

D. of Pride 691

Chapter 691 691- Marchosias' Intervention

The presence of two Fragments of Pride within Simon magnified the effects of his arrogance to unprecedented levels. While even a single fragment could instil a dangerous sense of superiority, the combination of two unleashed a torrent of unchecked pride that consumed him entirely.

With each fragment resonating within him, Simon's ego swelled to immense proportions. It fueled his belief in his own superiority, blinding him to the perspectives and worth of others.

What's more, with the two fragments resonating with each other, its influence had reached a level where it amplified Simon's disdain for those around him. His arrogance became a force so overpowering that it affected not only his demeanour, but also the very fabric of his aura.

It radiated off him like an oppressive weight, causing even the most confident of demons to falter in his presence.

While the activation of two Fragments of Pride had subdued the whole crowd. It couldn't necessarily be said that it was a good thing. It had brought him to a dangerous state of being, where the boundaries of reason and empathy blurred, and the consequences of his actions became increasingly unpredictable.

While his transformation had ignited a newfound fire within him, it had also unleashed a torrent of hubris that threatened to consume him. The overwhelming arrogance he now embodied carried both the potential for greatness and the seeds of self-destruction.

It was a delicate balance, one that teetered on the edge of peril with every step he took.

While all this was happening, over on the side, seated comfortably in their seats a few distance away, the beings who could only be described as ancients, suddenly felt a jolt through their body.

Their leaning backs straightened and they couldn't help but lock their brows in consternation.

"Did you all feel this?" Gareth spoke, his eyes solemn.

"Yeah, something doesn't feel right. What could be causing this sudden change?"...

"This pressure... It's unsettling. I haven't felt something like this in thousands of years".

The other archdukes were perturbed too. This shift in the atmosphere was just too sudden.

"It is coming from the centre of the venue"...

"This invisible pressure that is making every cell and muscle in my body quiver.. could it be coming from Belial?".

With a serious expression, the Archdukes exchanged glances, a sense of unease and uncertainty could be seen on their faces.

As Demon Archdukes, they were the pinnacle of power and the bearers of the purest bloodlines. Yet when exposed to that aura, they couldn't help but feel overwhelmed with a sense of unease they couldn't explain.

It was as if a force beyond their comprehension was pressing upon them, making them feel a hint of inferiority and insecurity within their hearts. They thought that since the pressure was coming from the centre of the venue, it was Belial.

However, only Gareth knew that it was not the doing of his son. The Fragments of Envy that he knew of were powerful but even they didn't give off such an overwhelming feeling.

'Could it be the doing of that Demon Earl?' Gareth shook his head discarding that thought. There was no way a seemingly insignificant demon, an Earl no less, could exert such an imposing presence.

That said, it was still an enigma to him where that pressure came from. No matter how astute he was, even Gareth was unable to figure out that it was the Framgnets of Pride within the Demon Earl that caused the weird shift in the atmosphere and subdued all the demons.

But again, it was not like all the demons here were overwhelmed by that pressure. There were a few demons in the venue like Belial and Oswald who still still remained somewhat unaffected.

Though what they felt when exposed to the invisible pressure emanating from Simon was completely different from the rest of the demons here.

"This aura... why is it stirring up the Fragments of Envy within me? Why are they acting up right now and that too in the presence of a mere Demon Earl?" Belial muttered to himself.

Faced with the overwhelming aura wielded by the Demon Earl, the Demon Lord of Envy who possessed the Fragments of Envy, found himself entering a mysterious state.

In that state, he found himself looking at a vast starry sky. A large constellation was shining brilliantly amidst those stars. It was none other than the constellation of Envy.

This scene was not new to Belial, in fact, he had seen this scene many a time after being chosen by the Fragments of Envy. That aside, what he couldn't understand was why the Fragments decided to show him this scene at this moment.

While Belial's mind became clouded with conflicting thoughts, from the corner of his eyes, he noticed two brightly shining stars in far far distant space. The light from those stars were so bright that it affected the surrounding dead stars too, bathing them in their starlight.

Meanwhile, Oswald was having his own thoughts as he observed Simon "This.. could it be..." A mixture of fascination and unease washed over him as he came to a realisation.

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Silenced by his overwhelming aura, Simon's words reverberated through the hall, each point he made seemed to strike at the core of the established order.

"And Belial, your words are as feeble as your position. To think you would believe some insignificant creature trying to bootlick his way up the ranks. Has the mighty Demon Lord fallen so low as to require the assistance from the likes of them to solidify his position?"

Simon sneered. His words caused every demon present at this gathering to gasp in disbelief. His outright defiance of the Demon Lord's command shocked all of them including the Demon Lord himself.

"You..." being blatantly disregarded like that, as a Demon Lord whose position, power, rank, authority and everything towered over all the other demons here, how could he simply take it?

The others might be subdued by the aura of the Fragments within Simon; however, Belial was unaffected by such coercion due to the existence of the Fragments of Envy inside him. As such, after his momentary surprise at this sudden change in the Demon Earl's behaviour and aura dissipated, he was enraged by the audacious words of the latter.

Belial wanted to use his own aura and strength to silence this audacious demon and teach them their place, when he felt the Fragments of Envy behaving peculiarly for some reason. It lay dormant within him and he was unable to muster up most of his powers.

'What is going on? I can't even channel half of my strength properly?' While Belial was having his own inner thoughts, a new voice interrupted in between at this moment.

"Although his words might be excessive and unnerving to hear, we cannot dismiss the underlying truths within them. He is the winner of the ritual of the Blades after all, and as per the rules that have dictated our demon realm through aeons, he has full right over the outcome".

"Duke Arctaurus' claims hold no weight, the same goes for Duke Famoon, the illustrious Hexennacht is no place for settling petty found among them.

squabbles. Demon Lord Belial, I ask you to reevaluate your verdict".

The new voice spoke with an air of authority, cutting through the tension that had settled over the crowd.

The onlookers turned their attention to the source of the new voice, their curiosity piqued by this unexpected interjection. Who was it that dared to disregard the proceedings of the Hexennacht and even tell Belial to reconsider his judgement?

With their curiosity piqued, all eyes searched for the origin of the sound, but to their surprise, there was no physical presence to be found among them.

Belial, in particular, felt a mix of curiosity and apprehension as he listened to the voice which carried a powerful weight and insight that he couldn't ignore. His gaze darted around the sky, his mind racing to decipher the origins of this mysterious observer.

However, after being unable to find any trace of them even with his powerful senses, he became even more apprehensive of them. Belial knew that since this person was able to hide from him, they must be in a different space altogether.

To be able to create a gap in space time, this person has clearly reached the...

As he came to a realisation, Belial understood that this was the special presence that his father notified him about a few moments ago.

While the demons in the venue were cluelessly wondering the identity of this mysterious voice, Gareth the most ancient demon present in the venue, rose from his seat and gazed at a particular space in the sky as he addressed.

"Marchosias, it is an honour to have you grace us with your presence at the Hexennacht. I extend my deepest gratitude for taking the time to be a part of this gathering."

With Gareth pointing it out, the demons gathered in the venue, be it Demon Dukes or the ancient Archdukes widened their eyes in surprise as they matched their gaze towards the area where Gareth was looking.

Nevertheless, forget about seeing anything, they couldn't sense even the slightest abnormality there. This fact further deepened the respect and surprise in their eyes.

That said not every demon was like that, there was one demon in particular who had no idea who this new voice was.

"Who the hell is this Marchosias?" raising an eyebrow, Simon gazed at the sky.

"Haha, it's like you are a completely different person. But then it is understandable, let me tell you who Marchosias is. She is one of the Jesters and a direct subordinate of the Demon Lord of Lust, Lady Lilith. Marchosias the Rogue Jester" Oswald explained.

Chapter 692- The End of the Event

Over at the sky, Marchosias' voice echoed through the air.

"Demon Archduke Gareth, you don't have to mind me. I am just here as an observer like all those other Archdukes watching from the skies here. The only reason I interrupted was because I noticed that the new Demon Lord who has been propagating a new system of diplomacy and negotiation suddenly deviate from his own principles".

"He who was emphasising the importance of fairness and impartiality, to take a verdict like that? It raises questions about the integrity of his judgment and whether external influences are at play. Do not worry, I am not challenging the authority of the Demon Lord of Envy or anything, I just want to ascertain what kind of character the new Demon Lord is and whether he truly intends to fulfil his duty of upholding the principles just like he had said or if his decisions would be swayed by partiality."

Marchosias' words highlighted the discrepancy in Belial's verdict causing the crowd to erupt in hushed murmurs. They all observed in anticipation, their attention focused towards Belial as they awaited his response and his subsequent course of action that will decide the fate of the concerned matter at hand.

Having his true intentions exposed, Belial struggled to compose himself as he felt the weight of the moment upon his shoulders. The Fragments of Envy within him stirred once again, urging him to reconsider his stance and reassess the implications of Demon Earl's actions.

He realized that he stood at a crossroads, faced with a choice that could either make or break the foundation he had been laying up until now.

Caught in a state of uncertainty, Belial glanced towards his father, the Demon Archduke Gareth to seek his guidance amidst the brewing confusion.

"I see, Marchosias, you are not wrong. As the Demon Lord tasked with the duty to lead us, he must ensure that all his decisions are impartial and fair towards all the parties. Belial, it is as Marchosias said. The position of Demon Lord carries great responsibility, and it is imperative that you navigate this situation with wisdom and integrity".

"Remember, the path to true leadership lies in upholding justice and fairness, even in the face of challenges and personal biases."

Gareth spoke recognising the importance of the current situation. Now that Marchosias had interfered, even he as one of the oldest Arcdukes here, could only go along with the other party's intention.

