldn't be too impulsive. Sometimes it is good to take a step back when the other side is giving you a way. If you continued to stay inflexible and headstrong like that, you might end up reducing your lifespan".

Valdris spoke, a gloomy light flashed inside those yellow gold draconic eyes as a dangerous aura started fluctuating out of his body.

Even after appearing in person, Valdris never thought that the other party wouldn't give him face and withdraw in his presence. Naturally, he was somewhat displeased. Given his status, how many people in this world can speak him to like that? At the very least, this demon in front of him wasn't qualified.

Chapter 543 543- Might Of The Legacy Technique

That dragon shadow appeared the moment that magic circle was completed.

"That is... [Ancient Draconic Compel!!]" Valdris muttered, a wild surge of emotions flooded his mind.

"No wonder... no wonder he could call upon that dragon shadow. His dragon aura... everything explains itself".

The [Ancient draconic compel] was a dreadful technique that was feared by all the members of the dragon race. It was mentioned by many of the ancient elders and the many records in the dragon clan that spoke about the might of this technique and how frightening it was.

It was said that during the ancient era, the person who created this technique, had extracted the soul of hundreds of traitors and used them as intermediary to perfect the technique. It was rumoured that the hundreds of dragon souls were still imprisoned within the technique, eternally doomed in the purgatory.

The contract made from this technique was absolute, especially against a dragon and those beasts that have a dragon bloodline.

Why would a technique that was created by Venerable Red appear on that demon? Numerous questions flashed in his head; however, all he could do right now was quietly kneel and wait for the dragon shadow to disappear.

Simon after evoking the [Ancient Draconic Compel], looked at the two kneeling figures. Although he had expected the dragon aura within him to have some effect after hearing Irene's words. However, even he never expected the effect would be this extreme.

Forget about putting up a resistance, they could barely move in front of this aura. Even that powerful adult dragon whose power gave him a thick sense of danger was powerless against it.

This fact once again made him realise how powerful this legacy technique was. Had it not been for it, he didn't think that he would be able to make that yellow robed person stop. Especially after seeing him resist the finger of Ozymandias.

This technique turned out to be quite beneficial to him.

"I wonder what that woman was thinking handing me such a powerful technique. Did she think that I would be able to make the most use of it or did she just nonchalantly throw this technique at me without giving it much thought?" Simon wondered.

Somewhere in the Chaotic Sea Continent...

"Achoo!! Sniff... sniff".

Lucine sneezed and rubbed her nose.

"Did you catch a cold?"

Adalinda who was flying beside her asked.

"Hmm?! I don't think so. Is somebody thinking about me?" Lucine shook her head before muttering in a voice that only she could hear.

A soul stirring beauty with snow like hair, appeared in Simon's mind. Her inborn nobility and that indolent attitude of hers, was still fresh in his mind.

This lady who acted high and mighty, was afraid of the putrid scent that Simon smeared on himself back when they met in the northern region of the forest. Now that he recalled those memories back he unwittingly found it funny.

Because of her, he had to deal with her unreasonable master who not only barged inside his dungeon, but also dragged him to various places. It was like roller coaster of a journey yet fun at the same time.

Not only that, they also saved him from a very critical situation in the end. Simon didn't have many friends, but those master and disciple duo were some of the few people in this world that he was fond of.

"I wonder what they are doing at this moment?" it has been more than half a year since they all went their separate ways. Well given their adventure seeking personality, Simon bet that they were out roaming the vast world.

All these thoughts flashed by in an instant in his mind due to the [high speed thought processing] skill.

Simon shook his mind and placed his attention back on the two kneeling dragons. One of them was an enormous giant, while the other had a human like body. Both of them were currently staring at him with trembling and dread filled eyes.

Simon sighed, this technique was quite overbearing and even tampered with the mindset of the enslaved dragon as could be seen from the behaviour of the Lightning Draconic Serpent. However, the circumstances were so, that Simon had no choice but to rely on this technique.

He was up against an adult dragon, if he didn't invoke the [Ancient Draconic Compel] there was no way he would be able to make them submissive the way they are now.

Steeling his mind, Simon did not dilly dally any longer, he needed the assistance of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon in the upcoming dungeon defence against the combined coalition of the top five guilds and the various other big guilds across the kingdom of Ellesmere.

No preparation was enough preparation for a crusade this big.

Simon beckoned with his finger and droplets of blood underneath the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon, flew towards him—[Mana Flow].

Simon dropped the blood in the ten foot wide magic circle in the sky causing it to immediately erupt with a crimson light. The magic circle silently rotated and strange fluctuations emitted out of it.

The rotation of the circle became faster and faster causing even the space to vibrate violently. Soon, the magic circle stopped rotating and disappeared, a droplet of blood remained suspended in its place.

Simon pulled the droplet of blood towards himself and allowed it to enter his body through the numerous wounds he had.

The moment this blood assimilated with his own, Simon could feel a gateway forming that connected his soul with the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon's, much like the one he had with the Lightning Draconic Serpent.

Simon spread his consciousness and allowed it to delve deeper towards that gateway at the end of which lay the soul of the lower dragon.

This was a form of absolute contract that bound this soul to him. Now, no matter what the earth shattering lower dragon does, he cannot betray nor can he go against his orders. What's more its current indifferent attitude towards him would soon change to become loyal and subservient.

"This is..."

It was not only him, even the earth shattering lower dragon felt the changes and its eyes went wide with surprise. It felt like its soul was suddenly being restrained by numerous invisible chains that came out from that mysterious gateway.

No matter how his soul struggled it couldn't shrug off those chains. Although these chains did not hurt him, he could vaguely feel the presence of hundreds of dragons within these chains. If he ever so much as thought of hurting the soul at the other end of the gateway, these chains would restrict tighter and shatter his soul.

After the technique was completed, the huge dragon shadow in the sky also disappeared and along with it, the suppression effect it had on the two dragons.

"What did you do to me?" finally freed from the bloodline fear that it was experiencing, the earth shattering lower dragon slowly stood on its limbs and asked.

"Nothing much, I just completed the master-servant contract between us" Simon replied with a smirk. He got what he came here to get, of course, he was happy.

"You!!!" Indignant, the earth shattering lower dragon roared; however, to its surprise, it found that this emotion of its disappeared abruptly leaving a vague empty feeling inside him.

"Are you alright?".

At this moment, the yellow robed man stepped between them and asked. His eyes were looking at the earth shattering lower dragon with concern.

"Elder... please forgive this junior, he has shamed the dragon clan" there was genuine shame and remorse in its eyes. It was after all a genuine dragon from the dragon clan, a clan that was like the ruler, a supreme overlord of this world.

Given the innate pride and superiority complex all these fellows were born with, of course, they would feel indignant from the result of this fight.

Valdris knew what kind of emotions the earth dragon was going through, it sighed and said—

"You fool... you haven't dishonoured the clan. In fact, I could see that you fought with all of your strength. It's just that you were up against an odd opponent this time. Nobody could have predicted this outcome... not even me. Fate is indeed mysterious".

Right after saying that, Valdris turned towards Simon. Those yellow gold draconic eyes were looking straight at him, various complex emotions currently flashed in them.

Simon's body jolted, and he hurriedly recalled the finger of Ozymandias back to his side. However, due to him being too injured and the backlash from superimposing all those skills on top of another erupting at this moment, the finger fell on the ground midway.

Blood swelled on top of his mouth but Simon hurriedly gulped it down and forcefully activated the [Dominator's control] once again.

