

## D. of Pride 701

### Chapter 701- First Grade Countries (2)

Besides Simon had witnessed the tower town develop with his own eyes, he considered it a part of the dungeon now. As such, he needed to find some other ways, some form of influence over the tower town to keep them in check.

Though that said, what could he do? Without any laws or regulations, the tower town has become a den of vice and lawlessness.

"It's as I thought, I need to have Maya gather more information about the guilds and individuals causing trouble in the town." Simon spoke, he glanced towards Jarred and ordered—

"Continue doing what you have been doing up until now and be prepared for any unforeseen circumstances. Also, inform Maya to be cautious in her investigations. Tell her that her safety is the utmost priority, We don't want her to get caught up in any dangerous situations".

Even if the [Helpers] have received the Gift from the dungeon and were now able to monitor the adventurers more stealthily, they were nevertheless from a rare race that was coveted by everyone for their cores that was a treasure like no other.

Because of this, Simon didn't want Maya to get caught or reveal her existence while trying to do her best. The reason why the Forest Spring Spirits were able to live this long is by isolating themselves from the other races.

It would be disastrous for them who have started to get back on their feet once again, if the news about them existing in this dungeon gets leaked. It was not only them, even the dungeon would be in huge danger.

Simon already had enough things on his plate, he didn't want to deal with things that can be avoided.

Jarred understanding the gravity of the situation nodded his head "Of course, My lord. I'll pass on your instructions to her."

After bowing his head, the boy exited the room, leaving an absentminded Simon. As he leaned on his seat and glanced out of the window, Simon's mind spun with possible solutions to resolve the situation of the tower town.

However, seeing that even after a while he couldn't come up with any suitable solutions, he decided to put it at the back of his head and focus on the other tasks at hand.

Since he cannot come up with a solution at the moment, he could only let time solve it for him. Maybe he will have some inspiration later on... that's how it had worked for him up until now after all.

Thinking so, Simon put his attention on the heaves of documents in front of him. All of these were reports of various activities, progress, petitions made by his subordinates and detailed the various things that occurred inside the dungeon on a day to day basis.

"No matter where you go, you can't escape paperwork I guess" Simon laughed bitterly staring at the stack of documents. Although he had created a system of organisation and communication, he was inadvertently unable to escape from the paperwork.

Irene did help him from time to time; however, she was busy with her own tasks—training the Valkyries, looking after the dungeon, directing the [Helpers], looking after Cecilia and so on.

It was not only her, everybody in Laplace was busy with their own tasks. Besides, Simon was already thankful that he only had to deal with the paperwork unlike his subordinates who have to collect all of their data and observations and compile it into a report.

And so, one by one, Simon started going through the documents.

"Hm? A petition to shift the orc floors above? This report came from the [Helpers] that were tasked to monitor the Diluvian High Orcs. It looks the request was made by Berigard himself. He wants to move the orcs floors to train the new orcs that have mutated from the Bloodtrap plant".

"Hmm... moving floors above requires a lot of DP and besides if they want to train, they always have the Elder Lizardmen floor or the training Floor for use. Rejected".

"Next, understaffed—need more personnel. This must be a report from Coleus. I did send him a few Forest Spring Spirits to assist him but it looks like he needs more. As of this moment, I do not have any free personnel, so let's put it at the back".

Next, next... As Simon went through all the documents, he came across one that was made by Fey. It detailed about all the new Danger Zones, Hidden Chambers and traps she created. What's more, she even included the new plans and traps she had been working on.

After reviewing Fey's plans, Simon began jotting down his own improvements and ideas. They flowed effortlessly from his mind onto paper, merging seamlessly with Fey's concepts.

As the Dungeon Master, and previously as the game developer, when it came to aspects like these, Simon was quite good at it. And so, after reading Fey's plans he included his own improvements and ideas that he thought would help her.

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Finally, after a long arduous hours of work, Simon sighed a deep breath of relief. He was finally done with the paperwork for today.

Leaning back in his seat, he took a moment to reflect on all the activities and reports that he had gone through. As the Dungeon Master, he needed to stay multiple steps ahead of the adventurers and be prepared for any unexpected contingency.

And so as he was going through all of his thoughts for the day, when something that Jarred told him suddenly struck his mind. Recalling the report the latter gave him, he soon found out what it was.

"The guild named Blades of Ascension from the kingdom of Eldoria... it looks like even the First Grade Empires are starting to notice my dungeon" Simon muttered.

The name Kingdom of Eldoria wasn't all that unfamiliar to him, in fact, he had heard that name on one of his trips to the human kingdom. At that time, when Simon was forcefully dragged over to the capital of the kingdom of Ellesmere by a willful Adalinda, he tried to make the most out of the trip by learning about the human kingdoms and the Central Continent.

From what he learned, the countries in the Central Continent seemed to be divided into three grades—First Grade, Second Grade, and Third Grade.

Third grade countries are the bottom ranking countries that are disconnected from the Main Land. The average level of people there are very low and they lacked the resources and influence of higher-grade nations.

The Second grade countries are countries who were able to grow out from their status as a Third grade country. Their lands have large deposits of mana crystal quarries which significantly contributed to their growth and development.

These countries maintained cordial relationships with First Grade nations, and as a result, the average level of their people was notably higher than that of Third Grade countries.

First Grade countries on the other hand were powerful and influential countries in the Central Continent. They are advanced nations, boasting immense territories, abundant resources, and a high concentration of powerful individuals.

These countries were considered the heart of the continent, and their presence dictated the balance of power among the nations. The average level of its inhabitants was significantly higher than that of Second or Third Grade countries.

The presence of powerful adventurers, knights, and mages was common, and they were well-respected and revered for their prowess in these countries.

Additionally to all of these, a country's grade in the Central Continent was also determined by the presence of remarkable individuals known as Rankers.

The title of Ranker was a prestigious recognition awarded by the Adventurer's Association to the crème de la crème of adventurers who had achieved unparalleled levels of strength, skill, and potential for growth.

In the entire Central Continent, there were only a handful of adventurers who had reached the realm of Rankers. These extraordinary individuals were revered and respected for their unparalleled prowess and abilities. Their very presence could elevate a country's standing and reputation.

A country with a notable number of Rankers held a considerable advantage over others, not only in terms of their adventurers but also in shaping the balance of power across the continent.

First Grade countries were characterized for having a substantial number of Rankers, showcasing their ability to produce and nurture exceptional talents. These elite adventurers played a crucial role in upholding the country's influence and power on the continent.

Second Grade countries, while not as abundant in Rankers as First Grade countries, still possessed one or two of these exceptional individuals. These few Rankers were enough to set them apart from Third Grade countries and elevate their standing.

The presence of even a single Ranker could significantly boost the country's reputation and signal its potential for growth and advancement.

On the other hand, Third Grade countries were at a disadvantage in terms of their absence of Rankers. However, if a Third Grade country managed to produce a Ranker, it would be a momentous achievement that could potentially lead to their promotion to a Second Grade country.

Countries like the Kingdom of Ellesmere, the Kingdom of Blackthorn, and the Ingolf Kingdom were classified as Third Grade countries due to their lack of Rankers. While they might have their own strengths and resources, the absence of these exceptional adventurers put them at a disadvantage when compared to higher-grade nations.

In contrast, empires like the Sanguine Empire belonged to the prestigious First Grade countries, boasting a considerable number of Rankers among their ranks

Chapter 702- Prime's new home

The presence of these elite individuals not only strengthened the empire's military capabilities but also contributed to its political and economic might.

The reason why Simon recalled all this information at this moment was because he remembered learning about the Kingdom of Eldoria. Being one of the few First Grade countries in the North-Western region of the Central Continent, the Kingdom of Eldoria was a powerful and influential kingdom that could match the Sanguine Empire in terms of strength and resources.

With a considerable number of Rankers among its adventurers, the kingdom's power and influence in the region were not to be underestimated.

The fact that his dungeon, Dungeon Laplace, had caught the attention of a First Grade country was a concerning matter for Simon. The reason for that was because dungeon Laplace was still not ready to face them yet.

Simon didn't know what kind of influence the guild named Blades of Ascension possessed back in their kingdom, but if they had a few rankers in their midst, it would be quite troublesome if they were to set their sights on his dungeon.

The Blades of Ascension was the guild currently leading the exploration right now with them having reached the 71st floor. However, they have yet to show any adventurers whose strength has reached the Rankers realm.

"Are they scouting the dungeon and testing the waters" Simon wondered. He had already experienced the might of the rankers before when they came to conquer the dungeon while hiding within the coalition of the top five guilds of the Ellesmere kingdom.

Davis Hall, an officer and a powerful Ranker of the Adventurer's Association had proven to be a formidable adversary. Exercising his powerful holy magic and peculiar magical apparatuses like the Floor buster, he had destroyed numerous floors and nearly brought his dungeon down.

He was also the person who pushed Simon to the brink of death. Although it was partly his own fault for recklessly diving towards the spatial storm, he couldn't have allowed that person to get away.

And so, as a result for putting his life on the line, he was nearly killed and was in a comatose state for a couple of months.

Then there was another ranker named Edgar who had infiltrated his dungeon without even getting caught by the surveillance system of his dungeon, He had completely eluded their senses without even them being aware of it, a feat that was both impressive and alarming.