Belial's gaze met his father's and a mental transmission was immediately shared between them.

[Listen well Beaili, my son. The personality of Marchosias is not like this. This is a test from her; no from the Demon Lord she serves, a test to see your character and ability. Rise above your own desires, it is good that you want to create a connection with Duke Arctaurus and Duke Famoon. However, you must not let that cloud your decision right now].

Belial nodded his head in agreement.

"It is as you say Marchosias, I did indeed advocate for a council that was impartial and fair in its decision. In this system, everybody is judged equally whether they be a Demon Duke or Demon Earl".

"As the Demon Lord, I will not let my personal sentiments or any external factors influence my decision. I assure you all, I shall reevaluate my stance and reassess the situation with utmost impartiality".

Belial's voice resonated with determination and resolve as he addressed the gathering once again. The weight of his words and the sincerity behind them captured the attention of the audience.

"After careful consideration and reflection, I declare that the accusations against Demon Earl Simon, the winner of the Ritual of the Blades, are deemed as false and unfounded. It is clear that he is not at fault in the situation regarding the Giga Minotaurus and the alleged theft of an artefact".

"As the winner of the Ritual of the Blades, he rightfully possesses the authority over the outcome, including the fate of the defeated subordinate of Duke Arctaurus. It is not for us to question or challenge his prerogative in this regard".

"As for Duke Famoon, this gathering is not the place to settle personal matters. As a Duke, you must take responsibility for your own actions and seek resolution through proper channels. This Hexennacht is a platform for broader discussions that concern our demon society as a whole, and we must maintain our focus on matters of greater significance".

A mixture of surprise and uncertainty rippled through the venue as the demons processed Belial's firm declaration. While some like the two dukes in question were unresigned and unable to take such a judgement, they nonetheless remained silent.

Others acknowledged the validity of his words, recognizing the traditional rules governing the Ritual of the Blades.

"And Earl Avrox, as a subordinate of Demon Archduke Charxros, your intervention in this matter exceeds your jurisdiction. While I respect the influence and authority of your master, it does not grant you the right to meddle in affairs that fall outside your purview."

The crowd, though initially taken aback by Belial's stance, gradually came to terms with the reality of the situation. It was clear that Marchosias' intervention had a profound impact on the unfolding events, shifting the dynamics and ensuring that fairness and adherence to the established rules prevailed.

Even the Demon lord had no choice but to yield in this matter, after all, nobody wanted to get on bad terms with this female lioness who had a very short temper much less with the master she served.

While demons like Arctaurus, Famoon and Avrox harboured lingering doubts and frustrations, they inwardly conceded that the Demon Earl Simon had been granted a stroke of luck.

The unexpected turn of events, coupled with Marchosias' appearance, had seemingly tilted the scales in his favour, protecting him from suffering any repercussions.

They knew that saying or doing anything more would only worsen the situation for them further as such, they could only glare at Simon murderously before turning around to leave.

"Haha, look at them scurry away with their tails tucked between their legs now. It served them right" Oswald laughed mocking the trio.

Just until a few moments ago those three were being so bold and throwing accusations at them. But now with the intervention of Marchosias setting everything right, he felt like a portion of his frustration was released.

"But still who would have guessed that you are acquainted with Marchosias? If you knew her, you should have asked for her assistance sooner. Though the fact that you are acquainted with the Rpgue Jester is in itself quite surprising" Oswald patted Simon's shoulder in a seemingly victorious mood.

"What are you talking about? Didn't I already tell you that I don't know her? Heck, I haven't even seen her before" Simon now released from under the influence of the fragments, spoke while clenching his hands.

The activation of the Fragments of Pride earlier was a reflex response of his body. They activated because the invectives thrown at him had exceeded a certain limit causing the fragments within him to react.

'The influence was far more powerful than before' Simon grit his teeth. He thought that he had gained some control over the First Fragment of pride. However, with the addition of the Second Fragment, he realised from his earlier outburst that he had lost all control.

It was as if the influence of the fragments had magnified by multiple times, consuming and overwhelming him.

"What? You don't know her? Then why is Marchosias helping you?" Oswald who heard Simon's answer, questioned in shock.

"How would I know?" Simon himself wanted to know the answer. Although he was consumed by the fragments and became a completely different person earlier, he was nonetheless still able to sense his surroundings to know what was going on.

Oswald glanced at the sky silently contemplating something inside his head before speaking up.

"Well if we can't figure out why, it's no use worrying over it. In any case, thanks to her we are out of that conundrum".

Simon nodded his head, due to her intervention, now not only does he not have to suffer such a disadvantageous verdict, but he got to keep the Eye of Enigma and was also able to snatch a powerful subordinate like the [A] Rank Giga Minotaurus from Duke Arctaurus.

Looking at the merry Maybell who seemed to be teaching something to the Giga Minotaurs, no matter how you see it, he had profited greatly.

But why was it that he was feeling that something was not right? This feeling that he had no way of describing, was bugging him and stayed at the corner of his mind the whole time.

Simon couldn't shake the lingering sense that he had been swept up in a grander scheme, entangled in something he had no control of.

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The Hexennacht continued, the grand venue remained abuzz even after the drama started by the Demon Earl had ended.

Demons from far and wide, debated, their negotiations spanning a myriad of topics. From resource allocations and strategic alliances to delving into various ancient and lost skills.

From unravelling the mysteries of ancient texts to tracing lineages, deciphering hidden meanings, and uncovering forgotten realms. The Hexennacht was the place where all sorts of information, facts and figures that concerned their whole Demon Continent were discussed.

Throughout all of this, the echoes of applause and awe reverberated through the grand hall.

As the Hexennacht slowly drew to a close and all important topics were done discussing, the audience shifted into a more informal form of gathering where the crowd flaunted their wares, displaying exotic artifacts, enchanted weapons, and rare treasures they bought forth from the Auction.

Chapter 693- The End Of The Event (2)

The Auction of the damned held by the merchant Grimvul came only once in one hundred and one years and was guaranteed to have brilliant items and treasures up for sale.

As such, there was no way these demons would miss their chance to flaunt their riches to their rivals, factions and enemies. In a way, acquiring treasure from the auction of the damned where all the demons fought tooth and nail for the items, was a sign of individual strength and status.

So by flashing the artefacts you got hold of not only are you indirectly showcasing your authority, but you are also making the ones that bid the item against you yet were unable to win against you, to burn in jealousy.

Thus accomplishing two goals at once.

In the demon society where one's rank and standing represented everything, showing off one's wealth like this was ingrained in them. And so, with the demons bragging about their haul, the enticing allure of power and wealth permeated the air, drawing in more and more demons who eagerly sought to enhance their own standing and prestige.

That said, not all demons were allowed to partake in this display of wealth. Nobles like Demon Earls were excluded from it and even some demon marquesses weren't allowed in.

From the point of view of these high ranking demons, whatever artefacts these demons managed to get hold of from the auction, were either items that held no interest to the high ranking demons or were trash that the merchant masked off as items.

Just like birds who feed on the tiny bits of food stuck between the teeth of a crocodile whatever haul these demons had was like scraps for the demon Dukes.

Then there were also demons like Famoon who even while being a high ranking duke, bid for all the trash items and got scammed by the merchant.

When he revealed his haul to other high ranking demons, they couldn't help but burst into laughter and ridicule him. Famoon, with his naive and impulsive actions, became the laughingstock of the demon realm.

"Haha, look at him still defending the value of those garbage items and refusing to admit that he had fallen victim to the schemes of the damned merchant. Good, good, keep it up. It would be even better if he consumed those items in his self denial"..

Then there were also demons like Oswald and Simon who had no interest in this kind of proceedings. The former laughed holding his belly as he saw the miserable expression of the duke.

The two of them stood in a corner of the venue, watching the subordinates of the Demon lord and the Demon Archdukes from his faction get busy to build a large multitudinal spatial gate.

"I guess this it. The Hexennacht is coming to a close. It was great meeting with you my friend" Oswald spoke with a smile.

"Yeah, it has been an eventful Hexennacht" Simon replied with a tinge of gratitude in his voice.

"Thanks for your aid up until now. I will return this favour in the future if there is ever any opportunity".

This glutton who held peculiar ideals had really been a great help. He had not only stuck with him during the numerous perilous situations of this event, their plan had also helped him a great deal. Simon felt indebted to him.

"Haha, what are you saying? There is no need for you to thank me, I was just helping my friend. You are making it sound so distant by saying all that. If anything, it has been a pleasure, the encounters have been nothing short of entertaining to say the least. Who would have thought that such a cunning and audacious demon like yourself would cross my path".

Oswald chuckled with a hint of mischief.

With the Demon Archduke personally lending their aid, it didn't take long to set up the huge multitudinal spatial gate. As it started to hum with pulsating energy, it was the cue for all the demons that their exit had been prepared.

All eyes focused towards the host of the event. Now that the purpose of the Hexennacht was over, the Demon Lord of Envy Belial addressed the crowd and officially brought the event to a close.

And so, as the curtain fell on the Hexennacht, demons dispersed to their realms, bidding farewell to the demons and the connection they made.

Some returned with triumph, others with a mix of disappointment at the outcome of the grand meeting. They each carried with them the lingering echoes of the unresolved mysteries and unspoken truths that had unfolded within its hallowed halls.

Regardless of the varying perspectives, there was no denying that one name in particular had left an indelible mark on the demon society. The name of the Demon Earl Simon lingered in the minds of all who had witnessed his audacious actions.

Whether seen as a heroic trailblazer or a reckless provocateur, his name would forever be associated with the audacious spirit that defined the Hexennacht, the demons who dared to challenge the norms of their society.