Now that the dragon aura that was surprising the yellow robed man was gone, he was free to do anything they want. If they held the intention to kill him and release the earth shattering lower dragon, it would be quite bad for Simon.

Realising that, his body became tense once again.

Seeing the finger of Ozymandias fly towards the demon, a strange light flashed in those draconic eyes of Valdris. However, in the end, he sighed and relaxed his aura. The tense atmosphere that had taken root in the air also disappeared at this moment.

"Relax, I don't plan to fight you. I just want to ask you a few questions and... a favour that I would like from you" Valdris' voice was unnatural, clearly he was not used to asking favours from others.

Since the other party told that he didn't want to fight him, Simon relaxed a little but did not relax his guard completely.

"So what is it that you want to ask? Ask away".

Chapter 544 544- Doing Valdris A Favour

Valdris nodded, he inhaled a deep breath and got to the point "Huff... my first question, who and from where did you learn that technique?".

Although he could somewhat guess the answer, Valdris still wanted to hear it from Simon's mouth.

"Ah! This technique?" Simon deliberated before answering honestly "I got it from a girl who ran from her home. Well it was a coincidence that she ended up giving me this technique".

"A girl who ran from her home? Can you describe how she looked like?" Valdris inquired.

Since they were both from the dragon clan Simon believed that it was no harm in telling him that. He described her appearance to him...

"Well that's how Lucine looked".

"I see..." Valdris caressed his chin and processed the information, there was a frown of confusion on his face.

Just as he was about to shake his head unable to think of any such person like that, the name that Simon spoke at the end shocked Valdris until his entire body trembled.

"W-Wait what name did you just say?" he asked again.

"Hm? Lucine, that was the name of the person that gave me this technique. Do you perhaps know her?" Simon replied unaware of the storm that brewed inside Valdris's mind.

Do you know her? That was a stupid question to ask, no matter which dragon it was or which pavilion they belonged to, as long as they completed their adult ceremony after returning back to their tribe, would have heard about this name at least once in their life.

After all, that name belonged to the young miss of one of the five pavilions of the Ancestral Dragon Lands. One could imagine the shock Valdris was going through when that name was mentioned and that too so casually.

"Ah right, I understand why you are so confused. You see, it's not Lucine who created this technique, but rather her master Adalinda" Simon clarified.

RUMBLE... if emotions could be personified, there would be thunderstorms raging inside Valdris's mind currently.

"@##\$.. ^&*. . . %&&#" Valdris felt light headed, his emotions were in such a mess right now that he even forgot how to make some coherent words.

THUD... unable to contain his fluctuating emotions, Valdris fell on his butt and looked at Simon with an expression of dread.

"H-How do you know those names?".

Simon was unaware of the position these names held in the hearts of these dragons, although he was a little surprised by the latter's unusual behaviour, he still answered honestly...

"Well, one of them barged inside my dungeon uninvited and dragged me with them to various places. While the other used me as a scapegoat to escape her master. It's complicated... hmm but well we did travel together for some time, so you can call us acquaintances I guess".

Goodness Gracious, Oh Mighty Dragon Lord!! What is this demon saying? Not only does he know their name but he even dares to call them his acquaintances.

For what it was worth, Valdris could tell that the demon was not lying which could only mean that what he said was true. He had indeed travelled with the both of them!!

What kind of ridiculous concept was that? Not only was he acquainted with the young miss of the pavilion he belonged to, but he also knew one of its Venerables, Venerable Red.

He expected the demon to say something ridiculous, given the fact that he carried her dragon aura and wielded the technique she created. But never in his wildest dream could he have guessed that the truth would be far beyond his imagination.

If the demon was their acquaintance then... Valdris' face became purple with fright. 'Good thing I did not try to kill this fellow' he thought internally.

His fate would be very miserable if those two found out that he had killed the acquaintance they had made in the Ghastly winding forest.

Huff.. Huff... after inhaling and exhaling dozens of breaths, finally Valdris managed to calm his emotions a little. Nevertheless, he still did not have the energy to stand back up. He could only look up at the demon from his position.

It was also now that he understood how mysterious this demon was. Aldebaran had seen through it and thus tried to tell him something; however, he was too inflexible in his ways to listen to others.

"It seems like I have become pedantic. It was high time that somebody woke me up" Valdris lamented as he gave a hollow laugh.

"So what's your next question?" Simon asked, his expression was a little better after gulping down numerous elixirs of healing.

"Ugh... there is no need for that now. It looks like I was mistaken to have doubted you. Thanks to you, my perspective has changed. I will not stand in your way if you want to subdue and take this fellow back to your dungeon anymore" Valdris stated getting up on his feet.

"Elder what are you saying? You want me to bow to this guy?" the earth shattering lower dragon who was listening to their conversation from the sides, spoke out at his moment. Although he respected the demon for defeating him, it did not come to the point where he would bow his head to someone else.

Simon wasn't fazed by the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon's attitude, it has only been a while since the technique was established, and it would take some time to show its effect.

"You will understand in the future. You don't have to worry, he is someone that even I have to recognise, there is no shame in becoming his subordinate" Valdris comforted the earth shattering lower dragon with a bitter smile.

The latter clearly had great respect for Valdris, thus it couldn't say anything further. After placating the earth shattering lower dragon, Valdris turned his attention back to Simon once again.

After deliberating something in his head for a second or two, he bowed his head in apology to him.

"I was blind to have attacked you. I hope that this young mister can forgive me. My actions were only to protect a member of my pavilion".

Seeing the yellow robed man suddenly bow his head in apology, Simon was surprised a little. But it quickly made sense to him when he connected the dots to Adalinda and Lucine.

"Mister only did what he thought was right, you cannot be blamed for that. I can tell that the dragon clan cares greatly for its members and the technique that I used must be greatly abhorred by you all. However, my circumstances are so that I have no choice but to resort to it. I hope that both of you would understand".

Simon was not overbearing, he understood that if that yellow robed person who the earth shattering lower dragon called elder was to attack him, he would have no way of protecting himself in his current condition. Thus he accepted the other party's apology without making a racket.

"Hahaha... it's a good thing that this young mister understands" Valdris face warmed up a little knowing that this person had some history with the pavilion he belonged to.

Now that Valdris was looking at Simon carefully, he found the fellow much more pleasing to the eye. Not only was he very talented to have defeated a member of his tribe, but from the energy signature of this fellow, he could also tell that the demon was quite young.

He very much liked people like Simon who were brave and fearless.

"Hahaha... What is this? Valdris, it looks like you finally understand how amazing this young man is. If you only just accepted this old man's words, you wouldn't have to lose face like this today".

At this moment, a deep voice carrying the vicissitude of time, rang out from seemingly nowhere.

Whoosh... wind started blowing all of a sudden and an incredible phenomenon occurred in front of three pairs of stunned eyes.

The devastated land that was devoid of any life for dozens of miles, suddenly had plants and trees sprouting out of it. A vast emerald green energy spread out from the land and covered it with greeneries in the blink of an eye.

Although some area was taking some time to recover, the place returned to what it was after a while.

"Tch... this old ghost's power is as ridiculous as ever" Valdris muttered under his breath.

Simon who heard it, did not know who this 'Old ghost' referred to, thus he could only look at his surrounding with stunned eyes.

Just a few seconds ago, the place looked like a barren land with deep pits and craters everywhere. Forget about a life nothing would flourish in such conditions yet that power suddenly made something as absurd as that a reality. This part of the forest was brimming with life once again.

