

Earths GMagus 491

Chapter 491: Monks

The figure that showed up from behind the shadows was none other than their dear friend from the far eastern world.

"Chumo!"

Seeing him after several weeks' worth of journey with only four of them made everyone very happy.

"Great to see you... What are you doing here?"

Chumo looked around and shook his head, a message for them to not make a scene in the middle of this still crowded city. Everyone nodded in agreement and walked inside to talk back in the inn's tavern.

Klea reinforced her enchantment and ordered the man to provide them with some food and to treat them like normal guests without any relation to the current event.

After so long, finally the five members of the Earth Magus team had gathered together. This was the first time all five had gathered outside the bounds of the academy.

Perhaps, thanks to that, the ice between them from the remaining conflicts have melted and their smiles were much warmer than before.

"So I heard you guys are looking for information about this ritual, right?"

Emery and the others nodded, but while Klea did nod, she kept staring at Chumo with a questioning glare...

"What is it?" Chumo raised his eyebrows at her and asked.

"Before that, I need to check if you really are our Chumo! This must be some kind of elaborate illusion!"

"Whoa, whoa, what's gotten into you? It's me, really!"

Emery stared at the two and quickly activated his spirit reading just in case Klea was right. From what he was able to pick up, there was no way for the Chumo that was standing before them to be fake, but then again Klea was their best spirit reader; if she is suspicious, that would be grounds enough to doubt the truth of his words.

"That can't be! The Chumo I know was too shy to even talk to me properly!" Klea said.

Chumo gave her an awkward smile until his narrow eyes practically disappeared and said, "Guys, come on, it's been one and a half years, I am sure you all have experienced many things, as well."

The statement was not wrong at all, all of them had pretty dramatic experiences these past few months, it wouldn't be weird if something happened that could cure Chumo weird sickness as well.

"Aw, I see... must be something to do with a girl, good for you Chumo" said Klea, teasing him with a look that once again made Chumo returned to his old self and unable to say a word.

The teasing and jokes eventually passed in favor of a serious discussion and Chumo started to explain about the ritual. The event was usually held in secret, but in the eastern world, it was a little more well known.

History had mentioned about a war that happened a few hundred years ago involving the Qin dynasties in the north, the Greeks in the west and the Mauryan empire, all fighting for the right to claim the sacred tree's Holy Fruit. In order to prevent that, the temple prepared this event every 10 years.

Surprisingly, although Chumo did receive an invitation, it did not come from his father the king, but from the Dongboyou shrine priest, the kingdom's royal sorcerer.

Chumo told them that, even though they got an invitation, the Dongboyou never really participated, as they had no chance to win at all. Hence, the invitation would always be kept by the high priestess. This time was no exception, for the royal sorcerer still wasn't interested to come.

"Well, that is until I received Klea's message that you were all heading east. I had a hunch that you would show up here. Considering we all are talking now, I guessed I was right"

Unfortunately for them, even Chumo had no idea where or how they could get extra invitations. They decided to just follow him tomorrow. There must be a way to sort this out.

Now that the serious discussion was over, they decided to have some fun by eating and drinking, while sharing their stories. Be it good or bad, they spilled them all as if they were in a yearly family gathering.

The next morning the group headed toward the temple standing on top of the hill. The temple was a huge complex surrounded by stone walls and filled with stone buildings.

These devotees of the temple would wear nothing but yellow robes, most of them shaved their head, but a few chose to tie their hair up.

Most of the monks they could see were sitting on the ground and chanting, they were mostly steeped deep in their training.

"Emery, at least half of them are cultivators like us," Klea said and Emery nodded in agreement, as he could feel it too.

Unexpectedly, Chumo interjected. "They're only rank one and two, none of them managed to even reach rank 3."

That surprised the others, including Klea, as her superb talent in spirit reading and S-rank aptitude in magic still couldn't guess it that accurately. Not even Emery with his maximum spirit force

Chumo looked at his friends, smiled and explained, "Ahh, didn't I tell you?" He pointed towards his left eye and the others saw there was white line in the middle of his jet black iris.

This was the ability he received when he broke the legendary Dongboyou bow in that cave, known as [Eye of the Raven]. This ability was also the reason why he could spot them quickly last night. Another of its abilities enabled the wielder to see the other person's stats.

"That is a great and useful skill indeed!"

The group arrived in front of a pair of huge gates made of stone and surrounded by more stone walls spreading across the place. Inside, there were at least a dozen strong looking monks. Chumo whispered that they were all rank 4 cultivators.

Amongst the crowds, Emery saw the group wearing all-black garb he saw yesterday and they walked without talking towards the gate, but only the person wearing the silver mask entered. The others took a spot in the field and sat in a lotus position, following the meditating monks all around them.

"The silver mask guy had reached rank 6, pretty strong," said Chumo.