His ability to win the Ritual of the Blades, claim a coveted territory, and even snatch a powerful subordinate spread like wildfire among the demon community.

Even those who might have initially dismissed him as an upstart or a fortunate opportunist could not deny the impact of his actions. But while his actions might have earned him admiration and respect from some, there were also others who viewed him with caution and apprehension.

Simon felt a couple of piercing stares filled with anger, frustration and strong murderous intent bore into his back as he walked towards the spatial gate.

Needless to say, it was from the two Dukes who looked at him as if he was a thorn in their side, an obstacle that they must remove at any cost.

From the looks they were giving him, it was not hard to tell that today's matter wouldn't rest here. They will surely retaliate against him for today's loss in the future.

While their gazes might be laced with malignance, it was nevertheless not enough to deter Simon. Since the moment he had arrived at the Hexennacht, he was determined to forge his own fate even while knowing that it would draw other's ire on him.

So it could be said that he was prepared for the worst. Determination coursed through his veins, he was prepared for the consequences of his actions, ready to face the consequences and confront any adversaries that stood in his way.

The Hexennacht instead of deterring him, became the catalyst that renewed his resolve and sense of purpose.

"My friend, you must remain careful from now on. If the opportunity arises let us meet again. My dungeon is located in the Devouring Chasms at the far west from here" Oswald spoke a few friendly words before diving inside the spatial gate.

His subordinate Aishsa, bowed towards him before following behind her master.

'Devouring Chasms huh' Simon repeated those words inside his mind, carving it into his memory.

"Let us leave too" Simon turned towards his subordinates and spoke. With their job done here, it was time they headed back for their home.

The spatial gate shimmered before them, beckoning them forward. Just as Simon was about to disappear inside the gate, he cast one last glance over his shoulders at these hallowed halls.

Coincidentally or intentionally, his gaze met with his adversaries. Flashing them a final smirk, he stepped into the spatial gate, leaving behind the Hexennacht.

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Over at the sky, watching Simon and his entourage leave from her space time gap, was a woman donned in a military style dress. She wore a long overcoat above and had half of her face hidden with an angry mask.

"Heh, that bold attitude and that unwavering confidence is just like a raging fire. It is very much to my liking. Very interesting" Taking a Her appearance along with her sharp aura, made her seem quite fierce. She was none other than the Marchosias, the Rogue Jester.

"Heh, that bold attitude and that unwavering confidence is just like a raging fire. It is very much to my liking. Very interesting" Taking a puff out of the cigar in her mouth, she muttered—

"This is quite a fortuitous turn of events. I only attended the event because I had nothing else to do and partly because I wanted to see for myself the capability of the demon who was chosen by the Fragments of Envy. But who would have thought that fate would have something else to show me".

Marchosias mused to herself, a glimmer of intrigue dancing in her eyes. The Demon Earl who coerced the entire Hexennacht into submission had caught her interest.

"A power that can suppress those far above his rank and a nature that refuses to bow down to others. Demon Earl Simon, you definitely possess a power that surpasses what meets the eye".

A contemplative expression crossed Marchosias's face. She had tried to use her Analysis skill on the demon; however, to her surprise, it failed.

What was surprising was that it wasn't blocked, the skill simply didn't work on him. Usually, that would only happen if the other party was higher levelled than her or possessed something that was able to cancel her probing skill.

It wasn't difficult to imagine which of the above two cases was at play here.

"There is definitely a great secret hidden within him, a vast reservoir of untapped strength that even I couldn't see through. Though for a second there, I felt like something within that Demon Earl resonated with the [Sovereignty] that I received from my lady".

There were slight traces of confusion in those eyes that were covered by her mask.

Chapter 694- Grimvul Vs Asmodeus

"I must report this to my master," Marchosias concluded, her voice filled with a mix of curiosity and excitement.

"She will undoubtedly find this information intriguing".

Marchosias looked at the spatial gate for the last time, before silently making her exit.

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Inside an unknown realm, powerful shockwaves containing an extremely destructive might rocked the place.

BOOM... BOOM... BOOOOMM... deafening explosive sounds echoed everywhere at an uneven intervals. The floor here was like a giant chessboard, with each square perfectly placed and alternating between black and white.

The walls here were made of peculiar material and had a high ceiling. However, all of it was in a total mess with broken splinters, clouds of dust and cracks running everywhere.

Sounds of outbursts and bellowing roars came from the distance, at the same moment a figure could be seen hurriedly treading through the place as if running away.

The figure had the head of a goat that was half skeletal and half bizarre. They had pale purple skin, long twisting horns, razor sharp teeth and peculiar crossed shaped eyes with ring patterns that made them appear even more bizarre.

The figure held a weird staff made of bones in their hands and donned a robe that covered their withered body. Who could this figure be other than Grimvul?

The merchant of the damned, a cunning and deceitful creature with command over the necromancy magic and powerful undead beings under him, was at his moment running away. Their face twisted in a mixture of fear and desperation, as they darted through the labyrinthine passageways.

Sounds of their footsteps echoed against the cold hard stone of the floor. As Grimvul continued to run, the shockwaves started intensifying and a formidable pressure that contained an intense rage churned like a tidal wave intending to capsize everything in its wake.

"You cannot run away from me Grimvul" At this moment, the space around Grimvul violently distorted creating a spatial portal and a silhouette stepped out from it.

Wearing a dignified three piece suit, a demon noble with ash grey hair and piercing white hair, stood in front of the Merchant. Their imposing presence was enough to even drown out the sounds of battle and shockwaves coming from the distance.

"H-How are you here? The Death Knights and Lich Lords should be engaging you right now" Grimvul spoke in fear and trepidation but soon realised that the figure in front of him was just another Astral projection. The real person was still fighting his army of undead.

"Dammit... Asmodeus" the merchant roared in annoyance and waved his staff. Immediately, dark deathly light was released from it in droves quickly manifesting a giant skeletal hand that emitted an aura of death in front of him.

"Die Asmodeus.. [Grip of Death]".. roaring like a wounded beast, Grimvul willed the giant skeleton hand forward.

"You forget your place" Facing that attack head on, the demon named Asmodeus simply tapped his shillelagh on the floor once causing a ripple to spread through the space. When the giant skeletal hand came in contact with that ripple, it crumbled apart causing a ripple to spread through the space. When the giant skeletal hand came in contact with that ripple, it crumbled apart immediately.

"Tch... ordinary means will not work even at your projection I see. In that case... [Death Infusion]-[Wall of Skeletons]"

Grimvul conjured another necromancy magic, transforming the entire floor into a field of skeletons. The skeletons undulated like waves before pouring out of the ground and trapping Asmodeus inside it.

"Have a taste of that. Inside the wall of skeletons, the death energy becomes very rich, every skeleton and every second you spend trapped in there will multiply the life force that is being depleted from you. Even if you are just an astral projection, you will rot in there forever" Grimvul cursed.

"Dammit I spent too much time tangling with a projection. I must reach the control room before the main body gets here".

The merchant just took a few steps forward when the voice of the projection of Asmodeus trapped within the wall of skeleton, sounded out.

"Even if you stop my Astral Projection I will still destroy you now that I have found you with my real body. Mark my words Grimvul, you will not escape from your sin. Your undead army will not be able to protect you".

Grimvul grit his teeth and waved his staff. Immediately, the wall of skeletons started sinking inside the floor, completely trapping the projection.

"As if I will die here" The merchant started running. As he raced through the corridors every roar and explosion that sounded out pounded in his chest, like a drum. It constantly reminded him of the imminent threat that pursued him.

Grimvul knew that even the group of Death Knights and Lich Lords will not be able to stop Asmodeus for long. As one of the oldest Demon Archdukes out there, Asmodeus' power and tenacity was truly legendary and praiseworthy. The undead army was just an annoying obstacle in his path.

"As long as I can reach the control room, I can navigate the Void Weaver and run away". Grimvul understood that escaping Asmodeus' wrath would not be an easy feat nevertheless, he continued to run.

As he neared the control room, a sense of urgency propelled Grimvul forward. He pushed open the heavy iron doors, revealing a vast chamber filled with various arcane machinery and pulsating magical energies.

Without wasting a moment, Grimvul rushed towards the central console, his bony fingers dancing across the intricate runes and sigils embedded within it. He activated the various mechanisms, each one designed to fortify his vessel, the ship they were in, the Void Weaver.

Just as he completed the final preparations, a thunderous boom reverberated through the chamber followed by the cold, icy words of Asmodeus.

"I told you, you are not going anywhere" A cold, frigid voice sounded out and to Grimvul's fear, the tall figure of Asmodeus materialized before him, their presence dominating the room.

With a wave of his hand, Asmodeus unleashed a wave of destructive energy, obliterating everything in its path. The walls crumbled, machinery shattered, and sparks flew around everywhere in a symphony of destruction.

The sheer force of Asmodeus' arrival sent shockwaves rippling through the chamber, rattling the very foundations of Grimvul's spaceship, the Void Weaver.

The merchant watched in terror as brownish-black energy surrounded Asmodeus, tendrils of erosion magic swirling around him like a sinister vortex. It was a power that corroded everything that it came in contact with, an overwhelming force that instilled fear in even the bravest of souls.

Realization dawned on Grimvul's face, his skeletal features contorting with a mix of dread and desperation. The projection of Asmodeus he had encountered earlier was merely a fraction of the demon Archduke's true power. The actual body of Asmodeus had arrived.

"Give up and quietly answer my questions" Asmodeus spoke, there was no emotions in those eyes of his, only cold indifference.

