Chapter 20 - Demon Abyss

Varian looked at the huge red mouth in the sky. It seemed to devour even the darkness.

This was the Demon Abyss ruled by the Demon Abyss King!

"I'll give you a brief intro on Abyss," Reina spoke using directly into their minds.

"Abyss follow a system of strict hierarchy. The Eight Abysses are ruled by five Abyss Kings and three Abyss Queens." she started with the basic knowledge.

"Abyss is its own world and governed as a kingdom. Demon Abyss is as big as Earth's landmass.

It is divided into four provinces. Each province is supervised by an Archduke.

Each province is further divided into duchies overseen by Dukes and each Duchy is divided into Counties."

Even though Varian expected Abyssals to be civilized, he didn't expect them to follow a structure similar to Old Earth's.

"Your entrance test is going to be conducted in the main city of Red county. A county is ruled by an Abyss Lord, a level 4 Awakener." she stressed the final words and paused.

"What!"

"This is suicide!"

The candidates couldn't help themselves and started to whisper. There was a common dread spreading amongst the crowd.

Majority of the students here were Level 2. Only a few elite were Level 3 and none were Level 4. In fact, every three levels was a watershed.

So asking them to venture in an area governed by a Level 4 Abyssal is no different from seeking death.

Reina looked at them with a cold gaze, without the slightest change in expression and continued "Abyss Lords are in their castles and usually don't come out. The biggest challenge you'd face is Abyss Knights — Level 2s. They constitute the Abyss Lord's army.

Also beware of Abyss Commander, the second strongest, a Level 3."

{Entering Demon Abyss}

The space ship's AI announced, and Varian's view blurred. The spaceship dived into the red mouth and a new world unfolded in front.

The sky was red with a black moon. Varian gazed out and saw the wilderness of the Abyss.

They passed through forests, rivers and mountains. They flew above several Abyssal villages and hamlets. He saw Abyssals everywhere.

'This is… a different race, a different civilization and a different world.'

The spaceship slowed down. With his superhuman sight, Varian could make out the silhouette of a giant city.

'This is the city of Abyss Lord?' Varian took a deep breath and clenched his fists.

'This is my only chance. I must breakthrough to Level 2 and get selected. I must!'

"Now the practical test rules," Colonel Reina snapped her fingers and a sci-fi watch appeared in front ot them.

"These are cadet comms, better than the ones on the market. They'll register the number of Abyssals you killed.

Each Level 2 Abyss you kill gives you 1 merit point, mp. Merit point is going to be the currency within military.

Those who survive after reaching 5 merit points would be selected. We'll pick you up tomorrow at the same after 24 earth hours."

The candidates went silent. They thought they were hearing things.

Abyssals were as strong as humans, if not stronger. To kill 5 Level 2s in 24 hours was an uphill task and for a few, no less than a pipedream.

'Selected means into the lowest Defense Academy.' Varian sighed inwardly at the difficulty.

There were five Defense Academies on earth. They were cream of the crop. But even amongst them, disparities were obvious. Earth Imperial Defense Academy was the undisputed first by a long shot.

"2 minutes for questions." Reina said in a monotonous tone.

"Um, how many merit points to get selected into Imperial Academy?" a boy asked. He looked around 17 and he perhaps participated this time to better his chances for the next try.

"10 mp." Reina's serious expression seemed to have a hint of teasing and she continued "For outstanding performance, you can even become an honorary student."

'Oh shit! 10 Level 2 Abyssals. Honorary...forget about it.' Varian facepalmed.

"What about Level 1 Abyssals?" a girl asked in a hesitant tone.

"0 mp. We don't need cadets who can only kill the weakest of the bunch. You're going to be trained as officers. You will be the ones taking on the strongest foes." Reina frowned and said.

'So I can only kill Level 2 Abyssals...but with my strength, I can't face them head on.' Varian tried to find a solution but couldn't.

He wasn't strong enough to take on a Level 2. Maybe he could kill one Level 2, but that'd need him to nearly put his life on the line, similar to what happened in the Dungeon. But 1 mp won't let him into Imperial Academy.

He didn't know what to do, but he knew he had to do it. Right then, the cadet watch latched onto his wrist, surprising Varian.

{Identity: Varian

Level: 1}

'Hey System, how does it know my level?' Varian asked.

[Are you treating me as a technician?

The cadet watch can analyze the aura flow and judge your level. This is also how everyone judges levels.

I can lower your Aura level.]

'Don't. I'm sure military already has data on my awakening and visit to murloc islands.'

'But still, killing 10 Abyssals of Level 2 is the requirement. Even battling a single Abyssal is risky. No wonder Defense Academies boast of the best Awakeners.'

"For those aiming for the honorary, it's not just killing way more abyssals, if you perform any action of strategic value in the county level, you'll be awarded merit points." She glanced at the rich kids and her tone seemed to soften.

"Free Advice: Get used to Abyss Will if you don't want to die." A sadistic smile formed on Reina's face.

Varian was confused, but before he could think, a strong wind hit his face.

"Daaaamn!" the floor under their seats opened and Varian, along with all candidates, fell from the sky.

The fierce wind hit his face, and his hair danced wildly. Varian clutched onto his seat for his life and cursed the madwoman.

The seat continued to accelerate, and the air friction only increased.

Varian forced himself to calm down. 'They won't kill us. So there must be a solution.'

He carefully moved tilted his neck and gazed at the cadet comm.

{Do you wish to activate aviation of the seats?}

"Now!" He yelled and the descent abruptly stopped, and almost threw him off.

Varian took deep breath to calm himself down. Thousand feet above the sky, it was a novel experience; hover cars didn't fly at this height.

He looked around and realized some had fallen out of their seats.

But thankfully, it seemed to trigger the AI, and it caught them soon. If it was a normal person, they'd have broken a bone or two, but awakners were alright with some torture.

A few seemed to know this setup from the beginning and were already descending at a controlled pace.

"Land safely 2km outside the city." He ordered, and the seat descended at a safe speed.

'Was this supposed to serve as a warning and push us to combat mode?' He wondered.

Upon descent, he observed a huge hill in the middle of the city and on top of it was a… castle?

The seat landed and Varian jumped onto the red ground. In the vicinity, more candidates landed.

They used their comms and located their comrades. They started to group.

Varian knew no one here and didn't think anyone would be interested in working together with a Level 1.

He planned to go ahead when —

"Varian!" hearing the familiar voice, he slowly turned around to see Kyle in the most unexpected of places.