The group then headed toward the gate and Chumo gave him his invitation and inquired about the invitation for his friends.

The monk politely bowed and said.

"My apologies, only those with an invitation are allowed to enter this place."

Chapter 492: Chant

No matter what they did, the group was barred from entering. Only Chumo himself, the one with an invitation, was allowed entry. Hence, he decided not to enter the place just yet.

Emery watched as his three friends tried to find a way to enter. Julian talked about how he came from far across Rome to be here, Thrax tried to intimidate the monk by showing off his strength, while Klea proved she was the queen of Egypt herself.

But the monk did not budge and he kept repeating the same thing. With a smile and a bow, the monk defied their requests.

When they were about to try that again, they felt another group approaching the gate to gain entry, hence they decided to step away.

It was a group of people wearing clothes made of goat furs lined with soft, silky fabric. They all carried weapons made of stone, but the only one who entered was an old woman in colorful robes. Julian's eyes perked up in recognition. "Oh, it's the balkan shamans."

Chumo looked at her intently before adding. "She's a rank 5. Pretty decent."

Not long after that, a big group walking close to each other came. They wore silk dresses and robes in all white. This time, it was Chumo who recognized them.

"They are the Han's scholars." Chumo muttered.

The reason Chumo knew them so well was not just because the Hans are the biggest power across Asia, but also because his kingdom was constantly attacked and invaded by the Hans.

Although they all wore delicate silk robes, a thin, long sword rested on the side of their waist, a sure sign that they were a group of swordsmen. The leader of the group talked to the monk, before parting and revealing two people.

One man and one woman wearing white silk robes entered the place, but no one could see their face, as they wore an opaque veil.

"They are very strong, both at the peak of rank 6. I can see why they say the Hans are the usual winner of this ritual."

Just like before, the rest of the Han's group went to sit in the fields. All two dozens of their group were all having high spirit force.

"Even the entourage were all at least rank 4 cultivators. The Hans are at a very different level."

Not long afterwards, another group came and Emery looked at them in surprise. The group consisted mostly of silver knights bearing an emblem he could recognize, the symbol of Icen Kingdom. They were led by a man in his forties.

With the help of his enhanced hearing, Emery picked up the name of the leader, Frayne.

He recognized that name as one of the wizards Gaious once talked about. He was the youngest among the four known wizards of Briton. The fact this wizard came all the way here from Briton was a surprise for Emery.

"Do you know him, Emery? He's rank 5," Chumo said.

"Well, he's from my island, but no, not really."

More and more groups came and, as usual, one or two would enter the premises while the others sat on the field. Emery followed suit to not stand out, but he started to wonder why all these people would sit on the field like this.

Just when he was thinking more about the reason, he heard the sharp sound of a gong being hit. The sound reverberated throughout the whole temple and everyone who sat on the field were suddenly sweating. They all closed their eyes in full concentration.

Within seconds, Emery realized what happened. In time with the gong's chimes, he could feel strong energy pouring out from within the gate, followed by an echo of mystical chanting that could be heard throughout the temple complex.

The chanting continued in time with the beats and created a gentle flow of energy, but still strong enough to let the group feel its pressure.

The energy pressure quickly shocked the group and they activated their spirit reading to try and sense the source from behind the gate. However, none of them was able to obtain an accurate reading. Not Emery with his maxed spirit force, Klea with her S-rank aptitude and talent, or even Chumo with his newly acquired ability, [Eye of the Raven].

"A magus? Here on our planet?" Klea whispered and Emery could only nod in response. Although that answer would just add more questions that were the only thing they could come up with.

Luckily, although the flowing energy and the chant were strong, it was harmless and soothed their spiritual core.

The group sat in a lotus formation and concentrated on the chant, following the other people there. The combination of the rhythmic sounds and chants made them feel as if they were inside the stone origin room back in the academy; except, instead of a stone, each time the gong was hit, they felt their spirit

core thrum in time with it, and with each beat, the feeling of power flowing all around them only became stronger.

The chanting went on for two hours, but at that short span of time, everyone could feel an increase in their cultivation level, especially Klea and Chumo who just received one point increase in their spirit force. Meanwhile, Emery, Thrax and Julian stayed at the same level, as they were waiting for a breakthrough.

When the chanting was over, Emery saw all the people who were sitting on the field open their eyes from their meditation, each of them satisfied with what they had just experienced. Perhaps, this was the reason why all the visitors and the monks here had a high amount of spirit force and why everyone stayed despite not having a chance to obtain the holy fruit.

The group was prepared to go in and see for themselves what was happening inside. If they were still rejected, Emery was prepared to open his [Spatial Gate] and sneak everyone in. But, when they approached the gate, the gate swung open and a little monk, a boy that looked no more than 10 years old, came out accompanied by two guarding monks.