"I already gave you the answer. I had no hand in that being's death. I have no idea who they were" Grimvul's skeletal face contorted into a snarl of defiance as he faced the overwhelming power of Asmodeus.

He refused to succumb without a fight, knowing that his life hung in the balance. With a flick of his staff, he summoned forth ten spectral skulls, each emanating a malevolent aura.

The skulls circled around Grimvul, their empty eye sockets glowing with deathly energy. With a wave of his hand, he commanded the skulls to launch themselves at Asmodeus, unleashing a barrage of necromancy magic.

Dark flames erupted from the skulls, hurtling towards the Demon Archduke with relentless determination. However, Asmodeus was undeterred by Grimvul's assault.

The latter simply created a sphere around him using their overwhelming mastery of magic. Every attack that collided with the barrier, got dissipating into nothingness.

A faint smirk tugged at the corner of Asmodeus' lips, he snapped his finger and the sphere of erosion magic expanded, disintegrating the skulls circling around him.

Seeing that his direct assaults were proving ineffective, Grimvul shifted his tactics. He tapped into his mastery of necromancy, weaving intricate patterns in the air with his staff. Shadows twisted and coiled around him, forming a web of darkness that stretched endlessly, entrapping both Asmodeus and him inside it.

"This is the [Tomb of the Dead], my [Domain Release]. Everything that enters this domain is negatively affected by the death energy and will be transformed into undead quickly. Asmodeus since you want to kill me, I will drag you with me"

Grimvul spoke, there was a hint of desperation and determination in his voice as he unleashed his Domain Release, the [Tomb of the Dead].

The surrounding area transformed into a bleak and desolate permeating the air and weighing heavily on the hearts of those trapped inside. The ground beneath their feet cracked and landscape, shrouded in an eerie darkness. A bone-chilling wind swept through the air, carrying with it the whispers of lost souls.

Within Grimvul's domain, the death energy became palpable, permeating the air and weighing heavily on the hearts of those trapped inside. The ground beneath their feet cracked and crumbled, revealing countless skeletal remains rising from the depths.

The skeletons clawed their way out of the ground, forming an army of endless undead, ready to obey Grimvul's every command. Their hollow eye sockets gleamed with a malevolent light as they advanced, their steps echoing with the sound of impending doom.

Grimvul's skeletal face contorted into a wicked grin as he watched his army of undead surge forth from the ground, one powerful skeleton after another emerging in an endless fashion.

Skeleton dragons spread their bony wings, exhaling clouds of dark mist. Skeleton gryphons swooped down from the sky, their razor-sharp claws ready to tear into their prey. Wraiths materialized, their ethereal forms flickering with malicious intent.

Tormented stalkers and butchers emerged from the depths, their menacing presence instilling fear in those who beheld them.

Chapter 695- Oswell's Secret

"Do you see now, Asmodeus? No matter how many skeletons you destroy, they will rise again. This domain ensures their eternal return. You will be consumed by the death energy of the dead, trapped in this domain for all eternity."

Grimvul revelled in his arrogance, believing that his undead horde would overwhelm Asmodeus, turning the Demon Archduke into one of their own.

"Die here, Asmodeus! Be swarmed by the relentless onslaught of my skeletons. You shall become one of them, forever trapped in my cursed domain!".

The entire place rumbled with the assaults of the undead. Yet facing an endless swarm of undead, the Ancient Archduke remained composed nonetheless.

With a wave of his hand, Asmodeus unleashed a devastating surge of energy, obliterating the first wave of skeletons with his ability that can Erode everything. However, Grimvul's words proved true as more and more skeletons rose from the ground, stepping on the remains of their fallen comrades.

"ShiShiShi... Now that I have released my domain, your efforts are in vain. No matter what you do, you cannot defeat them. You should be starting to feel the negative death energy invading your body by now. Soon your body will start rotting and you will become another one of my pawns. Embrace your fate"

Grimvul's laughter echoed through the domain, mocking and taunting. But Asmodeus did not stop, his gaze remained unwavering as he unleashed his powerful might, a cataclysmic display of destruction.

The ground trembled, fissures splitting the landscape as torrents of decay magic erupted from his being. Each swing of his hand shattered the skeletons, their bones reduced to dust.

However, as Asmodeus continued to crush the endless army of undead, the negative death energy they held, started to have some effects on him. His body began to show signs of transformation, slowly succumbing to the curse of the undead.

Asmodeus' once unwavering stance was slowly starting to falter.

Seeing this, the merchant started laughing at his perceived victory, his laughter echoing through the domain like a dissonant symphony.

"Your arrogance blinded you Asmodeus. This is just the beginning, the more you destroy the undead, the more you are exposed to their curse of the undead. Soon your body will completely be turned into an undead and you will become one of them".

Even though his body was slowly succumbing to the effects of the negative death energy, Asmodeus still remained resolute.

"So this is the Death energy huh, I must say it is quite powerful. However, your attainment and mastery over it is just outright amateurish and unrefined".

The Demon Archduke, despite his deteriorating form, retained a sense of composure as he acknowledged Grimvul's strength and the annoying nature of the death energy.

He paused for a moment, allowing the silence to hang in the air, before continuing "You may have attained a level where you are able to create a domain using it, but you failed to harness the true potential of the death energy".

Grimvul's eyes widened in confusion and disbelief at those words "What do you mean? you are on the verge of turning into one of my undead minions. yet you dare speak such nonsense even at this time?"

Asmodeus did not say much, a smirk hung on his lips, a glimmer of superiority in his eyes. With a wave of his hand, he evoked the powerful erosion magic of his. It erupted out of his body in droves and quickly started intertwining around him.

This caused the invading death energy within his body to come to a sudden halt before slowly getting corroded by his powerful magic.

With the death energy gone, the transformation stopped and all of his wounds swiftly got restored in front of Grimvul's distraught eyes. But that was not all...

"You see, true mastery lies in understanding the intricacies of one's own abilities. Allow me to demonstrate".

As he said that, Asmodeus created a small film around him using the erosion magic of his, further isolating the death energy filled in this domain from his body.

After that he extended his hands and the erosion magic surged forth, obliterating the skeletal horde in its path. The ground quaked beneath his feet as the very fabric of the domain trembled under the weight of his power.

Skeletal Dragons crumbled to dust, wraiths dissipated into thin air, and tormented stalkers were reduced to mere shadows. The once overwhelming swarm of skeletons dwindled, their numbers diminishing with each devastating strike.

Seeing this overwhelming display of power, Grimvul's eyes wavered, his confidence beginning to falter as the reality of his defeat set in.

He was completely defeated, no he never stood a chance. Having been shown that disparity, Grimvul had no choice but to accept the Even after releasing his domain and the negative death energy filling the place, Asmodeus had somehow found a way to repel the death energy and completely nullify the effects of his domain.

He was completely defeated, no he never stood a chance. Having been shown that disparity, Grimvul had no choice but to accept the reality

After obliterating another swarm of undead in a spectacular display of destruction with his Erosion magic, Asmodeus settled his gaze onto the Merchant of the Damned.

"Now then, it's time I end this farce. You will tell me everything you know..."..

"W-Wait, I give up. I already told you everything, please let me go" Grimvul plead; however, the Demon Archduke did not stop.

"Since you are planning to use this messed up spaceship to run away. Let me shatter this last hope of yours— Domain Release... [World of Ruination]".

As the last of his words fell, the merchant of the damned, Grimvul, stood before Asmodeus, his skeletal form trembling with fear and realization. The grandiose illusion of victory shattered, leaving him exposed and vulnerable.

At that moment, Grimvul understood the depths of his own arrogance and the true extent of Asmodeus' power...

Dungeon Laplace, White Palace, Main Hall...

"You are back" As soon as Simon and the others teleported, Irene appeared there to greet them.

"Took you long enough. Didn't you say it would only take you a day or two? However, you have been gone for more than two weeks. You made everyone worried once again".

Simon glanced at the icy beauty in front of him who always wore a cold emotionless mask to hide her feelings and sighed in relief. He was back home once again.

"Yeah, sorry about that. Due to certain matters, I had to change the plan. I'll tell you all about it later" Simon spoke flopping down on the couch.

He was tired, attending the Hexennacht, opposing the high ranking dukes, enduring the bloodline suppression and the Fragments of Pride going out of control had mentally and physically drained him quite a bit.

And so, to relax his nerves and digest all the information he had gathered from this outing, Simon headed for the bath.

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"Now then, tell me what you wanted to say" Once inside the bath, Simon dipped his body inside the warm water as he lazily asked the Lumynar who also enjoying the pleasures of the hot water bath while casually floating in the water in its miniature form.

One of Simon's goals for coming to the bath was to relax while the other was Prime who wanted to discuss something with him.

"Who was that lady who came to greet you?" Prime asked its body fluctuating with a multicolour light.

"You mean Irene? What about her?"...

"Nothing, I just felt like she could see me even though I was using my powers to hide inside your pocket" Prime murmured.

"My guess is that Irene was already aware of your presence the moment you arrived here. She is the most powerful being in my dungeon after all. Anyways, the reason why you asked me to bring you to a secluded area where nobody would come is not to ask about Irene did you? Spill it out already"

Simon glanced at Prime and asked. A serious atmosphere descended onto the place.

"I couldn't tell you before, but I have been meaning to tell you. Simon, you shouldn't concern yourself with that person?" Prime stated.

Just when Simon made an expression that said who was he talking about, the Lumynar clarified. "I'm talking about that demon you were so friendly with".

"You mean Oswald? Although that guy might be a little peculiar, I did not sense any ill will from him" Simon frowned.