If not because the latter willingly revealed themselves when he attacked the Floor Buster, Simon wouldn't even be aware of their presence.

Then there were also those skills they mastered and refined over a long period of time specifically to conquer the dungeon.

His experience with the rankers, allowed Simon to learn that they were a crafty and powerful bunch of fellows with a lot of tricky skills that couldn't be underestimated. He needed to be cautious and prepared for dealing with them.

It was for this reason that when Simon heard that the guild Blades of Ascension was from the kingdom of Eldoria, he was inwardly a little concerned.

"I guess I will go and give that little fellow a visit. Let's see what he is up to" On top of all the things, now that even a First Grade country eyeing dungeon Laplace, Simon couldn't sit still. He needed to strengthen both himself and his dungeon as fast as possible.

And so while thinking that, Simon teleported to one of the special floors and lifeblood of the dungeon Laplace.

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The industrial floor also known as the [Workshop], was a sight to behold. The moment Simon stepped foot into this floor, he was greeted by a powerful heat assaulting his whole body. The entire floor was covered in a red hue, a result of the intense heat released by the numerous volcanic mountains scattered across the area.

The volcanic terrain flowing with lava, was both awe-inspiring and a testament to Wisp's power who designed this floor.

"It looks like the floor had changed quite a bit since the last time I visited it" Simon remarked observing the place.

The [Workshop] had not only expanded in area, but had also become a lot more organised with lines of railways crisscrossing the area, transporting carts filled with various materials and components.

Factories of all shapes and sizes lined the floor, each dedicated to mass-producing Andromedas, the war machines that were the speciality of this floor. The factories hummed with activity as various robotic and mechanical noises continuously came from inside them.

If one glanced inside these factories, one could witness the intricacies of the manufacturing process. Robotic hands expertly crafted each part, while assembly lines efficiently put them together to create the final product.

Then there were also special rooms designed meticulously for testing out new weapons and their firepower, ensuring that the Andromedas produced here were equipped with the latest and most powerful weaponry.

Each factory was producing and researching a different part and component of the Andromedas. The rail lines connected all of these factories and carts moved back and forth on them, transporting parts from one factory to another, ensuring a smooth and efficient production process.

It was not only the factories that caught one's attention here, the iron smelting smitheries located at the mouth of the volcanic mountains was tirelessly smelting various kinds of minerals and ores, providing a constant supply of raw materials for the production of the Warmachines.

And then there was of course the Andromedas, the war machines that was the speciality of this floor, being mass produced here.

As soon as they came out from the factory, some of them were deployed in the distance, mining ores from the numerous quarries that dotted the floor.

Some were dedicated to the testing fields where new Andromedas were put through rigorous trials and evaluations. It was a place for fine-tuning and perfecting the creations, ensuring that each Andromeda met the highest standards of quality and functionality.

Then there were Andromedas who were deployed to the areas designated for scrap disposal, where any defective or obsolete components were discarded. These areas were efficiently managed to ensure that waste was minimized, and any reusable materials were recycled for future use.

Looking at these mechanical beings working tirelessly, and ensuring a smooth and steady flowing network, Simon was reminded of the game [Rise of the Demolishers], the project he worked on the most after Laplace.

In that game too, in the beginning stages when the artificial superintelligence took over, the heart of the empire that controlled and produced these powerful war machines looked something like this.



Simon could see a striking resemblance between the industrial marvel that was the [Workshop] floor and the empire that controlled the war machines.

It was an awe-inspiring sight, the seamless integration of various systems and processes, the rhythmic movements of the warmachines, the mesmerising spectacle of all these factories and the organised flow of materials and resources, all made the [Workshop] floor a true testament to his skills as both a game developer and a Dungeon Master.

"Emilia, I wish I could show this scene to you"

As Simon stood there marvelling at the sight, he couldn't help but feel a tinge of nostalgia. If Emilia was here, she would have definitely been awe struck at the sight after all, the project that was her masterpiece, was becoming a reality inside his dungeon.

still lingered inside his mind. He knew that she would have been proud of what he had accomplished inside his Dungeon Laplace.

Unfortunately, she was no longer with him. That said, even though she was no longer physically present, her memory and influence still lingered inside his mind. He knew that she would have been proud of what he had accomplished inside his Dungeon Laplace.

Having been lost in his thoughts, Simon quickly snapped out of those memories and focused on the task at hand. He was here to meet Prime.

After learning about the latter's ability from the person himself, Simon allowed Prime to live on this floor.

"Where exactly did this guy make his home?" Simon spat in frustration having been unable to find the Lumynar even after searching for a while.

The [Dungeon] option of his [Main Menu] which showed him a three dimensional structure and layout of every floor and dungeon, showed him that Prime was here somewhere. However, he was unable to pinpoint where exactly this guy was.

[Beep-Beep-Boop] While he was having trouble locating Prime, Wisp approached him. [Beep-Beep-Boop] As usual it talked in its unique sonar noise.

"Yeah, it's good to see you again. I see that you have made quite some progress with the floor. I'm grateful for your efforts" Simon spoke linking his hand with the ball of light.

Others might not be able to understand what Wisp said, however, Simon who had created a spiritual link with the Null Elemental, understood them as if they were actual words.

Not only that, but as the link grew stronger every second, he could understand even the subtle feelings and emotions it displayed.

Sentient Spiritual Entity, it was just like Irene had told him, this thing was a full fledged living entity even though it looked like a ball of light.

[Beep-Boop-Ping] The Wisp once again made some sonar noise saying that it was only doing its duty. Nevertheless, Simon was very grateful to it.

Looking at the development that his [Workshop] floor had gone through in this short period of time, which was otherwise impossible through normal means, he was finally able to realise the extraordinary being that wisp was and how blessed and lucky he was to have summoned it.

The Null Elemental read his intention to protect the dungeon and thus it created all of these solely because it wanted to help Simon.

Chapter 703- Prime's New Home (2)

The Null Elemental had read his memories and carried out the best plan of action to protect the dungeon according to his will. With the [Workshop] floor as a foundation, Simon knew that the potential of Dungeon Laplace was limitless.

As long as the floor continued to develop and expand, he could create an empire of war machines, just like in that game.

"Yeah, I am very much happy with the current progress. You have truly become one of the key individuals befitting of being one of the Guardian of the dungeon" Simon conversed with Wisp a little more before shifting the topic to Prime.

"By the way, do you where this guy is? He is supposed to be your new neighbour and I am unable to find him" Simon created the image of Prime in his head and Wisp immediately knew who he was talking about.

[Beep-Boop-Ping] It conveyed with its sonar noise that it knows where Prime is.

"Really?! Then can you take me where that guy is?"

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After a while, the two of them stopped in front of a place and the Wisp conveyed that they had arrived at the location.

"This... you don't mean.. are you saying that Prime is down there?" With his brows locked into a frown, Simon asked while looking down. An expression of apprehension was evident on his face.

Why was he making such a face? The reason for this was because they were currently on top of the mouth of one of the biggest volcanic mountains present on this floor and Wisp was pointing below.

Knowing what it wanted to convey, how could Simon not make an apprehensive face?

Below was a hot boiling sea of lava and according to Wisp, Prime was inside there. A droplet of sweat trickled down Simon's face as he looked below, his eyes reflecting the intense heat of the lava sea.

To think that Prime would choose to make his home inside the mouth of a volcano of all places, Simon was speechless for a second.

No wonder he was unable to find him, no sane person would think about checking inside the mouth of a volcanic mountain.

Was this guy okay down there?

"Hey Prime, are you in there? Respond if you can hear my voice?" Simon called out. There was no movement for a while, only the bubbling noise of the lava and the sulphuric clouds continued to exist here.

Just when Simon was starting to get anxious, there was finally some movements in the lava. A few columns of lava erupted from the mountain and a response came from within its depth.

"Simon? What are you doing here?"

Simon was relieved that the other party was fine though the next second, the latter's answer triggered him.

"What do you mean what I'm doing here, this is my dungeon. I came to check on you?" he retorted back.

"Ahaha, right.. right. Though why are you standing outside, why don't you come in? Let me show you my new place" Prime's voice sounded.

"This guy..." Simon's brows twitched "We are on top of a sea of lava for goodness' sake. How am I supposed to come in?"

The temperature here was more than 1800 degree Celsius, it was hotter than even the most powerful infernal magic of his. Even if he had flame resistance, this temperature was out of the question. He did not have a death wish for wanting to jump inside that hell.

"Oh right right, I forgot you are one of those races who cannot live in extreme mineral deposits like these. Wait for a moment, I will create a route for you that will lead you to my place"

After a brief moment, the lava around them started to move, parting away and creating a tunnel-like pathway leading towards the heart of the mountain.

Simon watched in amazement as the molten lava seemed to respond to Prime's command, creating a safe route for him to follow.

"Alright, come in!" Prime's voice sounded out from the other end of the tunnel. Simon was still in awe at Prime's ability and that the latter could stay alive inside the magma. Nevertheless, he still stepped inside the tunnel and followed the path Prime created for him.

The tunnel was quite long and showcased how deep beneath the Lumynar lived. As he ventured deeper into the mountain, Simon couldn't help but notice the unique and innovative material used to construct Prime's new home.