'That voice sounded familiar' this thought just appeared in his mind when suddenly the tree closest to them started moving and morphed into a familiar figure.

"Alder?" Simon couldn't help but utter out.

"Hahaha.. Young fellow it looks like you are doing fine. The worries of this old man were unnecessary".

The figure was none other than Aldebaran he had met back at Ancient treant's territory when he went to get the rest of the forest spring spirit tribe.

"Old fellow... so you didn't really go back and were watching the show all along?" Valdris had a sour face as he glanced at this humanoid figure made out of wood.

"Haha... Brat, I told you I had high expectations for this young fellow. I wouldn't just wait and watch while you destroy such a good seed. Though it didn't look like I had to intervene".

Aldebaran spoke smilingly, he looked at Simon and praised—

"Young fellow you have become quite strong. Not only were you able to defeat that lower dragon but you also managed to exchange a few blows against that brat and remain standing. It is quite praiseworthy, the results of your efforts are showing themselves in battle".

Chapter 545 545- Doing Valdris A Favour (2)

From his voice, one could tell how delighted he was. "I was merely lucky, I still have a lot more way to go" Simon knew that there were many strong people in this world, thus he couldn't just let this praise get to his head.

Aldebaran smiled, took out a mysterious fruit from the emerald green light that flashed on his hand and passed it to Simon.

"Eat this, it is called Gaia's fruit. It can quickly heal your wounds".

Simon took the fruit that looked like a strange pomegranate and bit down on it without hesitation. In any case, Aldebaran wouldn't try to hurt him and especially not with such cheap tricks. The being even tried to protect him from the shadows.

A mysterious icy cold energy swiftly entered his body the moment he took a bite and soothed the numerous wounds in his body. His fractured bones, cracking joints and torn muscles everything swiftly healed at a rate visible to the naked eye.

Simon was astounded seeing such a mystical effect. The effect of this fruit was even better than the healing elixirs from his shop. Simon took large bites and quickly devoured the fruit down. He could feel all his wounds, internal and external all swiftly healing after that.

Haha... Aldebaran laughed seeing the stunned expression in Simon's eyes, after that he fixed his attention on Valdris and said.

"Brat, I believe you have no more qualms with this seed I chose? If so then I would like you to not get in his way any longer. You see, it was me who had given this young fellow the trail to subdue all of the troublemakers of the north. I hope that you can give this old man face and let this young fellow take that dragon to his dungeon".

Although Aldebaran said it humbly, his voice still carried an ancient prestige to it.

"Hmph, even without you telling me, I wasn't going to stand in his way anyways. And I have already told you a thousand times, stop calling me a brat. I am no longer that juvenile dragon from the past" Valdris spat in annoyance.

Seeing the two converse with so familiarity, Simon realised that they were acquainted with each other.

Aldebaran naturally saw the look in Simon's eyes and explained pointing at Valdris "This brat here was once sent by those old pedantic fellows from his clan here to get some experience from me".

"However, at that time, he was too young and hot headed. Thinking that he can just trample everything underneath his power, this guy barged inside my territory".

"Stop talking" his face twitching a little, Valdris tried to stop Aldebaran from saying anything further. However, how could the king of ancient treants stop just because he was said to do so?

Aldebaran snickered and continued his story—"I obviously recognised the bloodline of this fellow the moment he came to the Ghastly winding forest but I played along with his antics. Since he came to seek trouble, I sent my people after him in droves and after he was all exhausted I sent those powerful subordinates of mine".

"They beat him up, tied him upside down and brought him to me. Hahaha... you should have seen there to see the look on his face at that time. This brat here begged us to not eat him, he thought that we were going to grill him on fire and eat him".

"I said stop talking..." Valdris' face was flushed red with embarrassment, he roared trying to drown out some of the words. However, this pathetic attempt of his to hide some embarrassing facts from his juvenile hood was clearly a big fail.

Simon and the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon heard everything. The former was trying to not laugh out loud while the latter was giving him some strange looks.

The adult dragon that made Simon worry so much, was actually beaten silly by Aldebaran and the ancient treants when he was still in his juvenile stage.

Simon knew that he shouldn't laugh but it was still funny hearing Valdris think that the ancient treants wanted to eat him.

While Simon was trying to suppress his laugh, Aldebaran on the other hand did not care for Valdris' face and laughed out loud. His laughter boomed across the entire place.

"You damn undying old ghost, if you are here to make fun of me then return back" Valdris shouted, his body trembling with fury. He had lost all face in front of his juniors, how would he be able to keep his act together in the future?

"Haha... that was some good laugh. Don't worry, I didn't come here only to laugh at you. But before I get down with my business, don't you have a favour that you wanted to ask this young fellow?"

"Tch... so you were even snooping on us too huh?" Valdris was not surprised that the latter overheard their conversation, after all, this entire ghastly winding forest was like his territory, nothing can elude his senses.

Only after Aldebaran mentioned it, Simon realised that he and Valdris were in the middle of a conversation before they were interrupted. He remembered that the latter had mentioned something about asking a favour from him.

After giving Aldebaran a vicious look, Valdris placed his attention back on Simon—

"Forgive me, we couldn't finish our conversation because certain someone barged in the middle of it. If only they could shut up, we would have finished this a long time ago. Anyways, the favour I wanted to ask you, is related to this guy behind me".

Valdris pointed at the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon behind him "Are you aware of some rules in our dragon clan?".

Simon shook his head, although he knew a little bit from the lightning draconic serpent, he wasn't sure that knowledge was accurate.

"I see, it's only natural that you don't know that. Allow me to tell you some of the rules then. One of the first rules in our dragon clan is that, when an infantile dragon reaches the juvenile stage, they have to leave the clan and wander the outside world".

"This is done so that the individual can gain experience and grow stronger by surviving in the harsh unforgiving world. They have to live in the outside world, compete against others and claw their way up until they reach the adult stage and only then are they allowed to return back to the clan".

"I had to go through the same experience and of course this fellow behind me too. The adult stage for us dragons hold a special meaning and thus no matter which corner of the world we are in, when we reach the adult stage we have to come back to the dragon clan".

"When a dragon reaches the adult stage, their body and power go through a comprehensive development. During that time, they require an immense amount of energy to go through that transformation. This kind of energy can only be found in our Ancestral Dragon Land".

"Thus the need to come back to the clan. This kind of transformation is also called the adult ceremony and represents an extremely great significance to all dragons".

Simon intently listened to Valdris, the gist of what he said, was more or less similar to what the lightning draconic serpent had informed him.

While he was having these side thoughts, Valdris continued—"The second rule of our dragon clan states that only those dragon that has gone through the adult ceremony, is qualified to get a name from the Elder Hall. I have received my name from them too. I believe I don't have to tell you the importance of receiving a name?".

Simon nodded his head, of course, he understood how significant receiving a name was in this world for a beast.

A name for a beast was vastly different than humans who simply use it to address others. For a beast, the process of naming is called a Bestowal. It uses an enormous amount of mana and life force to grant a name to a beast.

The name then becomes a branding that makes the beast far stronger and higher ranked than before. Naturally, it can only be done by a high levelled being since it constitutes a great level of risk.

If a person isn't strong enough to grant a name, they can die from the process of getting all of the mana and life force sucked out of them.

His buddy, the Bloodthorn demonic warhorse, was also a beast without a name. It was not like Simon was unaware of it, he had inherited some memories of this process.

However, the reason why he hasn't given a name to the warhorse a name yet is because the warhorse was yet to reach the limit of his growth and secondly Simon had to become more powerful than the warhorse to give it a name. Otherwise, he would only just end up miserably failing later.