Oswald was someone who he was starting to look in a different light than the other demons. The latter had also helped him a lot in the Hexennacht. Heck if not for the latter, Simon wouldn't be able to come up with the plan to manipulate the proceedings and lead towards the Ritual of the Blades.

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"That demon carries a destiny that is not any less twisted than Simon was indebted to him and so being said that he had to stay away from Oswald, how could Simon just accept it without any solid reason.

That said, Prime didn't just say all that on a whim, he had his reason why.

"That demon carries a destiny that is not any less twisted than yours. I'm telling you now, but the more you involve yourself with him, the more tangled your own path will become. That brat is not just any demon, but one who possesses the Fragments of Gluttony".

"What?!" The moment Prime said that, Simon's eyes opened wide in surprise. The realization hit him like a thunderbolt, causing his mind to race back to the moment they had first met.

Memories flashed before his eyes, and he could distinctly recall the peculiarities in Oswald's behaviour. This fellow who was overly enthusiastic when it came to food and who carried ideals that was far different from all the other demons Simon had met.

Chapter 696- How Level Up Works

The Fragments of Gluttony... to think that Oswald was the demon who was chosen by the fragments. Although surprising, it also made sense—the inexplicable aura that surrounded Oswald, the authority and reputation he held over all the demons, his [S] rank dungeon and subordinates.

Everything made sense now, the Fragments of Gluttony was what made Oswald special just like how the Fragments of Pride in him did.

As the shock subsided, a mix of curiosity and apprehension filled Simon's thoughts. What did it mean to be chosen by the Fragments? Didn't it mean that Oswald too was going to stand at the pinnacle of all demons in the future and rule as one of the demon Lords, the Demon Lord of Gluttony.

In a situation where Simon needed to keep the fragments concealed and a secret from others, being near a future Demon Lord is the last thing he needed to do right now.

However, he was already indebted to Oswald for their help in the Hexennacht and not repaying this favour would leave a bad aftertaste in his mouth.

Simon's mind raced, weighing the potential risks and rewards of continuing his association with Oswald. He was torn between the debt of gratitude he felt towards Oswald and the ominous warning Prime had given him.

Deep in thought, Simon contemplated his path ahead. The Fragments of Gluttony had added a layer of complexity to his involvement with Oswald.

"Wait a minute, was he being nice and friendly to me because he realised that I had the Fragments of Pride all along? Was it during the moment when the Fragments of Pride went out of control? No, that isn't either, Oswald was trying to befriend me since before the Hexennacht."...

"Although I cannot be certain, I believe that demon named Oswald who possesses the Fragments of Gluttony, felt something when the Fragments within you activated" Prime added.

"Well even if he was able to sense the fragments within you, you also now know about his secret. So pros and cons you know".

"It doesn't feel like that to me" Simon massaged his temples, feeling a headache coming. Now on top of worrying about the growing influence of the Adventurer's Association, the angels and the retaliation of the high ranking dukes, he now also have to worry about the possible risk of the existence of the Fragments of Pride within him being leaked.

Although from the personality of Oswald that he was able to understand in these past couple of days, the possibility of something like that happening is low. However, one couldn't discount it completely, especially when something like the Fragments are involved.

Be that may, in the end it doesn't change the fact that he and the dungeon he created needs to grow stronger as soon as possible.

The times are changing too fast and if he doesn't keep up, he would be swept up by the waves. The sight of the once grand and majestic dungeon in ruins that he had seen in his vision, Simon didn't want his dungeon Laplace to go down the same path.

As such, what he needed to do, did not change whether or not Oswald knew about his secret. It was so from the start.

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After a good long bath, Simon arrived at the Main Hall, feeling all refreshed. Once he walked in, all the subordinates who had gathered in wait for him, greeted him.

After more than two years Simon had long fit himself in the role as their leader, he didn't have that uneasy feeling while receiving their fealty and devotion any longer.

After Simon sat down in the main seat, Annette who was waiting for him, calmly served him a cup of tea.

"I'm back everyone" Simon spoke looking at all his subordinates.

Bea: "Welcome back Master we have been waiting for you"...

Cecilia: "Big Brother, you are not hurt are you?"..

Alice: "Master-Master... tell us about your journey. How was the auction? How was the outside world? Theodore told us you all also went to some other event after that?"..

Bea: "It's not fair, that only they got to go with you"...

Theodore: "Hehe".

"Eh?!" Simon who just sat down, was flustered by the sudden bombardment of all kinds of questions.

The Main hall quickly became boisterous and echoed with the sounds of hullabaloo from all of Simon's subordinates.

While the silent ones like Emma and Bianca directed their heated gaze at him, the composed ones like Irene and Annette smiled in one"...

"And that's what happened. I had to go to the Hexennacht" Simon amusement.

"Calm down everyone, I will answer all of your questions one by one"...

"And that's what happened. I had to go to the Hexennacht" Simon explained the events that happened from the moment he stepped into that gate. On that note, Simon was made aware that the teleport gate that appeared on the ceiling of the Main Floor, disappeared right after he went in.

"I get that you had to attend the Hexennacht to claim the Ghastly Winding Forest, it was unavoidable. However, it doesn't change the fact that it was still dangerous?".

Be it the auction or the Hexennacht, the place was oozing with high ranking demons. The mightiest of demons with power to destroy an entire country. Not to mention there were also the ancient Demon Archdukes and the Demon Lord there.

It was only natural for Irene and his subordinates to be concerned. Even if he had gotten stronger, it wasn't to the point where he can look down on enemies like them. It was a stroke of fortune that things worked out the way they were.

"I understand that, but as the dungeon master of this place and your master, I cannot just let the fate of the territory we are in to fall in the hands of some random demon. In the first place, I wouldn't have stood in front of all the demons if I didn't have any plan".

"Although everything did not go all according to plan, I still managed to claim the Ghastly Winding Forest in the end" It might not have been a smooth sailing, but Simon was able to accomplish the goal he went to attend the Hexennacht for.

"This plan was from that demon right?" Since Simon told them about the events with the twins chipping in from time to time, Irene knew about Oswell and how it was his plan. Though that said, the question still remained as to why the other party helped him.

"Although I will not pry into this matter, but you need to be careful".

Simon nodded at Irene's words. The Demon Nobles are the incarnation of desires and ambition. They cannot be trusted blindly, as their motivations can often be veiled behind a facade of friendship or assistance.

Oswell's plan may have worked in his favour this time, but it is important to remain vigilant and cautious in his dealings with him.

"Right, since we are on the topic, there is someone I would like all of you to meet"...

When Simon mentioned till here, Prime jumped on top of the table and appeared in front of everyone.

The moment he appeared, the hall turned lively once again as all eyes fell upon him.

"Woah~ who is this little fellow? Its body is so shiny and radiant"...

"It's so small and cute"...

"It may look cute, but its attitude is not cute at all".

Some threw curious and amused glances at hi, while others tried to assert that he was just cute on the outside.

Being observed like he was a monkey in a circus, Prime was unable to take it. The light coming out of its body immediately turned red and it stomped on the ground expressing its frustration.

"Who are you calling cute and tiny huh? I'm prime and I'm a lumynar an extremely intelligent race who can freely control their size. Hmph, I can become as big as a mountain if I want to. And although it may not look like it, I'm older than you all, so you should all call me Elder Prime".

Prime spat silencing the crowd. Though this silence didn't last long before it was broken by the raucous crowd once again.

"Ohh!! It can speak"...

"Look at it jumping around, it looks so adorable"..

"It has quite the temper. How is it adorable?"..

"I told you all to call me Elder Prime. Did you all even listen to me?!".

While the crowd was being raucous with the appearance of Prime, over on one side Irene carefully glanced at the Lumynar and commented.

"A highly civilised and ancient race that had nearly gone extinct due to their own self negligence. I don't know if I should be surprised that you bought a Lumynar or that it was listed for the auction" Irene shook her head, lost for words.

"is that guy really that geat?" Simon couldn't help but ask.

"You bought him without knowing anything?"...

"I told you before, didn't I? Prime was the one who initiated a conversation with me. Thanks to that guy instigating me, I had no choice but to buy him" Simon spoke, his tone a little bitter from the fact that he had to go over his limit and buy the Lumynar for 500,000,000 DP.

That amount was a great chunk of his income and usually, it would have taken his dungeon many many months to stock up that amount. If not because the previous invasion had rewarded him with a large number of DP, he wouldn't have been able to get Prime in the auction.

Chapter 697- How Level Up Works (2)

"Well, with 500,000,000 Dp you might have been able to put them to good use and expand your dungeon even more. It would not have slowed down the dungeon's progress. However, compared to the value of a Lumynar, it's nothing. You shouldn't think too much about it."

"Just throw him on the [Workshop] where Wisp is and see the magic. Soon you will be rejoicing that you bought him".

With Irene praising Prime that much, Simon had nothing much to say other than "I hope that is the case".

"By the way, what happened to your left eye?"

Amidst their discussion, Irene changed the topic to Simon's left eye with looked completely mismatched with his right. His left eye was now completely golden with gears like unique patterns in them. This was different from his right which was crimson with black sclera.

Simon covered his left eye with his palm and explained "It is the Celestial Ocularis. During the Hexennacht, I had the opportunity to stumble upon it and it chose me as its master. Right now, I still do not know what it does or why it chose me as its master. However, I will slowly find out about it".

With a tinge of anticipation, Simon glanced at Prime who was flopping on the table busily arguing with the Valkyries and the vampire twins.

"Celestial Ocularis huh" Irene studied Simon's left eye before muttering in a voice that only she could hear.

"To be chosen by one of the things that existed since the dawn of time, it looks like the Fragments within you have awakened and is slowly altering the course of your destiny".