The walls of the tunnel were made of a remarkable substance that not only resisted the extreme temperature but also glowed with a soft, ethereal light. It was a mesmerizing sight, and Simon could tell that Prime's engineering skills were exceptional.

Finally, after diving down for more than fifteen hundred meters, Simon arrived at Prime's new living quarters, located in the heart of the magma chamber.

The chamber itself was an awe-inspiring sight, with molten lava flowing all around them, illuminating the space with an intense, fiery glow. But what caught Simon's attention was the remarkable base that Prime had created within the magma chamber.

The base was made of a combination of rare minerals and magical alloys, carefully crafted to withstand the extreme heat of the magma. Despite the intense temperature surrounding it, the base remained cool and sturdy, a testament to Prime's mastery of his craft.

The walls of the base were adorned with intricate engravings and glowing runes, which seemed to pulse with energy.

"How do you like my new home?" Prime who was waiting for Simon in front of his new house asked with swagger.

Simon glanced at the new base the other party had created, there were various chambers and rooms, each serving a specific purpose.

Prime had thoughtfully designed the place to be both functional and aesthetically pleasing. Not only that, at the centrepiece of the base was a massive crystal that floated at its core, radiating a calming blue light.

This crystal, Prime explained, acted as a stabilizer for the base, harnessing the raw energy of the magma and converting it into a power source for various systems.

Simon was thoroughly impressed by the ingenuity and sophistication of Prime's new home. It was a marvel of engineering and wonder, a testament to Prime's talent and resourcefulness.

"I have to say, you've done an incredible job with this place, Prime. It's truly a masterpiece. I can see that you've put a lot of thought and effort into its design".

Prime grinned proudly, his body glowing with satisfaction "Right right.. you saying that makes me happier. Compared to my last base, this is an upgrade of sorts. I wanted to create a space that would not only withstand the extreme conditions but also serve as a sanctuary for me. A place where I can train, study, and forge anything that I want to".

"Well, you've certainly succeeded," Simon replied, nodding approvingly. "This base is a perfect reflection of your skills and abilities. It's befitting of an Administrator".

That's right, Prime had been selected by the dungeon for the position of Administrator, a role that was second only to the Guardians. Simon had received the notification on the second day of bringing Prime into his dungeon.

Since Irene had already told him that Prime's ability would be quite helpful to him, he didn't ponder for too long before pressing on the [Yes] option. And so from then on, Prime officially became the newest member/inhabitant of the dungeon and an [Administrator] alongside the Valkyries.

"I have to thank you for that. Who knew you had a place as advanced as this? I know that the Null Elemental was the one to create all of this; however, without your will and knowledge, something like this isn't possible even for that thing".

"Brat how did you come up with these ideas? Although not as advanced as the civilisation I am from, it's not too shabby either" Prime spoke glancing towards Simon in wonder.

To call a floor that was an industrial and engineering marvel, a hub whole world of Althaea, Prime was the only one to think like that.

for manufacturing that produced the powerful Andromedas, Revenants and the other War Machines, shabby? Perhaps in this whole world of Althaea, Prime was the only one to think like that.

Although his brows twitched at that indirect jab at something he prided on, Simon still maintained his composure. If not because he knew that Prime came from a highly advanced civilisation, he would have thought that was an insult.

However, judging from the tone of the other party and the lights coming out of their body, it appeared that he was actually praising the place.

"Sigh.. you have a weird way of praising things. Anyways, what were you up to?"

"Oh right, come with me, I will show you something. I found these thing abandoned in the junkyard, so I brought them here and have been building it by taking the scraps from the junkyard".

At Simon's query, Prime gave him a trip of the base he created. Inside the base, there were various chambers and rooms, each serving a specific purpose. For example, there is a library filled with ancient tomes and knowledge from all corners of the world.

Then there were numerous forges and laboratories equipped with all kinds of latest and old equipment, to allow Prime to create anything that he wants.

Seeing all of these inconceivable and never before seen things, Simon was curious as to where did the Lumynar get all these items from. The designs of the things here were very alien to him, indicating that these were all items that Prime brought with him.

Chapter 704- Resonancer

"I bet you will like it" Prime beckoned Simon as he led him to the place where he kept the item that he invented.

Due to him hyping it up, Simon naturally got interested in what this Lumynar was working on. However, when he arrived at the place and saw what Prime was working on, his eyes couldn't help but widen.

The expression in his eyes wasn't surprise, but... anger.

Kept in front of him, in a haphazard manner of display, were several weapons, armours and artefacts that were collected from the last invasion force. Given their large numbers, there was quite a lot of loot that was collected.

But of course, not everything that shined was gold. Many of the items that the adventurers had, either broke, were abused, incompatible or just couldn't be used after the last battle.

Things that could be used were collected and those that couldn't were discarded. The ones in front of him were the items that were discarded in the junkyard of the [Workshop].

However, it didn't mean that they were scraps anymore. From the way they were shining and put back together, it appeared that Prime had restored them back to their original condition.

No, he might have even upgraded them to a new level because Simon could feel the distinctive aura coming from these items was clearly far more stronger when they were in their prime condition.

Given that Prime had resorted the items he discarded as junks to their peak condition, he should be happy. However, there was no happiness in Simon's eyes. The reason for that was none other than the huge item that was sitting at the centre of all of these items.

"Oh? It looks like you found the item I have been meaning to show you. Yes, the others are just samples, the main item of the show is this. I found this thing discarded among the junks and after looking at its design, I suddenly had a flash of inspiration. Look, I even upgraded it. Now it's more powerful than ever. Hm?... hey wait what are you doing?"

Prime who was in the midst of self-retrospection suddenly noticed the flames blazing to life in Simon's hand.

The golden flames that appeared, raised the temperature of the magma chamber to ever higher heights and quickly formed into a spear.

"Get out of the way. I must destroy that thing".

"Huh?! Wait why do you need to destroy it".



At Prime's flustered question, Simon pointed at the item he was working on and explained "That thing you are working on back there, do you know what it is? It's the floor buster, the foul machine that nearly brought down my dungeon".

"This thing did what?".

The reason why Simon was angry was because Prime has been working on the Floor Buster.

"Get out of the way, it's an eyesore, I need to destroy" Simon was just about to launch his infernal spear magic on the machine when Prime asked him to stop.

"Wait..wait... I don't know what kind of grudge you have against this thing, but it's an excellent item with quite some thought put by its inventor into it. After I upgraded it, it has become even better"..

"Then all the more reason for me to destroy it. If it's allowed to be used on the [Workshop] then... In any case, destroy that thing" Although Simon did not continue his sentence, he was worried about that if the floor buster was used so close to the [Main floor] it might reach the white palace where the dungeon core was.

"Haah!! seriously this brat... will you listen to me for real. I know what purpose this machine was made for. However, using it that way was just wasting the potential of this machine. That is why, I altered the machine while drawing inspiration from its design".

"Now its purpose is different than what it was intended for. Look it doesn't have that drill pointer anymore".

On Prime's mention, Simon finally glanced deeply at the Floor Buster and noticed that it had been altered greatly. Be it its frame, structure, or the crystal that was used as its core, everything was tinkered greatly.

More importantly, the Floor Buster no longer looked like an auger machine that could destroy floors.

But then if it did not destroy floors, then what did it do?

"You said that its purpose now is different than what it was intended for initially?".

Seeing Simon finally willing to listen, Prime sighed a breath of relief "I will explain, but first snuff that magic of yours. Do you have any idea how valuable the materials and equipment are here? They are from my home world before it was destroyed. As such, it could be one of its kind in this whole universe".

Prime jumped up and down asserting that Simon put his magic flustered after seeing Simon conjure his magic here.

away. For every inventor, the workplace was like an extension of their life, the culmination of their efforts and dedication.

Seeing it get destroyed was the last thing they wanted to see and would be a huge blow for them. It was no wonder that Prime was so flustered after seeing Simon conjure his magic here.

After looking at Prime, who seemed earnest in his plea to spare the machine, Simon finally lowered his hand and dispelled the magic.

"Fine, I won't destroy it," he relented, "but you better explain what you've done to it".

Prime sighed a breath of relief seeing that he finally managed to convince Simon.

"You won't regret it," Saying that, he led Simon towards the modified machine.

As he approached closer, Simon could indeed see that the drill pointer, which was originally meant for destruction, had been removed. In its place, Prime had installed a series of intricate mechanisms that seemed more focused on precision and finesse.

"I've repurposed the floor buster to be more of a precision tool" As Prime began to explain the modifications he had made to the machine, his excitement was palpable.

He gestured animatedly, pointing out various parts and components that he had tinkered with, increasing their output, changing their placements, and even utilizing scraps from the junkyard to improve its functionality.

The end result was a remarkable transformation that turned the destructive Floor Buster into something entirely different.

"And so, after I adjusted the core, it should be able to create a specialized effect that covers a wide area," Prime said, his eyes shining with enthusiasm.

"What do you mean?" Simon questioned raising an eyebrow.

"What I'm trying to say is, when activated, the machine interacts with the mana particles in the air, strengthening and weakening certain conditions and aspects in the surrounding area. For instance, with this machine, I can weaken the gravitational pull in certain areas, making it easier for the Andromedas to lift and transport heavy materials. The opposite is equally possible too".