Right after he walked out, his eyes landed on them. The boy's eyes looked deep despite his age, as if telling the world that he had seen a lot during his short life.

"Dear visitors, you are all allowed to enter. The Abbot has been waiting for you."

The door was finally open for them.

Chapter 493: Ritual Begin

The group quickly made their way through the gate, being led by the little monk and his guards who welcomed them. They swiftly entered another pathway that was surrounded by walls on each of their sides.

As they walked through the path together, Chumo looked a little confused as well as doubtful. Emery, who noticed his expression, quickly asked what was going on. He then whispered something that brought complete surprise to everyone in the group.

"The young monk is a rank 4 cultivator."

Several gasps immediately rang out in the air. Emery and the others turned to each other and could clearly see the disbelief in their eyes.

Not long after, the group arrived in an open area, where five towering buildings could be seen.

Upon a closer look, one would realize the buildings were made of stone and covered with countless vines, giving them an archaic atmosphere.

The buildings were apparently the temples. The main temple being the one in front of them, across the open area. Meanwhile, the four were split into two and situated at the sides, surrounding the open area.

The open area itself was not empty. There was a massive stone platform built there, which was currently surrounded with people who entered earlier than Emery's group.

Emery and the others, all five were led to an empty space in one corner. Apparently, being the last to come had made them the center of attention, especially when all of the five seemed to be in one group.

Seeing the arrival of Emery and the others, one of the invitees evidently couldn't hold back what was on his mind as he commented,

"What is happening here? I never knew we are now allowing kids to spectate."

Emery's group swiftly turned their heads and saw a fat, bearded man; he was the one who spoke. As usual, it was Thrax who quickly responded as he glared at the man. In the meantime, the others walked toward their spot and took a seat.

Emery ignored Thrax's actions and observed everyone on the scene. There were about two dozen people gathered in this place and it was actually true that the five of them were the youngest among them.

Even so, the words said by the fat man were mostly ignored, as people with strong enough spirit force would know that Emery and the others were not to be trifled with. Hence, the situation quickly became normal, as if nothing happened.

"Please wait here until the ritual begins." said the little monk, before excusing himself and walking to the main temple.

While they were waiting for the main event to begin, Chumo decided to explain what it was all about. Apparently, it was just a plain, last man standing type of competition.

Those who thought they were strong enough could walk up to the platform and stand for the challenge. They would be then challenged and fought until there was only one from them remaining. Then, the renowned Holy Fruit would be given to that person.

"That seems simple enough." Emery commented, while Thrax was awed at how much Chumo had talked earlier.

"Participant in the group will be benefited then" Klea added, which was affirmed by Julian's nod.

This kind of rule was the reason why the duo of Hans swordsmen often won this event. Because it was stated that one only needed to be the last one standing to receive the reward, the Hans only had to swap places every few fights.

Emery felt the rule was too flexible, but who was he to judge this hundreds of years of tradition?

They were already happy to be invited and allowed to participate, especially when there were five of them. Wouldn't this exact kind of rule be beneficial for them?

Chumo once again scanned all the invitees and found the strongest was still the two Hans swordsmen and that silver-masked figure with their Rank 6. The majority of people here were Rank 6, while the fat man who commented on them was merely a Rank 2.

Hearing this, a confident expression appeared and etched on Julian's face. "This is going to be a walk in the park. Just let them directly experience the might of our legendary gladiator, he alone will do."

The group mood immediately turned bright, as if their win was guaranteed.

Emery, on the other hand, still felt nervous unlike his friends. His Spirit Reading ability perceived something really bizarre with the five temples standing before them. And, in addition to it, there was the possibility of a magus living in this place.

Several minutes later, the sound of a gong rang out loudly in the air. In an instant, the same energy felt before exploded, which was then followed by chants.

Everyone's attention was caught, as two dozen monks came out of the main temple in an orderly manner. They moved fast, but produced no sound. Among them were the little monk and the Abbot, the head monk who wore a slightly different yellow robe.

The group of monks walked toward the center and made lines with the Abbot positioned in the middle. The Abbot's appearance was not something that Emery, as well as the others, expected at all.

The figure was a tall charismatic man in his 50s, with a body that looked more like a fighter than a monk. Klea heard the whispers and murmurs of other invitees around them about the name of the Abbot and she quickly remembered drawings and rumors about a certain king who converted into a monk 200 years ago. A man named Ashaka.

"The Abbot is the great Ashaka?" Klea muttered with a look of disbelief on her face.

Ashaka was a famous tyrant that ruled the Mauryan Dynasty before the one currently ruled in this land. He was known for his deed of slaying ten thousand men before becoming a monk.

Knowing the Abbot's age should be more than 200 years if what Klea said was true, Chumo quickly used his [Eye of the Raven] on the former and found him to be a Rank 8 cultivator. This man was a person who was as strong as they were.