Seeing Simon nod his head, Valdris went on to explain the other things.

"It looks like you are aware of it, then I will be honest with you. The Earth Shattering Lower Dragon has yet to reach the adult stage but once he does, he needs to come back to the dragon clan and go through the adult ceremony to receive a name".

"The favour I wanted to ask is that you allow him to come back with me to the dragon clan once he reaches that stage. I believe it should also be beneficial to you, once this guy goes through the adult ceremony, its power would be incomparable to what it is now. At that time, he would be far more useful to you than he is now".

Valdris patted the dragon behind him whose eyes glossed over when the name Ancestral Dragon lands was mentioned.

Chapter 546 546- Passing The First Trial

"This was the favour you wanted to ask of me?"

"Yes" Valdris affirmed.

Simon was baffled, how was that asking him for a favour? wasn't it more like doing him a favour? The rise in the power of Earth Shattering Lower Dragon who has become his subordinate can only be good for him and not bad.

With strong subordinates, the defence of his dungeon would become more solid in the future. So in a way, Valdris was instead doing him a favour.

Though that was the case, Simon did not let it show on his face. He maintained a poker face and nodded after considering a few things in his mind.

The Earth Shattering Lower Dragon, was currently in the middle of its juvenile stage and had quite some time before it reached the adult stage thus it was no problem for Simon to allow it to leave with Valdris at that time.

"Many thanks to this young friend, this one shall remember this favour" The headstrong and prideful adult dragon bowed his head.

"Haha... Elder Valdris does not have to think too much about it. Oh right, now that this guy is my subordinate, I am going to teleport it inside my dungeon. What is Elder Valdris going to do? Of course, you are welcome to stay in my dungeon".

Once the earth shattering lower dragon enters his dungeon, Valdris would be freed of his duty of looking after the former. Simon wanted to know what this adult dragon would be doing till then. Would he return back to the dragon clan or would he stay behind?

Of course, it would be best for Simon if the latter still wished to prioritise his duty and came with him to his dungeon. At that time, Simon would gain a powerful helper and wouldn't have to worry about the crusade of the top five guilds.

"Haha, you can just call me Val. I appreciate your offer young man. However, I wouldn't be staying in the ghastly winding forest any longer. I plan to visit one of my old friends now and roam around a little while I wait for this fellow to reach the adult stage".

Valdris laughed, he appeared much more carefree now that he was relieved of his duty. Simon was speechless, this dragon appeared far too relieved and burden free now that he took the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon off his shoulder.

It was so much so that the word frivolous would be the perfect description for the current Valdris.

"Oh right, accept this seal as a token of my appreciation".

"What is this?" Simon took the small yellow crystal marked with some mysterious runes from Val.

"Haha... it is a spatial token inscribed with my essence blood. Once you shatter this, no matter where I am, I would instantly realise it and can come to your rescue. Use this when you are facing any trouble you cannot solve on your own" Valdris thumped his chest and explained.

It turned out that the crystal was a way of communicating with this adult dragon. Simon immediately accepted this token of appreciation and thanked Val.

With this, he would be much more relieved in the future if he ever met with some trouble he cannot solve with his own power. He had seen the power of an adult dragon, even the finger of Ozymandias wasn't enough to stop him.

"Un... at least you have some sense. With this, you have somewhat redeemed yourself for attacking a junior" Aldebaran remarked from the sides. It seemed that he had a good relationship with the other.

"Shut up you old ghost" Valdris clearly did not want to deal with Aldebaran at this moment. He turned around and was just about to leave when—

"Say hello to those old fogies for me when you meet them. Tell them it wouldn't be long before they can see the opening of that realm once again".

Valdris' eyes twitched though he did not know what Aldebaran meant, he would give this message to them.

Valdris stepped forward and covered hundreds of meters of distance in an instant. With another step he was further away and just like that, he disappeared into the distant sky.

Now that Valdris was gone, it was only Simon, Aldebaran and the uncertain looking earth shattering lower dragon left behind.

"Haha, congratulation young fellow on passing the first test. Honestly, I am quite surprised that you have completed it before the time limit. But I guess it is only to be expected for the person chosen by the fragment of pride".

Aldebaran repeatedly nodded his head. His elderly eyes measured Simon carefully and was quite satisfied with his growth.

"Alder is praising me too much. I have only just completed one of the two trails you have set for me. To gain the qualification to keep the forest spring spirits in my dungeon, I will naturally not shirk back. I will keep my promise and become a Demon Duke within six years and subdue the seven kings of this forest".

Simon spoke with determination. His eyes staring unblinkingly at Aldebaran.

"Haha... good.. good, I like your confidence. That's how the master of the fragment of pride should be. I don't have anything else to say to you other than that I will be waiting for you to give this old me a challenge... hahaha".

The king of the ancient treants laughed and turned into an ordinary tree, he too returned back. Now it was only Simon and the gobsmacked looked earth shattering lower dragon the only ones left in this place.

The reason why the latter looked gobsmacked was because of the words that Simon had uttered a few moments ago.

"You that... is it true... About the seven kings of the forest?" the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon asked with some hesitation.

"Yeah, that is the agreement I made with the kings of the ancient treants. Now that all the three overlords of the north have been subdued by me, it would be their turn next" Simon felt there was no need to hide it since the other party was now his subordinate and absolutely loyal to him thanks to the [Ancient Draconic Compel].

"Anyways, you should rest and heal your wounds for the time being. I will come back tomorrow to take you with me to my dungeon".

Simon commented, after that he didn't wait for a reply and simply took off. The fruit Aldebaran gave him completely recovered his health and healed all of his wounds and fatigue.

Five days passed by, one the morning of the sixth day.

City of Mountmend, a city situated at the top of a mountain. It was a small city with a population of less than half a million and located at the distant north-western corner of the kingdom bordering the Ghastly winding forest.

The city may not look spectacular compared to the other great cities or the capital of the kingdom; however, due to the management of Mayor Alfred, it was doing quite well.

The city seemed to be bustling with activity as humans from all walks of life strode around the streets. Although very rare, even some demi-humans could be seen among them. New buildings were propping up everywhere and the market was filled with various trades and transactions.

The city had a kind of flourishing atmosphere about it. Of course, the flourishing atmosphere wasn't something that was always there, this prosperity came from the emergence of a certain dungeon that was located in the ghastly winding forest.

Due to it, the city became a large trade hub where goods and materials were brought in and out every day. Caravans and adventurers who entered the city brought new goods with them which would then later be bought and transported elsewhere.

Of course, this increment in materials also attracted various craft smiths, alchemists and other professions to the city which further boosted its economy.

The markets and streets of the city of Moutnmend would usually be filled with hubbub and clamorous all day round. However, today it was extremely noisy and boisterous probably because of the numerous big air engines that had recently docked near the foot of the mountain where their city was.

Adventurers wearing lavish and exquisite armours could be seen continuously entering the city through the gates and roaming the streets of Mountmend in groups. They all had a different garb and had different insignia on their chest but the one thing common on them was that each and every one of them was strong without a doubt.

So much so that, even the local tyrants, the famous guilds of this city and the neighbouring cities had to restrain their aura around them.

The dazzling badge hanging in their chest and the aura of superiority surrounding them was something even the average citizen of this city could feel. They could tell that something big was about to happen and to further prove their beliefs most of the items that were in fairs, auctions or in shops were all purchased.

The entire market was emptied out.