"It is not only limited to gravitational pull, by interacting with the mana particles, the machine is able to induce disorders in natural orders of the laws. For example, this machine can create energy tides that can bring forth various kinds of elemental hazards. Like typhoons, snow, lightning, extreme heat and so on and so forth" Prime declared with a proud smile.

Finally starting to see the true potential of this new invention, the anger inside Simon disappeared in a puff of smoke, replaced by surprise and astonishment at the machine that Prime had created.

There was no reason why he would not after all, what did it mean to be able to interfere with the natural orders of laws? What did it mean to be able to create elemental hazards?

Prime was talking about being able to manipulate environmental change and laws, something that should only be possible through a certain option when the dungeon reached a high rank.

Yet here it was in front of him, a machine that could achieve a similar effect to an Environmental Change. How could Simon not be surprised?

Similar to Afflictions that can bestow certain kinds of status effects in the form of nerfs, deterioration in condition, debuffs that can weaken and so on in particular floors, Environmental Change just like what it means can alter certain aspects of the dungeon.

Using this option, it is possible to manifest various natural phenomena like clear blue sky, pouring rain, gusts of wind, or even lightning storms inside the dungeon. It was a feature that provided strategic advantages and challenged the adventurers exploring the dungeon.

However, Environmental Change was a high-ranking feature that became available to dungeons as they advanced and grew in power. It allowed Dungeon Masters to create artificial environments inside their dungeons, altering certain aspects of the dungeon to their advantage.

So when Prime said that he can induce environmental hazards like typhoons, lightning and such, Simon's mind was blown. Something that could otherwise be possible only after dungeon Laplace reached the high rank, this machine in front of him can reproduce an effect similar to it.

As absurd and disbelieving as it sounded, he knew that Prime would not play a joke on him. That is to say, this machine was really capable of doing what Prime mentioned.

If he can mass produce this machine and set it up on various floors of his, wouldn't he be able to alter the environment, making certain areas more challenging for adventurers or granting buffs to the dungeon's inhabitants, thus increasing the strategic advantages in combat situations?

The more Simon thought about it, the more he saw the potential of this machine to be an invaluable asset for Dungeon Laplace.

#### Chapter 705- Restoring the Radiant Crown of Brilliance

"That's impressive," Simon admitted "You've taken something originally meant for destruction and turned it into a tool for creation and enhancement. I'm glad I didn't destroy it now."

"Right... Right... Brat you see the potential of my creation huh? Well now that you know how amazing this thing is going to turn out to be once it is perfected, it's all bridge under the waters " Prime beamed with pride at the praise.

To dare call him a brat, Prime was the only one in this dungeon. Simon shook his head at the haughty words of this Lumynar when something that the latter said struck his mind.

"Wait did you just say 'once it is perfected'? Did you not test its effect out yet?"

When Prime heard that question, he turned around and released a yellowish light from its body. Although Simon was no expert in reading the Lumynar's expressions that are displayed by the colours they release from their body, he could somewhat tell that the other party was looking down on him.

"Sigh, listen up brat, don't compare me with that Null Elemental friend of yours. That thing is special even amongst the special existence. I do not have abilities like it. And besides, do you think tempering with the natural laws is that easy?"

"Not to mention we are inside a dungeon which has its own sets of laws and orders. How could it be so easy to understand in a few days? This machine is far from completion, I have only reached the stage where it can interact with the mana particles in the air, there is a long way to go until it can create environmental hazards".

"The only reason I told you about it is because you were adamant about destroying it. How can I just sit back and see you destroy something that is going to be one of my finest works?"

Simon was silent as he continued to stare at the machine. It was as Prime said, how can it be so easy to create a machine that could actually temper with the natural orders of the dungeon?

It looked like he had jumped the gun, the machine was something for the future. That said, it was a pity that it couldn't be used now. Just think about it, how broken would his dungeon be if it could already create its own environment inside the floor?

"Hm? What's with that dejected face of yours? Although I said it would take time, who do you think I am? Fine, lend me the help of that Null elemental subordinate of yours. I'm sure that with that things help, I can drastically shorten the time from a couple of years to within a year and deliver this machine to you. Hehe, once it is completed, I'm confident that the Resonancer will be a valuable asset for the dungeon".

When Simon heard Primes's words his eyes inadvertently started shining. If it was just a year then it wasn't much. Compared to waiting who knows how many years, what was waiting just a year?

However, that said, Wisp was already super busy as it was with manufacturing, developing the floor and controlling all of those Andromedas. He did not know if Wisp could handle additional work.

"I know what you are thinking. Don't worry, I just need it to produce a few pieces of equipment and ores that are needed to create its component. It wouldn't consume much of its time" As if reading his thoughts Prime clarified.

"Alright, I will tell Wisp about it. Anyways, I see that you went with the name Resonancer for the machine?"...

"Yeah, what do you think? As it is a machine that resonances with the mana particles in the air to create the disorder in the laws, hence the name Resonancer"...

"It's not a bad name" Simon answered, since the machine had been altered completely and it no longer served the same purpose it was intended for, calling it the floor buster would be wrong.

Though that said compared to the names he could think of for the machine, like Elemental Storm Catalyser, Mana Whirl Havoc Mixer or Environmental Blast Disruptor, just resonance seemed quite a bit... how to put it a less impressive.

However, Prime was the inventor of this machine as such, he had every right to name it.

"As you work on perfecting the Resonancer, keep me updated on its progress," Simon said. "I have a feeling this invention will become a defining feature of Dungeon Laplace."

He could already envision the countless ways he could utilize the Harmonizer's effects throughout the dungeon. With this invention, Dungeon Laplace would have an unprecedented level of control over its environment and conditions, making it a truly formidable and dynamic dungeon.

"You can count on me" Prime's body sparkled with determination. With that, the two of them spent some more time exploring Prime's new base, and the latter eagerly shared his plans for further improvements and expansions.

Simon couldn't help but feel inspired by Prime's passion and vision for the future. Was it to be expected of a highly advanced race? The Lumynar's ideas were groundbreaking eye openers for Simon. He was starting to realise that he might have won the lottery with Prime.

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Inside one of the vast chambers, as he observed Prime who stood tall, their form towering over the fiery furnace as they manipulated the molten magma with their hands, shaping and moulding it like a master sculptor, Simon couldn't help but be reminded of the Lumynar's ability to freely shift the size of their bodies allowing greater precision and efficiency with their work.

"This is the place I use when forging new weapons, armour and the other items. Those things that you discarded as scraps, were repaired here"

Prime spoke, shifting back to its tiny size. He held a tiny hammer and chisel in his hand, working with delicate precision on a large piece of equipment. Even in this miniature form, he exhibited remarkable control and skill, creating intricate details with utmost care.

Whether it be handling large scale materials and equipments or working with the tiniest of parts, Prime's incredible ability to change his size at will, came in handy. He could work with an errorless precision to create all kinds of items.

This versatility in size manipulation made him an extraordinary craftsman; however, shifting his size wasn't the only ability Prime had.

Being able to work with the molten lava, the ability to increase its heat and intensity to his will, responding to his every touch and help but feel a sense of wonder and admiration for this fellow.

In the [Workshop], Prime's forge became a symphony of creation, command. It was a mesmerizing sight to behold and Simon couldn't help but feel a sense of wonder and admiration for this fellow.

In the [Workshop], Prime's forge became a symphony of creation, with molten metal flowing like liquid gold under his skilled hands. The process of forging and creating in the magma-filled chamber was like a harmonious dance, with each strike of his hammer, intricate patterns and designs emerged, turning raw materials into works of art.

His attention to detail was unmatched as he freely manipulated his size, and his craftsmanship was unparalleled, producing items of extraordinary quality and functionality.

Moreover, Prime's inventiveness knew no bounds. He had a knack for repurposing and refining discarded materials and scrap from the junkyards, turning them into essential components for his creations.

As he stood there watching Prime at work, he couldn't help but reflect on the unique abilities and talents that each Guardian brought to Dungeon Laplace.

From Irene's presence that supported the dungeon like his shadow to Cecilia's control over nature, Wisp's mastery over the creation and elemental forces itself, and now with Prime's intelligence and skills, the dungeon Laplace got an unparalleled craftsman —it was a diverse and extraordinary team.

"You can stop selling yourself, I get it, you were the best thing that I was able to purchase from the auction. I admit that I was wrong in doubting you, your abilities are as impressive as you have said"...

Others might not be able to see through the actions of this guy; however, Simon who understood the nature of this Lumynar after interacting with it knew the latter best. Thus he immediately understood what they were trying to pull when they started showing him around their base and displaying their skills.

Having his intentions called out, Prime couldn't help but smile and stopped showing off.

"What? So you knew about it huh? Well, it's all good now that you have admitted it. Haha, I told you didn't I, that you won't regret purchasing me? I was one of the best things, no I was the best out of all the things that were listed there in the auction".

"You should be happy brat that you got me, the great Lumynar who was bestowed the name Prime by the Elder council" Prime boasted, a blue light emitting out of its body.

"Right. I get it. Now then, let's get to the main topic, there are three reasons why I came here to see you. The first is of course to see how you are doing. The dungeon and its habitat was a new place for you so I wanted to see if you were able to adapt to your new place or not".

"Seeing how excited and motivated you are, I guess I was needlessly worrying about it. The second reason I came here is because I have an item that I want you to repair" Simon raised three fingers and slowly started listing out his reasons...