While they were busy discussing this, the Abbot addressed and welcomed all the invitees with warm words. He looked towards Emery's group with a smile as he said, "Our Holy Harvest Ritual this time will be a special one, as we are visited by a special group of people."

The Abbot then introduced Emery's group to other invitees, causing waves of discussion among the crowd.

"Like previously the winner will receive the Holy fruit, but on this special event, anyone able to defeat any of these youngsters may bring home our ancient cultivation technique"

The Abbot's words immediately made the two dozen invitees excited. They all turned their heads toward Emery's group, staring at them with greed.

"Let the Ritual Begin" The Abbot gives a gesture asking which among them five will start first.

Chapter 494: Strongest man

It appeared the Abbot just changed the entire structure of the so-called ritual and announced the event to be five of them against everyone else.

The group was glad to be able to participate at all, hence no one complained.

It was now time to decide who among them five should go first, clashing against those two dozen invitees.

Emery could see Julian was being overly excited about this. It seemed the defeat he previously suffered under Thrax's hands became the main reason for his behavior.

"Let's face it, guys. Klea and Emery were too strong for them to handle. Even though I am not trying to doubt the mighty prowess of our Thracian friend here, it is a fact that he's still wounded. So let's not take any chances for our dear friend's wellbeing. Which means it is between me and Chumo."

Julian had already taken the lead on the discussion, as he fired his argument rapidly leaving no chance for the others to rebut.

Actually, Emery had no issue about who was to fight among them and what Julian said made sense.

But unfortunately for Julian, when he was about to argue with Chumo why he should go first, Thrax already leaped to the arena platform.

"No! No! Why do you always do that?!!!"

Thrax only gave Julian a wry smile and asked for one of the wooden polearms held by the monks and it was thrown to him.

Beaming an apologetic smile to Julian, Thrax turned around and declared in a confident tone

"I will go first!!!"

From the other side of the arena, the first who walked up was unexpectedly the fat, bearded man who derided Emery's group earlier. He brought with him a large mace made of pure steel that certainly looked heavy at glance. It had a long handle and a ball-sized head on top with many knobs around it.

Moments later, the two were already standing across and facing each other. However, they hadn't fought yet as they still waited for the Abbot's cue.

The Abbot was seen bowing before saying, "This is a friendly ritual. Therefore, please refrain from killing or inflicting any permanent injury onto your opponent."

He then took a few steps back, which automatically meant the fight could start already.

"The Abbot was so kind to allow us to warm up first." said the fat, bearded man as he began to move.

The man seemed to try to intimidate Thrax as he began flexing how much strength he had by swinging his mace around, doing all sorts of movements and variations with it. It was clear the man had physical strength much stronger than any normal man, as he could easily swing that heavy mace all around. Unfortunately, he met Thrax.

What the bearded man did indeed look very impressive in the eyes of laymen, but for the experienced invitees as well as Thrax, who was the bonafide king of the arena, his actions were full of openings and simply laughable.

"You kids are smart enough to send your strongest, but you are too unlucky to fight me!" said the bearded man, while glancing at Emery and the others standing below. "This mace of mine is able to kill an elephant with one strike! Don't blame me later because I already warned you!"

It was obvious the other party's chattering annoyed Thrax, as he turned to the Abbot and asked, "Can I start now? This one speaks too much"

Upon hearing his words, the man instantly became angry and dashed to him. Bringing the mace up to the air, he launched a downward strike at Thrax. A ruthless look was seen on his face, as his thoughts pictured the miserable sight Thrax would soon become.

But of course, Thrax could easily dodge the attack by taking a step to the left. While doing so, he also smacked the other party by swinging his wooden polearm to the man's unprotected ribs.

PAK!

The wooden polearm broke into two, but so did the bearded man, as he was knocked 10 meters away by the attack, going even faster than when he rushed earlier. His body fell to the floor with a thud, which was then followed by the ear-piercing shriek he released due to the excruciating pain of broken ribs he currently experienced.

One hit! And the boastful man was defeated.

Silence encompassed the whole place, as everyone's attention was locked on the bearded man's pitiful state.

Afterward, Thrax walked toward the groaning man and stopped right next to him. He grabbed the man's steel mace off the ground and raised it to the air.

When he saw Thrax holding the familiar weapon above him, the bearded man's face turned pale and quickly raised his hands and cried out.

"No! No! Please! I give up!"

However, it seemed Thrax didn't hear his plea, as he swung the mace toward the ground.

BOOM!!!

Everyone in the crowd couldn't believe what Thrax did. He cracked the mace and used his feet to break the mace's head from its handle. Then, he walked away from his opponent while bringing only the mace handle.

It seemed Thrax planned to use the handle as his weapon, because it bore resemblance to the polearm he previously used.

As for that fat man, he was seen lying on the arena platform in an unconscious state. He passed out from extreme shock, as Thrax smashed the mace right next to his head.