One had to imagine what kind of wealth one needed to do something like that. It was as if a giant was on the move. Various hush-hush was going on in every part of the town.

Inside the city lord's mansion, the many servants and maids were hurriedly attending to the guests sitting in the lobby. These guests all wore a robe on top of their leather armour, held exquisite looking staffs in their hands and had a dignified aura around them.

Judging by their profession, all of them were mages and quite strong at that.

Mage was a class amongst the adventurers that was highly respected. Even if one searched all around the city, they wouldn't find many adventurers having the mage class.

Chapter 547 547- The Top Five Guilds Mobilise

After all, it took hard work, learning, talent and great support to become one... that is to say, not just anyone can become a mage. Unlike classes like warriors or assassins that one could get by simply training their bodies, mage was a class that needed guidance from a young age to achieve.

One needed a teacher and talent to guide their stats and efforts in a way that was suited for becoming a magician. Of course, it was not like it was a rare class or something, just that it was a little harder to get than the other two classes.

The number of mages that Mountmend had, was not even one tenth of the total number of its adventurers. Yet so many of them were currently gathered in one place, sitting in the lobby of the city lord's mansion.

Not to mention all of them belonged to the same faction by looking at the badge that was on their chest. An insignia of a torch like staff was on the badge. One didn't need to think twice to know which guild or organisation this insignia belonged to.

Inside the main hall of the mansion— placed on top of a long rectangular table, were two teacups releasing hot smoke.

There were two individuals sitting opposite each other, one was a nobleman with an ash grey hair and a well trimmed moustache. His clothes weren't overly extravagant but were enough to give him a dignified appearance.

The man was the mayor of the city of Mountmend, Alfred Eude Bergest.

"Looking at this flourishing city, one wouldn't be able to associate it with the term remote backwater city. Perhaps in a few more years, it would even out scale the main cities of those duchies".

The woman seated opposite Alfred commented. Her eyes were looking outside the window, observing the people and the scenery around. The woman had long curly brown hair that fell onto her waist, light blue eyes that gazed at the world with profound meaning and an alluring figure.

She wore a skirt that displayed her smooth shapely legs filled with endless charms, a leather corset that tightly clung to her tempting curves and a long black robe that gave her an exalted appearance.

On top of her head, she wore a purple pointy head and a staff embedded with five core stones silently floated beside her.

"Haha, surely Miss Katrina jests. The city of Mountmend is only a small city located at the remote north-western corner of the kingdom, how can it compare to those duchies" Alfred replied respectfully.

The woman facing him was not just anybody, she commanded absolute respect from her subordinates and her valour and achievements were something that everybody in the kingdom was aware of.

One of the big shots of the capital, leader of one of the top five guilds and the only woman in the kingdom that could stand toe to toe with the strongest people in this kingdom, Karina Lowell.

The mage guild she leads, is comprised entirely of girls whose talent could shock the entire kingdom. The guild leader of that guild was currently seated opposite Alfred, elegantly sipping on her tea from her tea cup.

"Hnn~ is that so? Well, it's a pity. Anyways, I noticed a few demi-humans in your city while on my way here. where did they come from?" those light blue eyes that seemed like the representation of mana itself were cast towards Alfred.

The mayor of the city coughed once before explaining—"I'm sure you already know but the guild that was the governing authority of a neighbouring city, had a fallout with the Sea god's trident branch guild that was located in my city not long back".

"In fear of retaliation from one of the top five guilds of the kingdom, they deserted the city at the first chance. Well given the nature of the Sea god's trident guild, they did not take this lying down and sent a part of their unit to exact revenge".

"However, the upper echelons of that perpetrator guild had already run away leaving behind some small time lackeys. One could imagine what would happen to a city if all of its governing authorities disappeared overnight".

"Mass riots broke out, the people that were oppressed, the people that were discontent, all hell broke loose. What was worse, the people of the city of Morgress who were taken advantage of by a corrupted and inapt guild had a lot of frustration built up".

"Insurgencies occurred everywhere and destruction spread. Before the situation escalated any further, the army from duke Redcrest's castle arrived to calm the situation down and to suppress the mobs. Many investigations were done bringing the heinous and atrocious activities of that perpetrator guild to light".

"Anyways, after a discussion, it was decided that I would manage the city as a part of my territory. The demi-humans that you see here were brought over from that city. They were enslaved and mistreated there so I thought it was better for me to bring them here".

"I see... so that was the case" Karina's eyes were a little surprised after hearing the whole truth. Given her wide network and connections, she had more or less dug inside this incident.

Alfred looked a little hesitant before asking the question that was on his mind.

"May I ask why Miss Karina has come to this distant remote region?"

"Hm? You are a smart man Alfred, I believe you already have some clue as to why we are here?"
Karina smiled pursing her lips.

'So my suspicions were indeed right' Alfred thought internally. With that many high levelled adventurers and rows of air engines docked outside their city, it wasn't very difficult to predict their objective.

However, what he didn't understand was why so many big guilds sent their top adventurers just to conquer a single low ranking dungeon.

There were more than ten different badges of renowned and big guilds that he had seen on the chest of the adventurers that had entered the city. Somewhere even from distant regions far from here; nevertheless they too were roped in this.

This kind of powerful mobilisation was enough to even tackle a [C] tier dungeon.

"It seems that you are aware of it, then I won't beat around the bush. Our target is the dungeon that is located in the Ghastly winding Forest. We are the advanced party that was sent here by the air engines, the rest of them are waiting in the capital".

Karina explained, her eyes turned serious as she took out a scroll from her space ring and handed it to

Alfred. The latter took the scroll and read it only to be masked by surprise the next second.

"The seal is definitely authentic, I can't believe even they are on the move" Alfred sighed and passed the scroll back. He then closed his eyes and finally came to a decision.

"Since that is the case, I have no authority to deny you all the access to it, the stamp of the royal family of Ellesmere is also in there along with many others. As such please use the teleport gate as you want; however, since it hasn't been maintained for many years after it was first laid out, it may cause some problems starting. But seeing that Miss Karina was amongst the advanced party that was sent here, I guess they had already predicted this".

"Un, don't worry about that, even if the teleport gate is non-operational, my guild can fix it".

A few yards of distance behind the city lord's mansion was a big plaza. In the middle of the plaza, was a circular construct placed between four big pillars. The entire thing was crafted with a peculiar white stone and numerous mysterious runes were carved into it.

Since the teleport gate was not in use for hundreds of years, algae had accumulated around the construct over the time.

A couple of people from the magician guild could be seen cleaning the place with their magic and tinkering with the construct.

"May I ask why all of the top five guilds are collaborating together and putting so much effort to conquer a single low ranking dungeon? You guys even pulled the other big guilds from the other regions of the kingdom. What's in it for all of you?".

Alfred who was observing the adventurers from a distance, asked. This was the first time in history that all of the top five guilds of the kingdom were working together.

The letter also had stamps of other various big guilds of the kingdom. Such a big mobilisation of people and strength just for a single dungeon seemed like an overkill. The cost easily surpassed the profit.

Even if the coalition of these many guilds succeeded in conquering the dungeon and ringing the shattered core out, it would still not make up for the cost. Given this fact, it was only just natural for him to ask that question.

"Naturally, we have our own motives behind all of this..." Karina, standing beside him, spoke a few words but didn't explain further.

She got busy repairing the teleport gate and after an entire half a day of maintenance, the construct hummed as if alive. Loads of mana crystals of grade [1] and a few grade [2] were taken out from the space ring and inserted into the power core of the teleport gate.