"Oh? Let's see the item first".

Simon nodded reached into his inventory and pulled out a crown that had a regal and imposing design, adorned with intricate patterns that seemed to emit a faint glow, even in its damaged state.

#### Chapter 706- Restoring The Radiant Crown Of Brilliance (2)

The crown that Simon took out, was crafted from a mysterious golden metal that shone brilliantly, enhancing the aura of grandeur that surrounded it. The artefact was none other than the Radiant Crown of Brilliance, that he got from the Forbidden Grounds after completing the fourth trail.

This legendary piece of artefact which holds immense power and prestige, was once held by Yelan a woman of unparalleled power and grace. Using this crown, she cut off the hand of the Atrocity, crushed his heart and sealed it somewhere for eternity.

Simon who had observed that devastating battle capable of overturning the sky and earth, knew how powerful this crown was. Despite its current damaged state, remnants of its former formidableness were evident.

The Radiant Crown of Brilliance still retained some of the residual power that made everyone who looked at it feel awestruck. The aura of a [S] tier item lingered, leaving no doubt that it was once a potent and awe-inspiring artefact.

"Oh?!! That is quite an item you got in your hands? Let me see it".

Prime took the item from Simon's hand and inspected it. There was a hint of excitement in the Lumynar's behaviour as could be observed from the multicolour lights coming from its body.

"Brat do you know what this is? This is not just any ordinary artefact. This is an ancient relic, forged through holy fire and infused with the power of hundreds of years of starlight. Its value is incomparable to any item of this day and age".

"It was an item that I got after clearing a certain trial. Although I knew it was powerful, I had no idea about its origins" Simon mentioned, his curiosity piqued by Prime's explanation.

"Well listen up" Prime started explaining in an excited voice "This crown was crafted in a time long past, during an era where the forging techniques were imbued with divine blessings. During that time, the metal used to create the artefacts, was first smelted in holy fire for a long period of time before being left in a place where the cosmic energy gathered".

"The metal absorbs the essence of starlight for hundreds of years thus granting it unparalleled strength and resilience. Not only that, I can see that it has three depressions on it, it must have been inlaid with gemstones that granted the crown its unique properties, enabling it to harness the forces in a way that no ordinary artefacts can".

The more Prime explained, the more Simon realised how exceptional the crown was. There was a newfound respect in Simon's eyes for this item.

The Radiant Crown of Brilliance. He had acquired the item through an arduous adventure, but he hadn't fully comprehended its history and significance until now.

"I wonder what kind of legendary being or leader they were to wield its divine favour. Though it's a pity, without the gemstones, this artefact cannot gain its former glory"...

"Do you mean these three crystals?" On Prime's statement, Simon took out three glistening crystals that he got as a reward from the fourth trail.

"What?! You have it?! Why didn't you say so before?" Prime who saw the crystals in Simon's hand, was immediately rejoiced. Though the next second he shook his head saying "Although you have the Gemstones with you, it is a pity that it has lost all of its powers. To restore it back I would need things that are very hard and rare to find..."

Again while Prime was busy rambling to himself, Simon took out a couple of items one after the other and kept it in front of the tongue tied Prime.

"Eh?! These..." The latter pointed out, the colour coming out of its yellow displaying its confusion. All of the items that Simon took out, were very rare and precious, so much so that even if one searched the whole of Althaea, one might not be able to find any.

Yet here, Simon took out all these rare items one after the other as if they grew on trees. Prime's surprise was understandable; however, Simon already had all the items prepared to restore the crown. They were part of the rewards that he got from the fourth trial.

After putting down all of the items, Simon glanced towards Prime and inquired. "So, what do you think, Can you repair it?".

Prime was the one and only craftsman of his dungeon, Simon was eager to know if his newly appointed Administrator could restore the crown's former glory.

As expected of someone who he regarded as an unparalleled craftsman, Prime did not disappoint him.

"Hehe, absolutely. With all the necessary material available to me, there is no way I cannot... Gugggh!!" The Lumynar was unable to complete his sentence as his hands that was holding the crown, suddenly lurched back in pain and the item fell on the ground.

"What happened? Why did you scream in pain all of a sudden".

Prime did not reply, he simply stared at the crown in a daze before looking at Simon and questioning "That was... brat, you told me you got this item from a trial right? Then why is there this repulsive energy inside it?"..

"Repulsive energy? What do you mean?" Simon tilted his head in confusion as he picked the crown up.

"Can't you tell? That crown is plagued by a powerful curse energy. I am shocked that you are even able to hold it" Prime explained in shock, his hands that held the crown previously, were still trembling.

Simon finally realised what the Lumynar was talking about. Indeed, there were some traces of curse energy on this crown. However, it did not bother him as much as it did Prime. He did not feel any discomfort nor any repulsion from this energy.

"There seemed to be some remnants of the curse energy still latching onto the crown. Brat how; no, who did this crown belonged to?" On Prime's urging, Simon told him about the events that he had witnessed on the fourth trial, the woman who fought against the atrocity and how she sealed its heart with the crown.

"I see... so this world too huh" Prime who heard Simon's explanation, suddenly fell silent and muttered to himself. After a while, he arched his head up and glanced at the crown once again.

"Currently, the crown is slowly being corroded by a strong curse energy. If I have to repair the artefact, I must first purge this energy first".

Simon nodded his head in understanding, he personally knew how cumbersome and tricky the curse energy was. Thus he asked, "Can it be done?".

"It may end up taking longer than I thought; however, it is not impossible. Though before I agree on repairing it, I want to ask why do you want to repair this crown."...

"What do you mean?"...

"I want to know the objective of yours for repairing this crown. You do know that this artefact holds a powerful attribute that is contradictory to your own nature right? The item is imbued with the essence of starlight and holy fire, it contains divine magic which is a direct bane for all kinds of negative energy including the darkness that flows within you".

"If the crown were to be fully repaired, it could potentially become a powerful weapon that could work against you. Given this knowledge, why is it that you seek to repair it?" Prime questioned staring directly at Simon's eyes.

A contemplative expression crossed the latter's face. Just like Prime had said, Simon was aware that the divine energy that the Radiant Crown of Brilliance held, was contradictory to his own powers as a demon noble.

If the artefact was repaired, it would become a potent weapon that could potentially work against him, weakening his own dark powers.

However, he still wanted to repair it. The reason for that was that Simon couldn't shake off the feeling that there was a reason why he received the crown as a reward for the fourth trial. It had to be more than a mere coincidence.

He suspected that the Radiant Crown might hold some crucial significance for the future trials in the forbidden grounds, or perhaps even on his own future.

Deep down, he felt a nagging intuition that the crown could be an essential piece to the puzzle, and he couldn't afford to overlook its potential. It might be a quest item, something he would need to progress further in the trials and overcome the challenges that awaited him.

Despite the risks and contradictions, he couldn't dismiss the possibility that this item held a critical role in the grand scheme of things.

His decision to repair the crown was not merely based on a whim or desire for power. It was a calculated gamble, a leap of faith in his instincts as a game developer.

When he explained his reasoning to Prime, the latter nodded his head, impressed by Simon's resolve and vision. It saw the sincerity in his eyes and the determination in his voice.

"Very well," Prime said with a nod. "I will repair the Radiant Crown of Brilliance, but I will also incorporate a safeguard that will prevent its power from conflicting with yours. It will be a challenging task, but I am confident that I can achieve it."

"That will be a great help... Thank you, Prime," Simon spoke with gratitude. The latter was even going to the lengths of installing a safeguard into the crown just so that he wouldn't harm himself while trying to use the item.

#### Chapter 707- Talks of Heart

Simon had no doubts that Prime would be able to repair it after he saw the abilities and talents of this unparalleled craftsman. A few weeks later, the radiant crown of brilliance will once again shine with its divine light.

"Keep that Item over in that container. I will need to create a few special equipments to negate the effects of the curse energy before I can work on it" Prime pointed at a container not far away from here.

"Now then, state your last business".

Simon had three reasons for coming here, as explained before, first was to check on Prime and how he was adapting to his new habitat. The second was to repair the Radaitn Crown of Brilliance and the last...

"I want you to tell me about the Eye of Enigma".

The last reason was to inquire and learn about the mysterious eye, who had chosen him as its master.

"I thought you would ask that" Prime muttered, not surprised that Simon asked him about the eye.

Prime took a deep breath before delving into the mysterious history of the Eye of Enigma. He spoke of ancient legends that spoke of the eye's existence since the dawn of time, a relic that transcended ages and held a power that defied comprehension.

"It is said that the eye had witnessed the rise and fall of civilizations, the birth and destruction of worlds, and had been passed down through the hands of countless beings".

"According to the records and knowledge they left behind, it is said that the Eye of Enigma was an enigmatic artefact, with a will and purpose of its own. It had the ability to choose its master, bestowing its power upon a chosen individual and connecting its fate with theirs".

"Are you saying that the Eye of Enigma has chosen me for a reason, linking its destiny with mine?" Simon pointed at himself, surprise evident in his eyes.

It was entirely a coincidence that the eye of enigma fell in his hand, however, what now? The eyes had chosen him for a reason, some kind of purpose that he needed to fulfil.

"What kinds of purpose does it want me to fulfil?".