Several monks swiftly got into action as they carried the unconscious fat man. In the meantime, Thrax was busy familiarizing himself with his new weapon. He swung the steel polearm around, while looking at the other two dozen invitees below.

"Alright. Who's next?"

An incredible scene was unfolding on the arena platform at the time. People were seen flying away and being banished from the platform one by one, as the legendary gladiator began to clean up the invitees who had come for the Holy Fruit. Several people had challenged Thrax, but none of them had made him sweat.

Julian, who stood with the others, knew he had to do something before everyone was defeated by Thrax. Therefore, he shouted as loud as he could after Thrax defeated his third opponent.

"You have enough, Thrax! Change now! It's my turn!"

Unfortunately, Thrax ignored his shout and continued on his beatdown. One invitee after another, none were able to defeat him. It was obvious though, as Thrax could be considered as the strongest man on earth.

There was actually one invitee who was able to increase his strength by some kind of spell, but Thrax quickly put a dent in his ambition with a few strikes of his steel polearm. The man ended up laying unconscious on the ground as all the others before him.

At this point, the invitees finally realized the special guess the Abbot was talking about was indeed special. Therefore, after Thrax defeated another opponent, those who only depend on their physical strength didn't dare to come up the platform and fight him.

This was the cue for the other fighter, the one with high spirit force to join the fray.

The first to walk up was a suave middle-aged man with a refined appearance. This man was called Fryane, one of the five Briton wizards known by Emery, a rank 5 cultivator.

Looking at Thrax's opponent, Julian took this opportunity to persuade him once more, but again, he didn't budge. Thrax brandished the polearm and pointed it at the wizard as he said,

"Alright, your turn."

Faced with Thrax's provocation, Fryane calmly took out a staff and lightning started forming on it.

"I am sorry, young man. But sheer muscle power won't defeat magic."

Chapter 495: Against Magic

[Lightning Bolt]

A streak of erratic lightning zoomed through the air, swiftly making its way to the standing gladiator. Thrax dodged the spell with relative ease, but he was impressed when he saw the spot where he had previously been was completely scorched black by it.

[Lightning Bolt] was considered one of the most troublesome low tier offensive magic one could face against. Not only was it quick, it also packed quite a punch.

"I applaud you for such a quick reaction, young man. But in a fight where there's a limited area to move such as now, my lightning magic is very lethal." Fryane said calmly, while lightning currents materialized on his staff again.

The middle-aged wizard casted another [Lightning Bolt] at Thrax.

ZIPP!!

A similar lightning bolt sped across the arena and Fryane was confident that this time his spell would hit its target because he had pushed all his spirit force into it. Unfortunately, he was bound to be disappointed, as Thrax still managed to dodge it. In fact, the latter looked even more casual than before.

"That's just luck!" shouted Fryane, when he saw Thrax dodged his spell again. "This time, I swear I will hit you!"

It was truly unfortunate for Fryane to fight Thrax, because the latter had seen this magic far too many times in the academy that he had already prepared a set of measures for it. Indeed, the spell was quick and could be very troublesome when utilized correctly.

However, the other party's discernible and slow casting speed, as well as the staff had given away the timing of the spell activation, which automatically made it easier for Thrax to dodge the spell.

Even without his spells or [Immortal Gate] battle art technique, it was an undisputed fact that Thrax had the highest natural physical capability out of Emery's group which numbered at 62 battle power points. With his formidable physique and reaction speed, he could basically dodge almost anything if he knew they were coming.

Therefore, Fryane had essentially zero chance of hitting the former with his spells unless he caught him off guard like the first time.

After launching his fourth and fifth [Lightning Bolt], Fryane became agitated and confused as to why Thrax seemed to be getting more and more evasive from his spells as time went on.

"Thi-This is impossible!! No one should be able to dodge my spells like this! What are you really?!!" said Fryane, as he frantically threw [Lightning Bolt] over and over.

It took a few more [Lightning Bolt] before the Briton wizard's face became pale and destitute was apparent in his eyes. Then, without him realizing it, the Thracian was already standing beside him with the steel polearm positioned next to his neck.

Briefly touching Fryane's neck with the polearm, Thrax calmly said, "Just to be clear, combat is not just about sheer muscle. But, if you really like muscle, I can certainly give you one for free."

Thrax was preparing to swing his polearm and knock the other party unconscious when the Briton wizard announced his surrender. The middle-aged man knew he would not be able to take even a hit from the former. Ironically when it comes to resist against such attack, muscle does needed, which he doesn't have.

With this, Thrax already defeated half of the invitees and the other half had also lost the majority of their spirit to participate. Julian, who stood and watched from the sideline all this time, began cursing at Thrax because he had taken all the fun.

"You barbaric, uneducated, uncivilized, shameless man, come one change with me!!"