"Did you say something?" Simon who was lost in his thoughts thinking about the peculiar vision he had when acquiring the eye, turned towards Irene hearing her mutter something.

"Possessing an eye like that is an indication of great potential and destiny. From now on you must do your best to learn the secret hidden within your left eye, as you train to get stronger side by side. Quickly make its abilities your own" Irene smiled, encouraging him with her words.

"Yeah, the eye will constantly serve as the reminder of the path I chose. No matter what happens, I will grow stronger and protect this dungeon" With determination flashing in his eyes, Simon resolved.

Even though the auction and the Hexennacht was laden with dangers this time, it was nevertheless these very factors that became the fuel for his motivation that burned like a raging fire inside him propelling him forward.

The complacent feeling that he had after reaching the rank of Demon Earl and becoming one of the true demon nobles, was gone.

The once powerful rank of Demon Earl, Simon was no longer satisfied with it. He wanted to climb higher and higher, Demon Marquess, Demon Duke and then there was the Ancient Demon Archdukes who looked down at the world from their lofty position.

They were the pinnacle a demon noble could only hope and yearn to reach. These legendary beings, with their unmatched might and dominion, held the power to shape the very fabric of the demon world.

However... "Even higher" Simon wanted to reach even higher...

Belial, the Demon Lord of Envy whose prestige, authority, and power towered over all the other demons present in the venue. That guy not only had the ability to make his own decisions, but also decide the fate of other demons.

The way his words became the absolute verdict that no demon in the venue dared to disobey, even going as far as to suppress their frustration and unwillingness and relent to his decree. It was still fresh in Simon's mind.

Someone who could do anything that they want, someone with the power to forge their own fate. The very notion of reaching such heights stirred a burning ambition within him, fueling his desire to transcend the limits of his current rank.

As a Demon Earl, Simon had tasted the fruits of influence and authority, but he yearned for more. The Hexennacht and the events surrounding it had opened his eyes to the vastness of the Demon Continent and the potential that lay beyond his current station.

He realized that he had the path to extraordinary laid out for him since the beginning and was not limited to the ranks of Demon Marquess or Demon Duke, like the rest of the demons and extended even further—to the realm of the Ancient Demon Archdukes.

Yet, even the Ancient Demon Archdukes were not the ultimate pinnacle in Simon's eyes. He aspired to ascend even higher, to stand on equal footing with a Demon Lord himself, and stand at the true pinnacle of all beings.

Belial had shown him a tiny portion, a part of what it means to be a Demon Lord and the power that comes with it.

Being a Demon, an incarnation of desires, how could Simon not covet it? The allure of unparalleled power and authority was simply too irresistible even for Simon.

In a sense he had truly accepted his lineage and who he was. Though that said, there were hundreds of thousands of demons, if not even more who held the lofty ideals of becoming a Demon Lord.

However, all of this was just a pipe dream for them. Heck, even the beings who were closest to becoming a Demon Lord, the Demon Archdukes were helpless in this matter and can only dejectedly snuff away this dream of theirs which would always remain a dream.

So one could imagine what was it for the rest of the demons who were bound by their bloodlines. Forget about becoming a demon lord, just reaching the next rank might turn out to be impossible for most of the demons.

For them, simply advancing to the next rank was a daunting challenge. The bloodlines they inherited dictated their power and limitations, acting as a restrictive force on their aspirations.

The prospect of ascending to the ranks of Demon Marquess or Demon Duke seemed like an impossible feat, a distant mirage forever out of reach. It was a harsh reality that forced many demons to resign themselves to their predetermined roles and accept their place in the hierarchical structure.

So it was impudent no outright blasphemy for a mere Demon Earl to even have such thoughts. However, Simon was probably one of the few exceptions or the only one in this world who was not bound by this unwritten law of Althaea.

That is to say, as long as he had the [Main Menu] with him and strived to become stronger, he could ignore the bloodline limits that every being in this world was shackled to.

The [Main Menu] granted him the freedom to challenge the established order, to break the chains of convention, and to forge his own path. But even with this extraordinary tool at his disposal, Simon understood that becoming a Demon Lord was no ordinary feat.

It was a realm that transcended the boundaries of normal means. After all, to become the demon lord, one needed to be chosen by the fragments. These extraordinary and divine things that was still very much a mystery to him.

What were they, their purpose, origin and what secret they held, Simon did not know. But what he did know was that only the demons who possessed these Fragments, could become a Demon Lord.

This was something that Simon had learned after watching Belial closely. The latter was chosen by the Fragments of Envy and simply by being chosen by the fragments, he became the Demon Lord.

Simon recalled the words Gareth said in the last Walpurgis. The Demon Archduke had said that his son Belial was chosen by the Fragments of Envy thus filling the position as the new Demon Lord of Envy.

Simon might not know what was the exact nature and criteria for becoming a Demon Lord, but it was generally believed that it involves surpassing the boundaries of one's bloodline and rank.

It requires attaining a level of power, skill, and influence that sets the individual apart from their peers. That is to say, he who was chosen by the Fragments of Pride, had the potential to become the future Demon Lord.

It is for this reason that Simon believed that the path to the true pinnacle was already laid for him. All that was needed was for him to walk on it.

In the next few days, Simon devoted himself to training and upgrading his dungeon. Since becoming the Demon Earl ten months ago and reaching his current level which was level 536, his progress seemed to have come to a still.

He was so busy training his existing and acquiring new skills that he had no time to increase his level. However, to become stronger a balance of all of these things is required. And so, to walk the path of the strong, Simon focused on increasing his level.

In the world of Althaea, the general way of increasing one's level is by fighting a strong opponent. However, that said just defeating any opponent will not lead to a level up. One needed to continuously push their body beyond its limits and defeat strong enemies to gather enough experience points to level up.

Every being in Althaea, whether weak or strong, possesses a certain level of mystical energy within them. When they die, the latent energy within them, which Simon likes to refer to as experience points to keep things simple, disperses into the surrounding environment.

This energy is a manifestation of their power, life force, and essence.

Chapter 698- How Level Up Works (3)

So when one defeats their opponent this energy gets transferred into the body of the one that came out as the victor thus assimilating with them and becoming the fuel for their own growth.

For Simon, each victory against a powerful adversary meant absorbing their experience points, enabling him to accumulate the necessary energy to level up. The transfer of this mystical energy was a mystical process, with the defeated foe's power becoming part of the victor's own.

Generally, a level-up is characterized by the distinctive increase in one's stats—

Strength, Agility, Defence, Endurance and Magic. It is the enhancement of these attributes and stats that contribute to an individual overall power and abilities.

Strength represented physical power, determining the force behind their attacks and the ability to overpower opponents. Agility governs speed, reflexes, and dexterity, allowing for swift movements and evasion.

Defence measures resilience and the ability to withstand damage, mitigating the impact of enemy strikes. Endurance represents stamina, vitality, and resilience to fatigue and physical exertion. It determines their ability to endure prolonged battles, withstand intense magical assaults, and recover from injuries.

Magic determines one's proficiency in casting and the manipulation of mystical energy.

Every race and organism in this world has a unique and different increase in stats during a level up. For Simon who was a Demon Noble, every time he levels up, he gains 3 points in Strength, 5 points in Agility, 4 in Endurance, 3 in Defence and 5 in Magic.

It was the same for every demon noble or rather this is the general distribution of stats for their race. As mentioned earlier, it is different for other races.

Aside from the stats earned during level up, there was also something called the base stats. Stats that are predetermined from the moment they are born and serve as the foundation for one's growth and development.

For example, Simon observed that when he was just a level 1 Demon Baron, he already had 600 Base Strength, 600 Base Agility, 800 Base Magic and so on so forth.

These base stats are different and intrinsic for each race, providing them with a starting point for their growth and development.

In the case of humans, Simon noticed that although they have low base stats at the start, the points that they earn through level up, are marginally higher than most of the other races. The cause for this was the human's Class Change.

Depending on the class they chose, the level up increases specific stats according to their individual preferences and playstyle.

It is important to note that one cannot improve base stats through training, experience, or levelling up. It is prefixed from the start. However, it is not like it cannot be improved. This is where the Rank up in the case of Demon Nobles, Class Change for Humans, and Evolution for Beast and monsters comes into play.

In the case of Demon Nobles, when they experience a Rank Up, their base stats see a drastic change. From what Simon noticed after observing himself all these years, when he ranked up from a Demon Baron to a Demon Viscount and from Demon Viscount to a Demon Earl, on top of gaining all those stats from his level up, his base stat had seen a stark increase.

This increase became bigger the higher the rank he reached and also the reason why the higher ranking demons were so powerful. It was not only their levels, but even their base stats were so much higher.

The same goes for the other races. Of course, there are other factors like the bloodline limits and such involved in the level up process, but this is how it works generally.

Defeating powerful opponents and absorbing their energy was one way of levelling up in Althaea. The other method was using items like the Mana Crystals.

Mana Crystals are extraordinary items condensed from the purest energy of the mystical veins over an extended period of time. When one absorbs a Mana Crystal, it releases an immense amount of mystical energy that can greatly aid in increasing their level.

These crystals come in varying grades, denoted as grade [1], [2], [3], and so on. The higher the grade, the purer and more potent the energy contained within the crystal.

Grade [1] Mana Crystals are the lowest grade and generally more accessible compared to higher grades. They contain a considerable amount of mystical energy, but their effects may be relatively moderate.

As one progresses to higher grades, such as grade [2] and beyond, the energy becomes more refined and concentrated, resulting in a more substantial level boost.

The process of utilizing Mana Crystals involves absorbing the energy within them, allowing it to merge with the individual's own mystical energy and expedite their levelling process.