When asked that, Prime shrugged his shoulders saying "Beats me, I have never possessed the Eye of Enigma before, so there is no way I would know. In fact, it was also my first time seeing it with my own eyes at the auction. I am surprised by the fact that Merchant was able to get their hands on it. Perhaps the Eye of Enigma used the merchant as a means to get to you".

Prime explained, he omitted the part where he appeared before the Merchant of the Damned on his own volition to chase after the Eye of Enigma. His journey ultimately led Prime to Simon, a peculiar demon with a tangled and chaotic destiny.

If Prime were to put it in words, a normal person's destiny would be like a piece of thread with some knots and twists here and there. However, Simon's destiny was unlike anything Prime had ever seen.

His was like a ball of yarn, chaotic and full of knots, impossible to be untied. This was also the reason why Prime chose to follow Simon, he wanted to know what kind of destiny and purpose, fate had for this demon.

Although not fully convinced, Simon still nodded his head in understanding at Prime's words. The visions that Simon experienced during the moment when he first touched the item, the glimpse of the ruins he had seen. It was as if the eye wanted him to see and tell something.

Though it was still a mystery as to what it wanted to convey, one thing was clear, his fate was now intricately entwined with the Eye of Enigma.

"Well now that this eye has chosen me, whatever this purpose is, I will fulfil it. However, before that shouldn't I understand some of its abilities? If the eye is as you say, an item that existed since the dawn of time and not mere trinket, shouldn't it have some flashy powers, some supreme ability that would be worth all this nonsense?"

Simon asked, his voice was filled with excitement and anticipation. The thought of unlocking the potential of the Eye of Enigma, an item that existed since the dawn of time, was enthralling.

However, to his disappointment, Prime shrugged again, saying that he did not know.

"As I told you before, I have never possessed the eye before, and their powers are all a mystery even to me. As far as I know, they grant their wielder immense abilities that are beyond mortal comprehension. But the true extent of those powers, I cannot say".

Simon couldn't help but feel a pang of disappointment as he absorbed Prime's words. The hopes of gaining some overpowered ability was quickly replaced with the harsh reality that even Prime, with his vast knowledge and skills, could not provide him with the answers he sought.

"That's right?" Prime could tell that Simon was very excited about wanting to learn the abilities of the eye. However, like the latter, he "So, even you don't know what kind of abilities the Eye possesses?" he asked, trying to hide the slight tinge of frustration in his voice.

"That's right?" Prime could tell that Simon was very excited about wanting to learn the abilities of the eye. However, like the latter, he too was mostly oblivious about it.

Though that said...

"I do not know about the abilities of the eye. However, what I do know is the records and knowledge left behind by the previous masters of the Eyes. That's right, The Eye of Enigma is not alone. There are other similar artefacts scattered throughout the universe, each with its own unique abilities".

"Some are said to possess the ability to peer into the fabric of reality, while others are believed to have the power to manipulate the very laws of nature and time. What I can tell you for sure is that each eye possesses immense power".

"So what you are telling me is that that there are other eyes like this in the world, each with their own supreme abilities and that I have to find for myself what kind of ability the eye that I possess has?"...

"Indeed, it is a grand mystery waiting to be unravelled. But remember, the Eye of Enigma chose you for a reason. It saw something in you that made it connect with your destiny. You may not fully understand its abilities now, but I believe that with time as you become more accustomed to the eye, the eye will reveal its secrets to you."

Simon's eyes widened with intrigue as he absorbed Prime's knowledge. The latter explained that the eye might be dormant for now or was observing its new master, attuning itself to their essence.

But as time passed and their bond deepened, the abilities of the eye Simon took a deep breath and sighed. As per Prime, it was impossible to know what the eye did at this moment, he could only wait for it to gradually come to Simon.

Simon took a deep breath and sighed. As per Prime, it was impossible to know what the eye did at this moment, he could only take it slow and let the eye do its thing. Maybe someday its abilities would come to him naturally.

For now, there was nothing he could do here.



"I see... well then, my objective for coming here is over. Prime, I leave the two items in your hand. Notify me at once when either one of them is completed"...

"Yeah, you can count on me".

After saying that, Simon teleported away from the Main Floor.

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A great task lay ahead of him, the bundle of documents waiting for him to examine and approve. After fighting the beast with all of his might, Simon was finally able to take down the paperwork.

Pond of Serenity... Simon continued his training as his body was covered with a pale blue haze released by the ample mana crystals that lay around him in an arranged manner.

Slowly his level started rising and after a while, all the crystals turned into empty husks. Simon took some time to self reflect on his rising strength.

The Eye of Enigma or the Celestial Oculars was a sentient item that had its own will and purpose. Mastering it would require careful understanding and time. As such, he could only focus his attention on raising his strength.

However, that said, it's important to note that for Simon, levelling up was not the sole determinant of strength. Strategy, skill, experience, and the effective utilization of one's abilities also played crucial roles.

Levelling up provides a solid foundation and amplifies a demon's innate potential, but it is the combination of all these factors that truly determines their prowess in battles and challenges.

For Simon, increasing his level meant not only gaining raw power but also refining his techniques, expanding his knowledge, and becoming more adept at harnessing the skills he acquired after ranking up.

So of course, he didn't ignore the training routine Irene had prepared for him. Side by side with his own training to get stronger, Simon also trained in Mana Control and gaining proficiency in other skills.

From an observer's perspective, it might seem like he was overdoing things, attempting to juggle multiple disciplines at once. However, this was a deliberate choice Simon made, while fully being aware that it would be a monumental task.

Many times, he felt the urge to give up, especially when he hit a wall and his progress came to a standstill or when exhaustion threatened to overwhelm him. But his uncanny tenacity and resilience, traits forged from the struggles of his previous life, came to his rescue whenever he had such thoughts.

## Chapter 708- Talks Of Heart (2)

The desire to become stronger, to protect the dungeon and those he cared about, and the authority to control his own fate fueled his determination, pushing Simon forward even when the road seemed arduous.

As the days turned into weeks, and the weeks into months, Simon noticed remarkable progress. His level continued to rise steadily, and with it, he felt his control over mana improving.

The mana seemed to flow more smoothly within him, responding to his will with greater precision. As a result, he can now cast spells with a consistent output and without expending too much mana unnecessarily.

That was not all, with him improving his mana control, Simon could distinctly feel that the wall that barred his progress in magic from advancing any further, loosened a little.

He could now cast more powerful advanced magic and spells, even his other attributes like the Gale and Lightning magic were swiftly being honed and pushed due to the result of his training.

As for the Amalgamation magic, it has reached a realm where Simon was able to merge three attributes together into one magic. Of course, it still remained to be seen whether it could be used in combat. After all, the current Amalgamation magic was just too...

"It looks like your training is progressing well"

As Simon was busy reflecting on his progress, he failed to notice the presence of Irene approaching him.

"Yeah, though there is still a lot of progress to be made" Simon smiled refreshingly as he gazed at the stunning woman who could effortlessly capture everyone's attention with her subtle movements.

Irene sat beside him and spoke as she gazed at the picturesque serenity pond in front of her.

"Ever since returning from the outside world this time, it seemed like you have changed even more".

"Oh?! How so?"...

"It's like you are more forward looking now, as if you found your goal or something. The fire inside you seemed to be blazing with even more intensity and fervour now" Irene explained.

When Simon heard her response and observed that aspect of her personality, a mischievous grin appeared on his face, and he couldn't resist teasing her a bit.

"You are right; however these changes aren't something that one can notice without paying much attention. It looks like you have been looking at me quite a lot lately. It couldn't be that you have fallen for..."

"What nonsense. I am going now" Irene retorted with an icy tone. Just as she turned around to walk away, she felt a firm grip on her hand, stopping her in her tracks.

That rough and solid hand that held her were full of callouses; it was a sign of how intensely he had been training these days. Irene couldn't help but notice how strong and dependable they felt.

And then the next moment before she could say anything, she found herself pulled into an embrace. Simon's arms wrapped around her in a warm and tender gesture, and she felt her heart skip a beat like a rabbit caught in the moment.

"What are you doing?" Irene asked, her voice slightly passive. This sudden closeness was unexpected and left her emotions in a state of turmoil.

"What am I doing you ask? I'm just testing a theory" Simon replied with a mischievous grin "I wanted to see if I could make your heart race as fast as mine does when I'm with you."

His warm breath sent a shiver down Irene's spine, and she couldn't help but feel herself blushing at the proximity. She tried to regain her composure, but Simon's embrace was both comforting and exhilarating.

"I... I don't know what you're talking about," Irene spoke, trying to maintain her composure. This icy queen can try and suppress her emotions all she wants; however, the truth was evident in her eyes.

Simon chuckled softly, his fingers gently brushing a lock of her hair away from her face "It's okay, you don't have to say anything, I feel like I can understand you without the need of words right now".

As they stood by the serenity pond, their bodies close, Irene could feel the heat radiating from Simon's skin. It was a reminder of the passionate moment that had ignited within him during their last training.

It wasn't just Simon's physical strength that drew her in; it was the intensity of his spirit and the way he faced challenges head-on that captured her heart. And now, in this tender moment, she felt a connection that went beyond words.

"You see Irene, I am not the only one who's changed, you've also changed a lot since then. You're not only more open to everyone, but you're also starting to smile more often these days."...