Thrax's ear began to turn red at the variety of adjectives Julian threw at him. Therefore, he turned his head and said, "Alright, just give me one more. I swear just one more!" He quickly added, when he saw the distrust in Julian's face.

Fortunately, his words seemed to work, as Julian nodded his head, albeit reluctantly. At that, he turned to the other invitees and shouted, "Alright! who else wish to challenge me!"

Silence ensued as no one was willing to walk onto the arena platform. They still remembered the pitiful sight of those fighting Thrax, where the luckiest of them only got away with several bruises.

Luckily, the silence didn't last long as someone finally walked onto the platform. When Thrax saw who he would be fighting against, he couldn't help but sigh deeply. To be honest, he was expecting the silver-masked figure or the two renowned swordsmen. But it was an old woman wearing a colorful robe who challenged him.

The woman was holding a staff in her right hand, where the skull of a horned deer could be seen at its top. From the look of it, she was what was called a shaman.

Even though his last opponent wasn't the one he hoped for, Thrax was still astute enough not to underestimate her. Therefore, the mighty gladiator quickly prepared his stance with the steel polearm.

The shaman smiled at Thrax's actions and said, "Please be easy on an elderly like me."

She then started chanting a series of inexplicable words. It was quite a long one, but everyone could gradually feel a massive amount of spirit force being drawn into the area, as the shaman continued her chant.

Thrax knew that for an easy win, he only needed to attack the other party while she was still preparing her spell. But his honor would not allow him to do it.

The entire platform was slowly shrouded in a light mist, but nothing had happened yet. Then just as everyone was wondering if the spell had failed, they could suddenly see numerous lights appearing in the mist before they took shape.

[Summon Spirits]

The lights came together and coalesced into a wolf form. Immediately after, it swiftly dashed towards Thrax with its jaw wide open. Seeing the incoming wolf, Thrax immediately brandished the polearm in his hands and stabbed forward.

Swish!

He was surprised when he saw the steel polearm go through the wolf as if it wasn't there. But the surprise didn't stop there as he found himself wounded. His right shoulder was bleeding when the wolf's supposedly intangible paw touched him, as if it had been scratched by the wolf's claws.

"Now this is interesting!" said Thrax, as he brought his polearm back and retreated a few steps back.

At the same time, two more wolves had been formed and dashed at him as well. Thrax began to maneuver around the spirit wolves, dodging their assault to the best of his abilities. These spirit wolves

were actually faster than normal wolves, but they were still not fast enough to match Thrax's maximum speed.

Thrax contemplated and eventually thought the only way to defeat this spell was to hurt the shaman. Therefore, he quickly prepared his evasive maneuver to allow him to get close and attack her.

Unfortunately, due to his focus being entirely placed on her, Thrax didn't realize there were numerous motes of lights already coalescing behind him. They quickly formed into a bear form and successfully held him down by grabbing him from the back.

The spirit bear restrained Thrax's movement with its massive build, while the spirit wolves were having their time dealing wound after wound onto his body. Apparently, this was the combination attack prepared by the shaman.

Splat! Splat!

Blood splattered onto the platform as the Thracian began to bleed all over his body. Even so, he didn't panic.

He gathered all of the strength he could muster and discharged them to overpower the spirit bear that was holding him down.

"ARGGHHH!!"

The shaman couldn't believe her eyes when she saw that Thrax was able to escape from her powerful spell with just physical strength.

As Thrax made his way over to the shaman, she swiftly declared her loss and bowed to him with respect.

It was another win for Thrax and, as promised, the Thracian walked down from the arena platform. Then, before anyone from Emery's group moved, they saw the next one challenging them was the silver-masked figure.

Who should be fighting him now?

Chapter 496: Shadow Fighter

Thrax walked back to their side, sporting the brightest smile they had ever seen since the battle in Rome. Julian could imagine how satisfying it was to win 10 fights in a row, and seeing his rival smiling that brightly really irritated him.

"Alright, it's my turn now," Julian said.

To make sure no one did something like Thrax, Julian even quickly grabbed Chumo's arm with a death grip. He would not let him go, until they could sort out whose turn it would be next.

Julian grabbed him tight and continued arguing with Klea, but the longer he grabbed his Asian friend's hand, the stranger his arm felt. Julian stopped talking for a bit and looked at his friend, only to realize said friend looked a bit loopy.

It was actually just Chumo's [Shadow Self] clone.

As soon as he realized what happened, the shadow clone dissipated. They looked around the arena and spotted Chumo already standing in the center, ready with his fighting stance.

"Chumo...!" Julian narrowed his eyes, "Since when did he become that slick!"

Once again, Julian found himself falling victim to his friends' mischief. Emery found the situation was something worth laughing about.

Meanwhile, unknown to them, Chumo forced himself to come precisely because he knew who the next opponent was.