Soon after eating ten tonnes of mana crystals, a dark blue light started slowly appearing from the circular construct. The blue light slowly started spinning faster and faster and before long some spatial rift started appearing within that blue light.

"Alright, the teleport gate is fully operational and working, you guys can send your people over now" Karina who was involved in repairing the teleport gate, spoke.

Chapter 548 548- The Top Five Guilds Mobilise (2)

A transmission conch can be seen on her hand, she was talking to someone on the opposite end of the transmission conch.

After she gave those words, the humming noise from the teleport gate became louder and louder and soon enough, people wearing adventuring gears started appearing out of it.

Alfred who was looking at the scene from the distance, sighed. Although he was no adventurer, from his years of experience working as the mayor of this city and meeting with different kinds of people, he could somewhat tell the power of a person just by looking at them.

That is why, he could say with certainty that each and every adventurer that came out of that portal, was more powerful than any of the adventurers you could find around this part of the land.

Even the weakest amongst them released a pressure comparable to the vice guild master or guild master of their city. What was even more astonishing was that their numbers weren't in the hundreds but thousands.

Droves and droves of adventurers carrying the badges of their respective guild came out of the teleport gate and soon the entire plaza was filled with it.

Seeing that the number of people coming out of the portal didn't seem to be slowing down, Alfred called for his subordinates who respectfully led those adventurers to a different part of the mansion.

The teleport hummed for a whole three hours before the light from the construct died down. A massive lineup of adventurers could be seen on the plaza. All of the adventurers that were waiting in the capital, were here.

The coalition of more than twenty guilds, comprising of more than thirty thousand people, was here. One can imagine what kind of atmosphere the city lord's mansion was basked in when these many strong adventurers, gathered in one place altogether.

The powerful auras from the adventurers became one coagulating mass of energy that even disturbed the surrounding mana. Some weak levelled servants inside the city lord's mansion even fainted, unable to take the pressure.

Alfred witnessed the powerful lineup of adventurers with his own eyes, his face was complicated as various thoughts ran through his mind. This lineup of adventurers was so grand that had he not known what their objective was, he would have thought that they were here to take down a country, forget about a dungeon.

Not even in his wildest dream would he have thought that, not only the guild master of the mage guild, but all of the guild masters that he had only heard talks and rumours about, would show their faces in this distant remote city of his in person today.

Nevertheless, knowing their objective did not particularly make him happy. The emergence and placement of the dungeon, was something that had deeply affected the economy of his cities and the other neighbouring cities.

Thanks to the dungeon and the various benefits it provided, various people from different walks of life came over after being attracted by it. Their cities started flourishing, commerce thriving, market booming with new jobs propping up every day.

The average level of satisfaction amongst the citizen rose and the city was filled with vitality and life. Nobody would be able to deny that the dungeon was deeply connected to the development of Mountmend and all the other neighbouring cities.

However, knowing that it would all come to a stop soon, made Alfred unable to take joy in seeing this big mobilisation of power. If it was some other cause or occasion, he would have been delighted to have people of such calibre come over to his city but not today.

All he could do was sigh in regret seeing their strength.

One day later, tower town. The always bustling town of adventurers, was covered with an unusual silence today. An army of more than thirty thousand adventurers marched through the southern region of the forest and arrived at the town where a huge tower was located.

Their sheer number and presence was enough to subdue the people of the tower town and clear a path for them. Many discussions rose amongst the adventurer until the entire town was buzzing with hullabaloo.

It was not every day that one gets to see so many powerful adventurers gathered in one place. The sight was mind-boggling to say no less.

Adventurer's Association branch, a large group of people were gathered outside as they tried to get a peek at the appearance of the famous adventurers that they have only heard in rumours and news.

The people inside the building were like their idols, these people worshipped and held in high regard.

The large hall would usually occupied and filled with adventurers; however, today it was empty with only a selective group of people sitting inside. These people were the guild master and the vice guild master of the various big guilds of this kingdom.

Karina Lowell, Brutus Sarge, Arven Lantz, and the guild leaders of the top five guilds were also present. Nonetheless, they weren't seating on the seat of honour and instead a man with short grey hair, covering his face with a mask, sat there.

His aura was restrained and he seemed ordinary at a glance but given how respectful the various guild leaders were around him, one could tell that his position was higher than anyone present in the room.

"Have the Sea God's Trident contacted yet?" the grey haired man asked.

Seated on his immediate right was a person with a badge of a blue trident stitched to his clothes. This person was the former vice guild leader of the Sea god's trident and a pillar of the guild, Dalton Lance.

"My earnest apologies, I talked with my guild leader yesterday. It seems like they are still stuck inside a dungeon and cannot free themselves currently. He asked me to lead the members of the guild for this expedition on his behalf" Dalton said, bowing his head a little towards the grey haired man.

"Tch... well whatever, it's not like we absolutely need their power. The manpower we currently have is enough. However, since you guys aren't providing all of your assistance, don't expect the reward I originally promised to you guys".

Dalton revealed a bitter smile when he heard those words, those guild leaders from the rival guild and the other famous guilds all revealed a gloating smile. For an expedition this large, all of the guild participating today were promised reward that they couldn't decline.

Seeing the Sea god's trident guild be excluded from it, some of the guild leaders couldn't help but become happy. Even though they were working together right now, they each belonged to a rival guild.

The sea god's trident held the position of the head amongst the top five guilds. Them losing the favour of the grey haired man was a pleasant development from the other guild's perspective.

Dalton was aware of what these people were thinking however, the situation was so that he couldn't do anything. Currently, the Sea god's trident was tackling the forbidden grounds and cannot free all of their manpower immediately.

Not to mention Godwin and Raven were also away and training on the Mainland. Thus it only left him and a few other members available for the expedition.

"Hnn~ I believe this expedition was something that was suggested by the guild leader Benny Beckerman. He tried every means to rope all of us into this yet when the time came to reap the rewards for his efforts, why is it that he and the other important member of the Sea god's guild are absent?".

Karina Lowell seated on the left side of the table asked. Her charm was so that every eye immediately focused on her, and the various guild leaders who wanted to get closer to her, started questioning Daxton further.

"Enough... Benny Beckerman isn't the type of person to back down. I believe he must have his own reason for being unable to provide assistance. Perhaps he really is stuck inside a dungeon" the grey haired man admonished, silencing the crowd.

Karina narrowed her eyes when she saw that person side with the Sea God's trident. Various thoughts flashed in her mind as she wondered about the two parties motives.

"Ahem... now all of you please look at this" the grey haired man coughed once to disperse the weird atmosphere in the air and took out something from his space ring.

The thing on his hand was a small orb as big as a fist. Everybody immediately recognised it as the transmission orb that transmitted information in the form of images and videos.

When the visuals inside the orb played, a dark cavern came into view and a group of adventurers could be seen clearing it.

The place inside the orb was filled with monsters, traps and various magical things. Scenes changed as the adventurers proceeded forward, all eyes were tightly glued to the visuals inside the orb when suddenly it stopped and everything turned dark. The transmission had ended.

"So what do you all think?" the grey haired man asked after giving them some time to digest the information.

"Are those images from the dungeon that we are about to tackle?" the people inside the hall weren't any ordinary people, they were the guild leader of the renowned and big guilds of this kingdom. It was easy for them to connect the dots and associate the images inside the orb with the dungeon.

"Correct, these are the images from the various floors of this dungeon. I procured this thing through some means of mine so that it can help us clear the dungeon faster" the grey haired man explained.