"What do you know?"...

"I know... Maybe it's because I've spent so much time with you. I've learned to read the subtle changes in your expressions and the emotions in your eyes. That is why, I know that this place is your favourite place in all of the dungeon and that you have been coming here every day to check on my progress".

"I also know that you are very worried about me so much so that tears accumulated in your eyes when you saw me lying in the bed in a comatose state all those months ago".

At that moment, Irene's body became stiff, and her eyes widened in surprise. She hadn't expected Simon to be aware of her emotions, especially during those vulnerable moments when she had let her guard down.

"I..." Her usual composed facade was slipping, and she struggled to find the right words to respond.

Seeing her like that, Simon's warm smile softened, and he gently cupped her cheek with his hand.

"It's okay. You don't have to hide it from me," he reassured her. "Your concern and care mean a lot to me. It's because of your support and encouragement that I've come this far. You're an incredible person, Irene, and I'm grateful to have you by my side".

"You have not only become an indispensable part of my dungeon, you're my confidant, my ally, my friend and my... woman".

In that moment, time seemed to stand still as they gazed into each other's eyes. The world around them faded away, and all that mattered was the warmth of their bodies pressed together, the softness of their breaths mingling, and the unspoken emotions that filled the air.

And then, in a tender moment, Simon leaned in and placed a gentle kiss on Irene's lips. It was a gesture that spoke of his feelings, of the unspoken emotions that had been growing between them.

Irene did not reject his advance, it was as if all hesitation within her was washed away when she heard Simon's words.

She silently wrapped her hands around him, acknowledging her feelings. The serenity pond before them reflected the scene, adding a touch of magic to the atmosphere, as if the world itself was celebrating this newfound connection.

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After a while, as they finally left each other's embrace, Irene glanced at the grinning Simon in front of her and questioned "There is something that I have been meaning to ask you, and I want you to promise me that you will answer truthfully".

Seeing Irene's expression turn serious, the mischievous glint in Simon's eyes disappeared, replaced by a deep sincerity.

"Alright, ask away. I swear that I will answer truthfully" he replied earnestly, his voice firm.

Irene's crystal blue eyes locked onto Simon's, as if seeking the truth in the depths of his soul.

"What I want to know is why you are being so intimate towards me. What is the reason for your affection? Why do you feel the way you feel towards me? Due to my special conditions, all my feelings are frozen. It is an unnecessary for my powers".

"However, whenever I'm with you, there is never a moment where I can keep these emotions in control. It is as if they have a mind of their own. Sometimes these emotions feel foreign, like some long forgotten sentiments that ache my heart. But they are far too genuine to call it false".

"That is why, I sometimes wonder if the emotions that I feel are truly my own or something that I have been made to believe. This is also the reason why I want to know if the feelings you have for me are truly yours, or if there's something affecting your emotions to be the way they are".

Listening to her, Simon understood the weight of her question. He had seen the walls she built around her heart, her ice-cold demeanour that she used as a shield. But he also saw the flickers of warmth and gentleness beneath the surface, glimpses of a person that was bound by her own powers.

Simon took her hands in his own, thought for a moment before looking at her with a gentle and reassuring smile.

"I can't explain exactly why I feel this way, but from the moment we met, there was something about you that drew me in. Perhaps you are right, the influence of some kind of force being in effect cannot be discounted".

There was something about Irene that drew Simon in from the moment he summoned her from that mysterious abyss. And as they slowly got closer, these feelings only just intensified further.

He did not even know if those feelings were love or not. However, if there was one thing he was certain, it was that...

"Irene I want you to know that the feelings I have for you right now, are entirely my own. There is no external influence or manipulation affecting my emotions. Everything I feel, every thought, every moment we've shared together—it's all genuine"...

I know it took some time; however, things are finally progressing. There are also some hints dropped here and there.

## Chapter 709- A Family

Simon's words were sincere, and Irene could feel the truth in his touch and the sincerity in his eyes.

She gazed at him and after a while, she spoke again her voice carried a mixture of vulnerability and hesitation.

"I see, then there is one thing you must know about me. My memories ... I don't have any. I don't know where I came from, and I don't know why my emotions, powers, and memories are all sealed. No matter how hard I try to remember, it's all a vague and muddled chaos. It causes me immense pain whenever I attempt to recall anything from my past".

As Irene's words sank in, Simon's heart swelled with empathy and admiration for the woman before him. He had always sensed that there was more to Irene than what met the eye, but now, hearing her share her deepest struggles, he felt a newfound understanding of her complex emotions.

He could only imagine how terrifying and frustrating it must be for Irene to not remember anything about her past. Memories were the foundation of one's identity, and to have them taken away left her feeling adrift, unsure of who she truly was.

Irene continued, her voice shaking slightly "This is why I'm afraid of these emotions. It's precisely because I can't remember my past that I'm afraid of what these feelings mean"...

"I understand" Simon gently reached out, and held the trembling body of the woman in front of him.

This was the first time he had seen her so vulnerable. The usual Irene was always cold and composed no matter what the situation. So seeing her like that, made Simon want to hold onto her and rescue her from the burden she was carrying.

"I can only imagine how frightening and unsettling it must be to face the world with your memories shrouded in mystery. It takes immense courage to open up and share your feelings, especially when you're unsure of their origins".

"That is why, I have always admired your strength and composure. It's okay to have moments of uncertainty and fear. We all carry our own struggles, what matters is how we face them and how we grow from the challenges life throws at us".

At the very least that is the only way that Simon knew and learned through his past experiences.

"Anyways, who said that you don't have any memories, aren't there the ones you have now, the ones you have made here, the people that you met in this dungeon, the ones you cherish".

From his embrace, Irene looked at him, her eyes shimmering with unshed tears.

"Aren't you afraid that the person you have feelings for will turn out to be a completely different person later on? Will you still love her once she gains her memories?" her voice barely above a whisper.

Simon smiled gently, guided her hand to his chest, letting her feel the steady rhythm of his heartbeat.

"I may not fully understand the depth of what you're going through, but I'm not scared. The woman I fell for is you. It is not going to change even if you become a completely different person. My feelings will still remain genuine whether you do or do not gain your memories. I just want you to know you are not alone, I'm here, and I promise to stand by you no matter what".

His reply was unwavering as his heartbeat.

Seeing this, Irene's eyes softened, and she leaned into his touch, finding comfort in his presence. For the first time in a long while, she felt a sense of solace, one that was genuine.



A fleeting smile crossed Irene's lips, a fragile yet genuine expression that made Simon's heart skip a beat. He found himself wanting to protect that smile, to be the one who could bring it to her face more often.

As the soft breeze rustled through the mystical floras growing near the pond, Simon and Irene remained close, lost in each other's eyes.

Just when Simon was about to give in to the intense fire burning within him, and follow his instincts, it was disturbed by a timely interference.

"Ahhhh!!... no this can't happen. When did Miss Irene get so close to Master? Ahhh!!... this is so frustrating"...

"I told you to shut up. This is an unruly behaviour for a maid"...

"Fufu... Miss Irene's face looks so red"...

"You are right, big brother and big sister look so cute together.. hehe"...

The others tagging behind them all nodded their heads. Who could this entourage that disrupted the entire flow of mood be other than the Valkyries, Cecilia and the vampire twins? The entire gang was here.

Of course, the first one to talk as she chewed the hem of her skirt in jealousy, was Bea. The fires of jealousy emanating from her body was palpable.

The next to speak and who whacked some sense into the former was the current eldest of the maid sisters, Annette.

The mischievous duo, Alice and Cecilia laughed slyly as they observed the romantic atmosphere between the two. As for the others, they silently nodded their heads agreeing with the others.

Simon and Irene were so busy while lost in each other's comfort that they did not even sense the others approaching. It was only when they heard their teasing remarks that they came to their senses.

Hearing them approach, Irene quickly broke away from Simon's embrace and distanced herself. There was no trace of her usual ice like demeanour on her face; instead, it was as red as a tomato.

Contrary to her, Simon's eyes only twitched slightly at this unexpected disruption. Although his face was thick enough to not get embarrassed in such kind of situation, he still felt it was a pity that their mood was interrupted here.

If only they didn't arrive now then perhaps he would have been able to... Simon sighed inside his heart.

"Master!! What were the two of you doing here?" Bea questioned, there was a dangerous glint in her eyes.

"Huh?... I was just discussing something with Irene"...

"Hnn~ you were 'just' discussing something hmm?" Bea continued to stare at Simon as if he was some kind of criminal.

WHACK... "Will you cut it out? Master please forgive her... she is an idiot" To educate that sister of hers, Annette came forward and knocked some sense into her.

Well, even if she can stop her sisters, who can stop Cecilia? She mischievously clung to him saying 'Is this how big brother hugged big sister?'.

"No... No.. princess Cecilia, it was stronger. Master hugged Miss Irene like this.. tightly!!" Alice demonstrated while also clinging to Simon.

The twins weren't among the ones to back down, they too clung onto him.

"Master it's unfair that you only show affection to them. I want you to spill me too" And of course seeing them like that, Bea finally couldn't hold herself back and threw herself into the mix.

Unlike Cecilia, Alice and the others, Bea was still a full grown adult. As such, seeing her cling to Simon with the other kids, it was a funny scene no less.