It was the man garbed in all black and wearing a distinct silver mask. He was a known master hailing from a shadow assassin group from the island across Dongboyou. They were famous hired fighters, who had felled several well-known public figures with a secret mystic art.

Chumo gave the man a sign of respect with his hand; the masked man followed suit.

There were no words exchanged between them, but one thing was clear, they were both itching to prove themselves. The masked man moved his hands, creating signs too fast for untrained eyes to follow; four clones identical to him appeared. Each clone wore the same silver mask and held the same weapon.

All of the clones held a small, triangle-shaped dagger made with carved white stone. At the same time, all the clones charged towards Chumo. However, Chumo could quickly discern which clone was not real, unfortunately for him, Chumo's [Eye of Raven] was the perfect counter of this skill.

Chumo's eyes glinted with a white sheen, quickly discovering which one was real, before countering them with a quick kick. Realizing his skill had been rendered moot, the man jumped back to dodge.

The man with the silver mask used a different hand sign and added multiple clones. Now, there were a total of 15 masked man clones and the invited fighters all looked at the arena in shock.

All 15 black-garbed figures with silver masks surrounded Chumo.

Nothing could trick Chumo's eye and he scanned the men, trying to figure out which one of them was real. But, before they came towards him, the man made another hand sign and, to Chumo's surprise, all 15 shadows were suddenly brimming with spirit energy. With his [Eye of Raven] he could tell now all 15 clone figures were now not just shadows, but real persons.

He had to admit, the masked man had amazing skills. Right now, Chumo was a rank 8 acolyte, but he was only able to create 2 clones. This man's strength was rank 6 acolyte, but he was able to create 15 clones.

Chumo quickly casted [Shadow Self] and two figures appeared, each standing by his side.

The technique marked the point when the fight turned into an epic 15 vs 3 battle, in other words, a battle to see who has the superior numbers. Unfortunately for his opponent, Chumo's two clones were much stronger than the 15 masked men clones.

As the fight dragged on and Chumo vanquished a few of the clones, he felt that although his opponent had more clones, many of them only had a fraction of the real one's strength. At most, they would have a third of the original man's strength and none of his defensive capabilities.

Chumo started to take a more offensive approach and hit every incoming clone as hard as he could, without giving them any window to dodge. It was the right call, for the clone disappeared into black smoke within one or two hits.

During the chaos, one clone jumped up into the air, made a sign with his hand, and threw a [Firebreath] spell on Chumo's face. Chumo was barely able to dodge it, but before he could savor his victory, another clone managed to sneak up behind him and cast [Frozen Touch], freezing half of his body and trapping both his right arm and right leg, making him unable to move at all from his spot.

A peak rank 6 cultivator, a warrior with the aptitude of both fire and ice element. Added with his spectacular clone skill that bested his [shadow self] spell. His opponent definitely possessed a rare talent.

Another reason why the man's strength was able to match Chumo was because of the Magus Academy restriction. The spell placed on him downgraded his spirit force to rank 7 despite his rank 8 condition.

Chumo quickly shattered the ice encasing half his body with his strength. Now that the ice restricting his movements was destroyed, he started to use his real ability. Chumo cast a spell that summoned dark shadow shapes like a bow and used his [dark missile]. Each missile would blast one and two of the opponent's clones.

The real silver mask figure could only dodge around in panic. Chumo dashed toward the confused man and gave the man a powerful punch to the face, making the man fall onto the ground. The force of the punch shook the old man and made his silver mask fall to the ground.

Without his mask, Chumo saw that his opponent was an old man in his sixties. The old man stood up, gave a sign of respect and admitted his defeat.

"Young warrior, my name is Bihei. Please give me the name of the warrior who has bested me."

"Chumo, I am Chumo." Chumo nodded, and the man gave him a small smile before returning to his side.

Chumo stared at the old man's retreating form. Perhaps, if the man was given the chance to spend a few days in the academy, his talents might have passed his own.

He shook his head, now was not the time for such thoughts. He decided to return to his side.

With the old man's defeat, the only ones left were the swordsman from Hans. Unlike the previous fights, both the man and woman walked up to the stage.

Chapter 497: Swordsman

There are only two challengers left and both of them were the winners of the previous ritual.

Before all this, the two of them asked for a two versus two fight.

Julian really wished to participate and the two were most likely the last ones. He quickly turned to look at Emery and Klea.

"Which one of you wishes to partner with me? If no one wants, I am ready to go solo against them."

Chumo held Julian's shoulder and shook his head before explaining that those two were the famous swordmasters from the Han dynasty. The largest and the most influential kingdom in Asia. Each of those two masters governed their own school and they had a few thousand disciples who became part of the dynasty backbones.

The woman's real name was not known, but people called her Flying Snow, while the man was known as Broken Sword. Both have served as masters since the second Qin dynasty 200 years ago. They were master cultivators who have lived in this world for more than 200 years.