He shook his hand and dozens of transmission orbs appeared from his space ring which flew towards the guild leaders of the various guilds.

Chapter 549 549- The Top Five Guilds Mobilise (3)

"I want everyone to have a copy of this. Remember the topography, the format of the floors and the monsters there. It should be more helpful than simply hiring an adventurer who is a veteran here".

The various guild leaders nodded and copied the images and videos from the main orb.

"Now that everybody has a copy of this, I suppose we should talk about how we are going to tackle this dungeon..." the grey haired man finally started elaborating his plans.

Dungeon Laplace, Training chamber, Floor 56th.

Simon was huffing and puffing as he slashed his sword forward. CLANG... an intense collision of metallic sound rang out, the huge axe that was clashing against the sword, was deflected to the side.

However, before Simon could relax his guard, a whip covered entirely with thick black scales, came smashing at him.

BANG...

Simon crossed his arms, two faint gauntlets took shape and absorbed the damage for him. Nevertheless, he was still pushed back a few meters from the force.

SKID... When he looked back at the thing, he could see countless snake heads glaring at him at the end of the whip. It was then retracted into the sleeves of the ominous looking black robed humanoid creature riding on a big menacing antler.

Soul Catchers, Gate Keepers,... Ogorath, it had many names.

The creature as the name suggested guarded the gates until the end of time and captured any unfortunate souls that dared to come closer. That was its sole role and the reason for this existence.

It rode on a wretched looking antler that feasted on the flesh and carried huge ominous weapons that harvested the souls. The creature had no soul itself and was a living corpse faithful and in eternal servitude to its master.

SHRIEKK... a cacophony of multiple anguished noises came out whenever it opened its mouth. Two more soul catchers silently rode and stood beside the first one.

Looking at this lineup, Simon nodded his head and remarked "Although they are unintelligent creatures and can only follow simple commands, their strength is without a doubt".

Just as he was about to start another round of training with these creatures, Bea teleported behind him and knelt on one knee.

"Master... according to the reports from the [helpers], the humans have arrived".

"Hoh, it took them around two weeks to arrive. Our guests sure are late. Have all the preparations to show our hospitality been completed?" Simon wasn't particularly fazed by this report, he raised his brows and asked.

Bea obediently nodded her head and replied "All preparations have been completed. Everybody is waiting in the hall for Master".

"In that case, let us go. The show is about to start" Simon commented, a crimson glow flashed in his eyes. He wiped his sweat with a towel and along with Bea, he teleported back onto the main floor.

Two days later, Floor- Twenty-Sixth—

A large group of people comprising of more than seven hundred adventurers, were currently resting inside an ant hill. Mountains of corpses of Giant Beetle Ant, could be seen all around them.

From the looks, it seemed like this colony was cleared by this group of adventurers who were currently dissecting the biggest beetle ant that was supposedly the queen of this hill.

"Hey did you guys hear? According to the reports, the Savannah Beast Guild has already reached the thirtieth floor. While the Crimson Demolition Guild and the Sea God's Trident Guild are right behind us".

A woman of great beauty, said towards the two people seated at a table that they had set up to take some rest.

The woman that just spoke, was Anna White from the Mage Guild. She was also one of the participants that was competing in the Battle of the Finest tournament in the capital.

The two people that she addressed had a status equal to her, especially the girl named Hallie May who was the personal disciple of their guild master and their future guild leader.

Hallie May looked at Anna white and smiled, she waved her hand and asked the latter to come sit by their side.

"Anna you have returned? Tell me what other information did you manage to get from the spies of our guild" the woman who spoke was Tiana Lowe, the eldest of the three and ranked 11th in the battle of the finest tournament.

Hearing her words, Anna nodded, she sat beside the smiling Hallie and continued with the information she received from the spies.

"According to reports that could be trusted, Marcus's group have reached the 30th floor while the Lantz and Rees brothers are currently tackling the 28th floor. At this rate, the one to reach the 34th floor first will be the Savannah Beast Guild. What should we do elder sister Tiana?" Anna asked.

"The top five guilds and the renowned guilds each have their prejudices and own way of doing things. It is impossible for them to leave their animosity and work together. I heard from the guild master Karina that a great ruckus was created when the time came to elect the expedition leader of this operation".

"The meeting ran in circles and nobody could come to a conclusion. Thus it was decided that whichever guild first reaches the last floor that was shown in the transmission orb.. i.e the 34th floor, the guild leader of that guild would be the expedition leader for the combined forces".

"The groups that have dived inside the dungeon currently are all tertiary teams of their respective guilds. There is no need to worry, let Brutus and those guys in the front clear the path for us. Besides..."

Tina reassured, her eyes turned towards Hallie who was sending a sound transmission over to the other end of the conch.

"Our guild master isn't interested in becoming the expedition leader, so you don't have to worry. The task that we have been given is to closely monitor the dungeon and investigate if there is any anomaly".

"So that is the case" Anna nodded her head in understanding.

The decision that whichever guild first reached the lowest floor recorded in the transmission conch was all good and fine; however, the problem lay in the way it was to be executed.

The top five guilds and the other renowned guilds were the biggest guilds in the entire kingdom of Ellesmere. Naturally, they had thousands of adventurers, if all of the guilds rushed in together, the entrance and exit would be jammed and there may be numerous disputes and collisions arising.

To avoid that, it was decided that the twenty guilds would be sending their tertiary team first inside the dungeon first. If they wanted to, some guilds could also cooperate with each other by combining their tertiary teams. However, they cannot bring in more than a thousand people at any given time.

This decision was taken so as to prevent the guilds from clashing against each other and plotting behind their backs. Also, by sending the tertiary teams one could see the overall potential and foundation of that guild.

It is after all, a known fact that the weakest members and the newbie adventurers are usually kept in the tertiary team. So when any tertiary team reaches the objective faster than the other teams, it says a lot about that guild.

It proved that a particular guild has better overall adventurers, and the tactics and methods they used are also better than the other guilds. It wouldn't be unacceptable for these pedantic guild masters to accept a leader whose tertiary team achieved the best result inside the dungeon.

Nevertheless, this decision had somehow turned into a race for the top five guilds and the big guilds to see whose young generation was better than the other and a chance for them to gain experience.

While the tertiary team was clearing the dungeon and competing amongst themselves to see who would reach the 34th floor first, the primary team and the secondary teams of the respective guilds were resting and biding their strength on the 20th floor, which was declared as the Safe floor by the adventurer's association branch.

No monsters spawned or traps spawned on the 20th floor thus it was the ideal place to set up a camp. Thus the twenty guilds used this floor to setup their camps here and establish a headquarter.

Inside one of the biggest camps, the guild leaders of the various guilds were in attendance. Seated in the seat of honour, was the grey haired man with a mask on his face.

"How goes the exploration?" he asked with a sombre tone.

The guild leader of the Savannah Beast Guild Brutus Sarge gestured with his chin and the vice guild leader of his guild got up from his seat to give a report.

"Your lordship, the tertiary team belonging to our guild, has already reached the 30th floor. Four more floors before we can decide on an expedition leader".

The grey haired man nodded his head and his sharp eyes went on to the other guild leaders.

"It is only a matter of time then. I believe you have no qualms with Brutus Sarge becoming the expedition leader?".

Seeing that no one dared to show their discontent, the grey haired man proceeded with laying out his plans.

"Once they reach the 34th floor, we will get moving. The primary teams of all the twenty guilds will become our main unit. The objective of this unit is to spearhead the lower floors and break through any and all traps and defeat the monsters barring our way".