Left with no choice, Simon entertained everyone. Now that everything has come to this... "Why are you three hesitating there, come on" He beckoned Annette, Emma and Bianca who were silently standing in the distance.

Although they held themselves back, unlike a certain someone, it was clear that they too wanted to get into this moment.

"Th-Then please excuse us" With a flushed face, Annette straightened her glasses and along with Emma and Bianca, she hugged him.

And so while it started as a prank from Cecilia and Alice at first, before he knew it, he was hugging everyone.

Seeing this scene, Irene smiled they looked just like a family—a quirky and playful one, but a family nonetheless.

It was a beautiful moment... "Hehe, big sister Annette you lost. When it comes to bust size, clearly Master prefers mine since they are bigger" Bea passed a snarky comment...

It was a beautiful moment or so Simon would like to think.

After a while...

"So, why are all of you gathered together in one place?" Simon questioned them after they arrived back inside the white palace.

"I called them over" Annette stepped forward and replied.

"You did?"...

"Yes," She picked up the teapot and served Simon a cup of tea "There is an Incident on the upper floors. I believed Master needed to get notified about it urgently".

"Oh? What happened?" An incident that made Annette gather all of his subordinates together. Simon's interest was piqued.

"A few days ago, a unique group of people entered the dungeon. They are currently on the upper floors and are being chased by various teams of adventurers" Annette reported.

"Wait.. you say a group of people? Aren't the first group also adventurers?" As Simon sipped his tea, he noticed some strange points in Annette's reports.

"Yes, the actions of the first group deviates very much from the habits of the adventurers. As such I believe they are not really adventurers" Annette explained.

"Hoh? So what is about this incident that is unusual from the others? It is only just natural for humans to fight when their interests collide" In fact, it was an everyday occurrence inside his dungeon.

If a report was to be collected on the various causes of death of adventurers inside the dungeon, a monsters, traps or getting lost only played a small part in all of it.

large part would be due to the infighting amongst the adventurers. Compared to that, deaths from  
Chapter 710- Pursuers

"Yes, master. Infighting among adventurers is a common occurrence within the dungeon, but this group is different. They do not seek fame, wealth, or glory like other adventurers. Instead, they seem to have a clear purpose and are working together with remarkable coordination".

"Usually, the adventurers roaming on the upper floors are more focused on their personal gains and are quick to turn on each other when the going gets tough. But this group... they are different. They fight as a team, each member covering the other's weaknesses. It's as if they have trained together for a long time" Annette nodded in agreement.

"That is indeed unusual," Simon mused "Most adventurers who are only capable of delving in the upper floors of the dungeon are usually strangers who form temporary alliances based on convenience. But this group you speak about seems to be more than just a chance encounter".

There was something about this group that felt familiar, something that made him remember another group who similarly entered his dungeon in the past.

"Exactly, master" Annette continued. "And that's not all, the reason why I gathered most of the guardians and Administrators here is because this group right after entering the dungeon, has been calling out your name"..

"What?!" In his surprise, Simon almost spilled his tea.

"You heard it right master, this group is going around on every floor shouting your name?"...

"Wait don't tell me they are the.."...

"It's the same group" Annette confirmed. The group she was talking about was the very same group that had entered his dungeon in the past to warn him about the coalition the top five guilds made to topple his dungeon.

Why did they arrive this time? Concerned, Simon straightened his posture as he spoke "On which floor are they right now? Make preparation for me to meet them".

"About that..." Annette made an apprehensive face as she continued "It seems they are not doing very well. The groups that were after them, have cornered them multiple times already and they have already suffered some casualties..."

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—5 Hours ago, 28th Floor, a vast lush forest covered in thick mist. The visibility here was nearly zero, making it an ideal location for ambushes and surprise attacks. In the heart of the fog-laden forest, a tense confrontation was taking place between a group who was doing their best to run away and their relentless pursuers.

Needless to say, the group that was desperately trying to run and throw away their pursuers were in a pretty bad state. Before they came to the tower town, they had more than thirty people in their entourage.

However, most of them died on their way while stopping their pursuers or got gravely injured in the process. Even now, when they dived inside the dungeon, their pursuers did not stop. They employed the help of multiple teams of adventurers to ambush them on numerous floors and were still pursuing them relentlessly.

[Venomous Blade Strike] Two daggers glowed a unique green light and two pursuers who were tailing the group, fell down on the ground dead.

"Dammit.. kuh!!.. There is no end to them" An assassin who came out of the shadow, spoke while clutching his injured right shoulder. Blood seeped out of their grab indicating that they were clearly injured.

"Mister Brett are you alright" A burly knight with dull grey heavy armour tried to support the assassin. However, their hand were slapped away by the assassin...

"Burg?! what the hell are you still doing here? I told you to leave. Your duty her royal highness. You do not have to worry about this old man, just focus on your duty. Go... leave, I will guard your backs"

The assassin named Brett grabbed the warrior and asked them to leave. However, at this moment another voice interjected in between.

"I told him to come back" A woman donned in a black robe, stepped forward. Although she hid her appearance, that noble aura and posture she carried, still couldn't be concealed.

When Brett saw who it was, he couldn't help but widen his eyes in surprise "Your royal highness why are you here? I told you all to leave while I hold them back. Please leave. Alvara take her royal highness and go now".

Brett insisted looking at another woman with short black hair. Just like Brett and everyone, she too had numerous wounds all over her body. The black leather that she wore, had numerous cuts from which blood seeped out. The woman was none other than the guard captain.

Alvara had a complicated face at this moment as she glanced at the woman donned in a black hood. It was clear that she was of the same mind as Brett; however, she did not speak and chose to stay silent because her royal highness had made up her mind.

"Leave? And go where? Tell me Brett, is there any place in this dungeon that is safe? The more we descend, the more powerful and deadlier the monsters will become. Not to mention there is no guarantee that our pursuers will stop chasing us if we descend down. I have already lost many subordinates already, I cannot afford to lose even you guys".

The woman spoke removing her hood. Immediately a beautiful face that carried an inborn nobility and grace appeared in front of everyone's eyes. The woman had long lustrous violet hair, phoenix like eyes that matched the colour of her hair, a shapely nose and perfect lips.

Whether it be her appearance or her aura, it could instantly captivate anyone. The woman these people were calling her royal highness, was none other than Cynthia, the mistress of the Serene Palace Merchant Guild. Her other identity was also the princess of the Ellesmere kingdom.

Hearing her words, Brett was silent, he had nothing to retort. Just like she had said, there was no safe place inside the dungeon. It was whether they died at the hands of the pursuers or the monsters lurking on the floors below.

"Although on your insistence I ran to the dungeon along with you all, I don't think it will work. That demon will not involve himself with us and besides he has no reason to do so. It would be much better if I surrendered myself to the pursuers that way, at least you all won't have to die".

Cynthia suggested with a haggard smile. These people who have died for her, were all her precious subordinates and there were only eight of them remaining. Cynthia didn't want to lose any of them anymore.

"Princess you can't do that. Our pursuers are from the Second Prince's faction, that person does not care about you or your wish. And besides, it is clear that our pursuers do not have any good intentions. If you surrendered yourself to them, you would only be putting yourself in an even greater danger" Alvara persuaded holding onto Cynthia's hands.

"It's just like the guard captain said, your royal highness cannot surrender. We are honoured that you are worried about us, however, you need not worry. If it's for you, we are happy to give up our life. Your royal highness, it was my greatest honour to have joined your shadow guards. You do not need to look back, just keep on proceeding" Brett spoke downing a healing potion.

"Princess let's go" Alvara motioned and the eight people aside from Brett, turned to leave.

Cynthia glanced back at her retainer who even in his old age stuck with her at her most difficult times one last time before turning around to leave.

She only took a few steps when the mist around them wavered and a dozen shadows emerged blocking their path.

"Hey now, who said that you all can leave?" A voice filled with amusement and malice, echoed out.

The mist seemed to part as a couple of figures stepped forward. The person leading them was a young man in his twenties. He had long slick blonde hair, thin eyebrows and a moderately handsome face.

He was wearing a full body armour that had an intricate designs and glint to it indicating that the armour was of quite a high grade. But since he wasn't a combatant, the armour was clearly a mismatch for him.

Behind him followed a tall person who was hiding their identity with a robe. Their poise was like a sword, sharp and graceful and they carried an aura that could only be cultivated by a veteran warrior.

Following behind were several adventurers giving off a strong aura.

The moment Cynthia's group saw them, their heart sank to the pits of their stomach. They all wore a grave face as they realised that escape was not going to be easy.

"Protect the princess" On Alvara's command the group formed a protective formation around the princess.

"Hahaha... You royal highness I do not understand the meaning behind your struggle. You should not know that you cannot run from your fate. Please give up on this futile struggle or else you will even lose the ones currently by your side. Do you see these men behind me, they did not have their fill of blood yet. If I give a simple command they will immediately start attacking you all"

The blonde haired man spoke with a smile as he glanced at Cynthia's haggard group.



"Herm you bastard have you forgotten the benevolence the princess showed you all those years ago when your family was about to be destroyed by the bandits? How dare you of all people betray the princess like this? You mongrel do you have no humanity?" Alvara shouted looking at the blonde haired person with hatred and disgust.