By tapping into the power of these crystals, individuals can experience a significant increase in their stats. It's important to note that the availability of higher-grade Mana Crystals is usually limited, making them highly sought after and valuable commodities.

Their scarcity and purity contribute to their elevated prices and their allure to those who seek rapid advancement. Additionally, the use of Mana Crystals for levelling may be a safer alternative compared to the traditional method of battling powerful opponents and slowly gain experience points through them.

By absorbing the energy within the crystals, one could increase their level without directly facing the dangers and physical exertion of intense battles. It was a convenient option that allowed individuals to grow stronger without putting their lives at risk.

However, there were limitations to this method. As an individual's level increased, their body would gradually develop a resistance to the effects of Mana Crystals. This resistance would diminish the potency of the crystals, making it more challenging to continue levelling up using them.

To overcome this hurdle, higher-grade crystals were required. However, as explained before, Higher-grade Mana Crystals were exceptionally rare and held greater amounts of pure energy.

These crystals could only be obtained from Mana Crystal Trees that had reached adulthood. Mana Crystal Trees thrived in environments rich in mystical energy, typically in areas where a mystical vein ran beneath the surface.

These trees required meticulous care and maintenance, thus finding Mana Crystal Treea that have reached adulthood was a truly rare occurrence in the outside world.

Aside from Mana Crystal Trees, another source of Mana Crystals was through mining. Specific areas with mystical veins deep beneath the earth would give rise to quarries where Mana Crystals could be extracted.

These quarries acted as natural repositories of Mana Crystals and provided an alternative means of obtaining these valuable resources. However, it was important to note that both the Mana Crystal Trees and quarries were limited in number.

The rarity and scarcity of higher-grade Mana Crystals made them highly coveted and sought after by many individuals and countries. And the reasons for wars and clashes.

Whether it be through battling formidable adversaries or harnessing the concentrated energy of Mana Crystals, both methods have their own ups and downs. That said, all of these did not matter to Simon after all, he had the aid of his Dungeon with him.

The presence of a dungeon was a significant advantage for Simon in his quest for power. A dungeon, regardless of its rank, held immense potential and acted as a treasure trove of resources and opportunities.

It existed in a separate space, governed by its own set of laws and rules. As the dungeon grew and expanded, it accumulated a rich reserve of mystical energy, making it a fertile ground for the production of extraordinary items and resources.

Intermediate-ranking dungeons were known to harbor numerous Mana Crystal Trees and quarries, where Mana Crystals could be obtained. The abundance of these resources within such dungeons provided ample opportunities for growth and advancement.

In the case of high-ranking dungeons, the presence of fully matured Mana Crystal Trees was not an uncommon sight. As the Dungeon Master, Simon had always prioritized the development and growth of his dungeon above all else.

He recognized that the strength and prosperity of his dungeon directly correlated with his own power and potential. Therefore, he spared no effort in pushing the boundaries and unlocking the true potential of his domain.

Not only that, but to accelerate the growth of his dungeon, Simon went to great lengths to meet the requirements set by Aldebaran, the Ruler of the Ancient Titan Treants.

Despite the absurd and demanding conditions imposed upon him, Simon willingly agreed to them, recognizing the immense value of the Forest Spring Spirits' assistance in nurturing his dungeon.

Simon's dedication to his dungeon extended beyond mere agreements and negotiations. He was willing to go to great lengths, even risking his own life, to protect and defend his domain from external threats.

He engaged in numerous life-and-death battles, demonstrating his unwavering commitment and determination to safeguard his dungeon. The dungeon that he named after his unfulfilled dream that he couldn't see come to fruition in his previous life, became the embodiment of Simon's aspirations and ambitions.

Thanks to his strategic management and careful planning, one could see the fruit of his efforts with just a glance at his dungeon. Even though Dungeon Laplace had emerged not too long ago, its rapid ascent from a low-ranking [E] tier dungeon to an intermediate-ranking [C] tier dungeon was nothing short of remarkable.

This accomplishment spoke volumes about Simon's strategic management and careful planning. The dungeon, named after his unfulfilled dream, had become a beacon of hope and aspiration for adventurers and denizens alike.

That was not all, as one delved deeper into the various floors of Dungeon Laplace, a world of wonder and excitement unfolded.

Chapter 699- Efficient method of using the Mana Crystals

The Dungeon Laplace was a place that exceeded all expectations, brimming with adventurers seeking treasures, monsters waiting to be defeated, and extraordinary items waiting to be discovered.

Each floor became increasingly abundant with wealth and power, offering a tantalizing reward for those brave enough to explore its depths. However, all of these changes were just something that was born out of the outcome of overflowing mana and meticulous management of the dungeon.

The true marvel of Dungeon Laplace lay inside its special floors. like the [Workshop], [Training floor], [Forest Spring Sprit Village] and [Main floor].

The {Main Floor} in particular, being the heart of the dungeon and where the dungeon core was located, was a realm of extraordinary beauty and grandeur, overflowing with all manner of mystical wonders.

Here, the mana was dense and potent, providing a source of power and vitality that permeated throughout the entire dungeon. With its enormous area now enveloped in mystical clouds that gently rained down an abundance of mystical energy, it nurtured an extraordinary grove of Mana Crystal trees that had reached adulthood, their radiant light illuminating the landscape.

The air was imbued with a sweet, floral fragrance, carrying the essence of magic that seemed to invigorate all who breathed it in. The sight of the mountains, with their groves of Mana Crystal trees stretching as far as the eye could see, was truly a sight to behold.

These trees that stood tall and proud, their trunks sturdy and their branches extending towards the sky like outstretched arms, sparkled with an otherworldly brilliance, with mana crystals embedded within their branches and leaves, casting a mesmerizing glow upon the surrounding area.

Teeming with life, many mystical creatures like the Dryads and Sprites found solace within its sanctuary. The presence of these fully matured Mana Crystal trees was a testament to the accelerated growth and evolution of Dungeon Laplace, a feat made possible by the assistance of Cecilia, the Forest Spring Royal Spirit.

With her ability to control and manipulate nature itself, Cecilia played a vital role in nurturing and expanding the complex network of mystical veins that ran beneath the Main Floor. These veins, now transformed into heart veins, served as conduits for the flow of mystical energy, further enhancing the power and potential of the dungeon.

While Dungeon Laplace, was designated as a [C] tier intermediate ranking dungeon, its true capabilities far surpassed that classification. Even when compared to some [B] tier dungeon or even a high ranking dungeon, Simon reckoned that his place would not lose in certain aspects.

In any case, unlike many others who had to worry about the scarcity of high-grade Mana Crystals, Simon as the Dungeon Master of Dungeon Laplace had an abundant supply of high-grade crystals.

That was even after deducting the amount needed to run the numerous arrays and other functions of the dungeon.

With the abundant supply of high-grade crystals at his disposal, Simon could focus on his personal growth and the development of his dungeon without worrying about anything.

And so, seated atop a huge rock near the pond of serenity, Simon thanked a Dryad who passed a space ring full of mana crystals to him.

The Dryads and the other mystical creatures that were living on the Main floor, were Cecilia's subordinates. They do not have much combat abilities, but were adept in manipulating nature and nurturing the resources of the world.

Thus Simon tasked them with the maintenance and collection of the resources produced on the Main Floor. The beautiful Dryad, bowed her head towards Simon before going on her way.

With the backdrop of the Serenity pond and the sounds of the nature, Simon looked at the space ring in his hand and after inspecting its contents, he nodded his head.

"There are exactly a thousand Grade [4] and a hundred Grade [5] mana crystals inside it" This was exactly the amount he asked them to bring, there was not even a single crystal extra or less. This went to show how diligent the dryads were.

Satisfied, Simon took out the crystals from the space ring. As he held the grade [4] and grade [5] mana crystals in his hands, he could feel their immense power resonating through the container.

For Simon who had reached a level that would classify him as a powerhouse in the outside world, mana crystals below grade [4] were useless for him. Even if he absorbed the energy from them, his body was so resistant to their effects that hardly any changes would occur to his level.

In gaming terms, it would be more like grinding on mobs that offered you a negligible amount of experience points. The same was the case here, the energy that the current Simon required, was so large that even tens of thousands of grade [3] crystals wouldn't be able to fill that up.

However, Grade [4] crystals were different. Each grade four crystal possessed ten times more purity and energy than the grade three crystals, making them an invaluable resource for his growth and advancement.

The Grade [5] crystals, being even more potent, held the potential to allow him to reach even greater levels.

Simon took out exactly a hundred grade four crystals and ten grade 5 crystals and carefully arranged them around him. Next, he took out a small oval white stone from his inventory and crushed it with his hand.

Immediately a transparent dome like energy surrounded him and covered him with a serene and tranquil aura. This was the effect of the Serenity Stone, an item that created an impromptu effect of increasing one's concentration and focus for a short period of time.

In other words, it allows one to reach the self transient state of mind.

Taking a deep breath, Simon sat down on a relatively large rock and began the intricate process of absorbing the energy contained within each crystal.

He released his mana and branched it into many mana strands using [Mana Flow] and slowly enveloped each of the crystals with it. When touched by his mana, these mana crystals started pulsating before releasing vibrant mystical energy all around him.

These pale blue energy haze were the purest mystical energy capable of increasing one's strength and was no different than the energy transferred when one defeats a foe.

Ordinarily, these purest forms of mystical energy once realised from their container, would immediately dissipate in the air and become one with the mana particles present in the surrounding.

However, Simon was already prepared for it. Manipulating his branched mana strands using the [Mana Flow], Simon immediately grabbed hold of them and pulled them all towards him.