"This unit will be led by the expedition leader and the other guild masters would be there to assist him. Although I don't think we will need it, but the secondary unit will be led by Miss Karina".

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"Your unit will be providing timely assistance and help carry the injured back up. Other than that, if we lack in numbers, your unit will be providing manpower. I hope everybody is clear on how we will proceed?".

The grey haired man paused, his eyes looked at various guild leaders seated around the table who showed no discontent on their faces.

Although they were all prideful and mighty guild leaders of their own guild, they still restrained acting like that in front of the grey haired man.

Also judging by the situation, the latter was much more suited to guide the guilds than any single one of them. Not only he had many years of experience tackling intermediate tier dungeons, he was also from the Mainland.

They all knew that the title expedition leader was just for show, the true leader of this coalition was this man. Because he couldn't be bothered with every single problem that arises within the expedition army comprised of several big guilds, they needed a leader to act as an intermediary who would solve these situations for him.

The group discussed various other issues in the meantime as they waited for the tertiary team to reach the 34th floor.

Dalton who was in attendance, saw the laid-back attitude of these guild leaders and spoke in caution.

"I know that all of you are confident in your abilities and I'm sure that you don't need me to remind it, but let me at least say this? The master of this dungeon and our opponent is a demon viscount who is extremely cunning. He is also the perpetrator behind the incident that occurred in the capital".

"Although he is not a threat right now, but given enough time, he will surely turn out to become one. However, our greatest opponent that we must be careful of, is not him but the rumoured disaster class beast under him".

The fact that there was a disaster class beast guarding the dungeon, was a well-known fact amongst the adventurers of the tower town. That beast had shown its face quite a few times in the lower middle floors and scared many of the adventurers away.

It wasn't unusual for these guild masters who have their own personal networks, to have information about it.

Seeing that nobody was overly concerned by this fact, he felt it was prudent for him to give them a heads up.

"I know what you all are thinking, a mere demon viscount or a disaster class is no match for us. However, it would be unwise to let our guard down and underestimate the demon or his dungeon".

The sea god's trident was much more knowledgeable about this demon and what the latter was capable of. They had used various means to probe the dungeon; nevertheless, they couldn't see the full extent of its power.

His guild leader, Benny Beckerman had cautioned him many times not to look down on the master of this dungeon. So much so that he had even roped in the grey haired man and the other top five guilds to remove this thorn from his path.

'If the guild leader's suspicions are correct, that demon should be in possession of an item from the forbidden grounds' Dalton mused internally. It was the only conclusion that they could reach which explained the unusualness of the demon and this dungeon.

The forbidden grounds recorded in the ancient texts was a treasure trove of unparalleled treasures, it can transform even an ordinary human into a mighty overlord that looked down on this world. It wouldn't be unusual for a treasure from the forbidden grounds to completely transform a dungeon.

Dalton's involvement in this expedition was also due to this reason. His mission was to recover the item from the demon while the others were busy hoarding the treasures. For them who were tackling the forbidden grounds, the item was much more valuable than anything.

They who had borne a beautiful misconception that Simon was in possession of an item from the forbidden grounds would never in their wildest dreams believe that all of the change that had occurred to him and his dungeon, was because of his relentless efforts and the support of Cecilia and the other subordinates of his.

Although he brought forth a few items that could be considered to be unparalleled, like the Radiant Crown of Brilliance and the finger of Ozymandias, none of them worked like the way the Sea god guild thought.

One was broken, while the other cannot be used by any inhabitant of this world. No one would even think of using the finger the way Simon did. However, the Sea God's Trident was unaware of it. In their pursuit for any item that could help them clear the forbidden grounds, they left no stones unturned. Even if it meant antagonising a demon viscount. Something that they would come to regret bitterly in the future.

'It is a pity that our guild won't be able to enjoy the spirit orbs... alas, it couldn't be helped, clearing the forbidden grounds is paramount for our guild right now. if not for that, the guild leader wouldn't have disclosed the information about the forest spring spirits to that guy'.

Dalton sighed; however, he did not show it on his face.

"Haha, Dalton I think you are concerned over nothing. Haven't we all confirmed this fact already? The demon is no longer under the protection of that person who turned the capital upside down. Since that person is not here, conquering a [D] rank dungeon shouldn't pose any difficulty".

"On the contrary, I'm concerned that we have mobilised too much manpower and that not everybody would be able to get the chance to battle... Hahaha".

The one to speak out was Brutus. His words were filled with confidence that came from knowing one's strength. It was not only him, all of the guild masters felt like that.

The top twenty guilds and the best of the best adventurers from the kingdom of Ellesmere were currently gathered here. Forget about a [D] rank dungeon, it would not be impossible to even conquer a [C] rank dungeon.

Conquering a [D] rank dungeon with this number and level of adventurers was like butchering a chicken with an axe.

While everybody was filled with a confident aura, a slight change appeared in the eyes of the grey haired man when Brutus mentioned the affairs in the capital.

At the same time while the adventurers were plotting their own plans, the master of the dungeon was looking at everything with an eye of indifference.

Main floor, White palace, inside the hall.

Irene, Cecilia, Wisp, Valkyries, Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse, [Helpers], all of the people close to Simon, were gathered together.

Seated near them, on a couch was a demon with pale white skin, crimson eyes and long black hair. Two horns protruded from his forehead and decorated his head like a crown. He was wearing simple black linen clothes embroidered with golden lines by the forest spring spirits themselves.

A small grin hung on the corner of the demon's lips as he watched the multiple windows hanging in front of him with cold indifferent eyes.

Displayed in those windows, were adventurers clearing the different floors. Some were fighting monsters, some were disarming traps, some were mapping out the floor while other were resting or sharpening their weapons.

Each adventurer was doing their own thing, a relaxed atmosphere surrounded them as if they were out on a stroll.

"Drunk on their power, Concieful, Underestimation. Haha, they are so full of themselves" An indifferent voice came out of Simon's mouth as he kept on observing the adventurers.

"Those bastards are looking down on our dungeon too much" Bea by the side remarked, slight traces of anger could be seen in her eyes.

It was not only her that was angry, all of the people present in the hall were so. Their home was being invaded upon, how would they not be angry?

"Master, when should we move? I cannot take that attitude of theirs any longer" Alice stated gritting her teeth. Her eyes observed a window where a group of adventurers wearing bright red robes and armours killing monsters as if it was some kind of sport.

"What's the hurry? A large bunch of strong adventurers just delivered themselves to our abode. Let them squander around a little more while we collect the rewards from their invasion in the meantime."

Simon's tone contained some slight delight as he watched the dungeon points in his menu skyrocket every hour.

This was the first time since the establishment of the dungeon that such a large group of people had entered at once. These people were not like the citizens of the tower town aboveground. Each and every one of them was strong, which meant that the DP that they generated was also higher than most of the adventurers of the tower town.

Especially the ones on the 20th floor. The DP that was being generated from them every hour was on a whole different level than anything he had accumulated up until now.

Although he couldn't spy inside some of the tents on that floor because of some kind of temperance that was applied to it, Simon could tell that they were the cream of the corpse of this expedition army.

"However my lord, I don't understand what they are trying to do by dividing their group and sending their weaker members to clear the floors. Are they being used as disposable perhaps?" the one to ask that question was Coleus, the leader of the [Helpers].

No matter how they saw it, they weren't able to understand what the adventurers were thinking sending separate teams of weaker members to clear the floors when the high levelled ones remained behind and lazed on the 20th floor.