Thanks to the effects of the Serenity Stone which allowed him to achieve a state of heightened concentration and focus, Simon could manipulate these many mana strands without straining his mind.

As all the energy from mana crystals gathered around Simon, he looked like a person covered in a pale blue haze. Each strand and thread of this pure mystical energy was meticulously pulled towards Simon, absorbed through the pores of his body before harmonizing with his own strength.

That was not all, Simon's mastery over [Mana Lines] allowed him to guide the energy strands with precision. He directed the influx of energy into specific channels within his body, ensuring a smooth and efficient absorption process.

The pure and concentrated nature of the mystical energy within the crystals resonated with his own mana, enhancing his innate capabilities and strengthening his connection to the mystical energy.

As the energy continued to flow into him, Simon could sense his own power expanding and deepening. It was as if every fibre of his being was being infused with the essence of the mana crystals, their energy integrating seamlessly with his own.

He could feel his physical and magical attributes surging, his senses sharpening, and his consciousness expanding to new levels. Otherwise also known as level up.

Time seemed to blur as Simon continued to absorb the pure mystical energy pouring inside his body. Soon his mind got attuned to the subtle vibrations and fluctuations of the energy and he reached a realm where all side thoughts vanished from his head.

New understanding descended onto him, allowing him to fully grasp and utilize the potential of these pure mystical energies. As they flowed through his veins, filling him with vitality and strength, Simon could feel his own power surge and expand.

Level 537... Level 538... Level...

Simon continued to absorb the energy released from these crystals and soon many of them were turned into empty husks.

It needs to be mentioned that previously, Simon could only absorb one crystal at a time. However, that process was too time consuming and if he were to consume hundreds of these crystals that he laid around him, who knew how long it would take him?

It was not like Simon did not have any other task than this. As a dungeon master, he had many tasks pending, waiting for him to complete them.

Since he cannot just devote all of his time to training, he needed to allocate his time wisely. And so, he came up with this idea.

After he learned [Mana Flow] and [Mana lines], Simon devised a more efficient method to absorb the energy from the mana crystals. By extending his mana outside his body and manipulating it as if they were his own limbs, he could simultaneously interact with multiple crystals, greatly reducing the time required for absorption.

With a focused mind and precise control, Simon guided the mana strands to envelop the remaining crystals, creating a network of mana connections that linked them together.

Chapter 700- First Grade Countries

Like a web of energy, these mana lines pulsed with power, facilitating the rapid transfer of mystical energy from the crystals to Simon's being.

The efficiency of the process was remarkable. As Simon maintained his concentration and directed his mana flow, the energy from multiple crystals merged and surged into him simultaneously.

The pale blue haze around Simon's body intensified, reflecting the immense influx of power. Level 540... level 541... One by one, the crystals transformed into empty husks, their energy fully absorbed by Simon.

The speed at which he absorbed them was a testament to his skill and proficiency in mana manipulation. What would have taken hours or even days using conventional methods was now accomplished in a fraction of the time.

Feeling the effects of the absorption coursing through him, Simon couldn't help but smile. He could sense a profound transformation occurring within him. The level he had gained from the mana crystals resonated throughout his being.

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Time flew by and soon as the last of the remnant energy dissipated from the empty husks, the absorption process was complete. Simon stood in his place while silently reflecting on the changes and the increased capabilities of his body from the level ups he had gone through.

This method of training was quite efficient, by combining the skills of [Mana Flow] and [Mana Lines], he had unlocked a faster and more effective way of assimilating the energy from the mana crystals.

Simon reckoned that the entire process had only taken him a little over ten hours. This was no doubt a breakthrough that would undoubtedly save him precious time and allow him to allocate his efforts to other important tasks in the future.

Satisfied with the results, Simon collected the remaining mana crystals and stored them away for future use. He knew that these precious resources were the lifeblood of his dungeon, powering its systems and enabling its growth.

Now that the pale blue haze surrounding him had faded, Simon got up from his place with a renewed sense of vigour and strength.

A dungeon master has many tasks, as such he couldn't spend all of his time in his personal training. He also had to look after the dungeon that was his home.

Fortunately for Simon, he got many capable subordinates who carried some of his burdens for him.

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"The current dungeon exploration progress has reached the 71st floor. The guild leading the exploration is called 'Blades of Ascension,' hailing from the kingdom of Eldoria".

Inside one of the majestic halls of the White Palace, designated as the workplace, Simon sat on his seat listening to the reports from Jarred.

Now that Coleus was assigned as the head of the Research and Development division tasked with mutation and breeding of the monsters of dungeon Laplace, Jarred became the proxy leader of the [Helpers].

The fifteen year old boy had grown quite a bit in these past few years and had broken out of his immature shell to become a dependable young man.

Of course, there were other candidates for the proxy leader of the [Helpers] like Birch. However, they all pushed for Jarred to take on that role believing in him. Since that was the case, Simon also had no qualms.

He had already seen the work ethic of the boy and knew how diligent he was. Simon nodded his head, taking in the information.

"How are they faring so far?"

"Their progress has been steady, but not without challenges," Jarred replied. "The numerous arrays you told us to lay across the lower floors of the dungeon, is proving to be quite effective. It has marginally slowed down the adventurer's progress".

"Additionally, thanks to Fey's and her team's ideas to create various kinds of tricky areas and danger zones, it made clearing the floors even more treacherous. Leader Coleus' mutated monsters are also impeding their advance".

With the Dungeon Laplace rapidly becoming famous for the riches and allure it held in the surrounding region, it attracted over many strong guilds from the distant countries. They have set up their base in the tower town and are exploring the dungeon frequently.

These guilds who came from the faraway land couldn't be underestimated as they have many strong and determined adventurers in their rank.

From a report he got from Jarred, it showed that the average level of the adventurers diving inside the dungeon has increased to around level 500 in the past few months. Of course, one cannot just look at the report, the average level mentioned in no way displayed the true levels of the adventurers that are leading the exploration on the lower floors.

Starting from the 60th floor, one can expect to encounter adventurers and guilds with levels nearing 600 or beyond. And so to defend against the increasing strength and number of the adventurers and the future threats, the dungeon itself also had to grow stronger.

"I'm glad to hear that the Arrays and Danger Zones are proving effective," Simon replied, nodding in approval "These things will slow down their progress and ensure that the adventurers face true trials of the dungeon if they as the continue to descend downwards".

The mention of Fey and her progress towards creating numerous traps like the Hidden Chambers and Danger Zones, Coleus with his research on the mutated monsters made Simon very delighted.

Based on the reports given by Jarred, he could tell that their progress in their respective field was going quite well. Both of them were working on towards creating a more solid and fortified As a result of their actions, the dungeon became more complex and challenging. The numerous traps of the dungeon, including the mutated monsters, provided a real test for the adventurers.

It ensured that only the most skilled and determined individuals could progress deeper into the dungeon.

"I see... good job on your work. By the way, how goes the task I gave to Maya" Simon asked leaning back in his seat.

Maya was given the task to monitor the adventurers on the upper floors and gather information on the tower town.

"The last I spoke to her was yesterday. She had gathered up a lot of information and is making a report. I believe she will report it to you soon".

Simon sighed. The allure of Dungeon Laplace had indeed attracted all sorts of adventurers and opportunists, turning the once quaint town into a lawless and crude place.

Without a governing body to maintain order, and with the Adventurer's Association branch unable to control the numerous guilds and individuals flocking to the town, it had become a breeding ground for underhanded activities and shady trades.

"It seems that the tower town is becoming more chaotic by the day," Simon remarked, tapping his finger on the desk.

He had planned to leave the situation to solve on his own. However, after what he heard at the Hexennacht, he had to change his mind. Something needed to be done to address this situation.

Three High ranking dungeons had fallen in the past few decades and all of them were ruled by powerful Demon Dukes who had lived for more than 2000 years. Needless to say, this piece of news shook Simon to his very core when he heard it in the Hexennacht.

Although the reason for the destruction of the other two dungeons was unknown, Simon remembered the reason for the fall of the last one, the Shadowed Abyss governed by Duke Beleth.

As mentioned by Belial, it was because the adventurers had created a base and built several large scale teleport gates around that dungeon that connected with the central kingdoms. Until one day, all communication coming from that dungeon was cut off and it was already too late.

There were only a few clues that led to the fall of the dungeon and the perpetrators who had a hand in it.

The revelation of this news had a great impact on Simon and what had changed his current thinking.

At first, he was unconcerned to the creation and expansion of the tower town by the adventurers. Since it reeled in great income for him, he let it be believing that the humans can just govern themselves without him needing to interfere.

The only thing he needed to concern himself with was what happened within his dungeon. However, after what happened to the last High Ranking dungeon, he realised that such thinking was flawed.

Even if it was just a town right now filled with adventurers, traders, slaves and people from all walks of life, it couldn't be denied that the humans have established a base near his dungeon.

If even a high ranking dungeon can fall unexpectedly, who is to say that this simple town right now might eventually become into something that would be the downfall of Laplace?

The vision of a dungeon in ruin that he repeatedly had, flashed in Simon's mind once again.

town was directly and indirectly related to the growth of his dungeon.

No, he cannot just let the human be, he needed to do something about the tower town sooner rather than later.

There was the option of destroying it by using the help of external factors. Just like the time when the tower town was nearly destroyed by the invasion of the orcs. Should he use those Black Ogres who were eyeing his dungeon?

Simon was sure that if it was the Seven kings of the forest, they would be able to destroy the tower town. However, doing so would be stupid of him especially since the flourishing of the tower town was directly and indirectly related to the growth of his dungeon.

Destroying it would be like shooting oneself in the foot. There was no guarantee that the dungeon would be able to recover from this loss.