"They are not someone you can take lightly. Their sword skills are known as the best throughout the land. They are dangerous individually, but together, they are known to be undefeatable."

Chumo was really against sending Julian away by himself. He reminded the Roman about what happened in the last fight.

"They are... at the peak of rank 6. You may be rank 7, Julian, but with the restriction we all have right now, your strength is at most the same as them. Going against them alone would be unwise."

"Hey, Julian," Emery interrupted. "Actually, I am very much interested in trying their sword skills. Do you want to go together?"

Hearing Emery's words, the roman quickly became excited.

"Finally! Alright, lets go emmm-"

But Julian suddenly lost his words, his mind became blank for a few seconds, the next thing he knew Klea was already dragging Emery towards the platform.

She apparently cast a spell on the roman that blurred his mind for a few seconds and within that span of time, Klea and Emery were already in the middle of the arena and his chance was taken away by Klea. Julian didn't even dare to complain, as when he saw the egyptian queen, she only give him a glance

The unspoken message was clear, "Don't mess with me, this is my time to have fun,"

Although Klea walked up with Emery, she stood at the back, while Emery approached the two masters by himself. It was clear that Klea was letting Emery to fight the two master by himself

If Emery was unable to face those alone, Klea would join and finish the fight. This way, Emery would have his sword practice, but he wouldn't risk losing the fight.

The two masters gave a gesture of respect with their hand and Emery followed suit.

"My respect to the two elders."

The two swordsmen took off the veil covering their face and Emery saw a handsome man and a beautiful woman who barely looked in their forties.

Most other people would dismiss the fact they have lived over 200 years as mere rumors, but Emery had knowledge of the Magus Academy, and it is definitely possible to live for hundreds of years. But, on the other hand, the only way they could look that young was reaching rank 6 since while they were much younger.

But then, this raised the question, how long have they been stuck at rank 6 for and why?

The woman named Flying Snow looked towards Emery with empty eyes and said.

"Young man, we decided to come together knowing we can't defeat you unless we fight as one. But, please let the girl join the fight. Otherwise, it would be disrespectful to the ritual."

Emery shook his head and answered.

"Elders, I harbored no intention of disrespect. This girl possesses no knowledge of the sword and I merely wish our fight would give me some pointers."

The woman looked at the man for a sign of agreement, and after thinking for a bit, he nodded. The man pulled out his sword from his back and stood in a fighting stance.

The woman followed suit, and she pulled out a light longsword shaped similarly to a long, stiff whip. On closer look, the sabre the man wielded was broken, making it turn into a short sword instead

Emery calmly cast his spell and a small dark circle appeared in the air in front of him and he took out his knight sword from his? [Spatial Storage].

The spell made it look like Emery pulled his blade out of nowhere, making everyone look at him in surprise.

He took his sword stance, stared at them and said. "I am ready."

The man named Broken Sword started first, he dashed fiercely, throwing dust all around the arena. His charge was fierce, but his steps were light as a feather and with the speed to match.

Within two steps, his sabre was already inches in front of Emery. He quickly parried with his sword.

Clank!

Broken Sword fought just like flowing water, he moved in accordance with his enemies. As Emery parried his strike, he had already prepared another counter slash attack, forcing Emery into a defensive position.

The speed and strength he displayed was surprisingly on par with Emery's restricted 53 points of battle power.

Despite the fact they were merely rank 6 cultivators, that short exchange of blows, along with the technique used in his movements, was enough to alert Emery of his top-notch skills.

They were not opponents to be trifled with.

Emery parried the man's slash again, but this time, he put all his strength into the strike, driving him backwards a few steps. The man smiled at Emery and praised.

He look toward the female and it seems both were in an agreement

"Young man, you are very strong for a warrior of your age. We will now show you our sword technique."

Broken sword creates circular movement with the sword and the gesture created an odd glow mixed with a specter dancing on the jagged tip of his sword.

On the other hand, standing next to the broken sword the woman, Flying Snow raised her sword as well. She also created a circular flow and her sword start glowing the same, but her stance seemed to be on the direct opposite of the man.

The two charge forward to him with speeds, it's time to see which is better, the magus academy sword skill or the two masters.

Chapter 498: Sword skill

The moment the two master swordsmen charged toward him, Emery knew it wasn't going to be an easy fight. Even though he knew he was stronger than them in magic, the same couldn't be certainly said for swordsmanship.

He quickly grabbed a second sword from his spatial storage and parried two sharp blades that came for his body at once. His body was pushed back by the momentum the two swords brought, but Emery swiftly recovered as well as taking advantage of it to retreat.

Looking at the two swordsmen before him, Emery really looked forward to testing how high the level of his swordsmanship had reached. He depended on the sword many times during the knight tournament as well as the Magus Game, but it had been a while since he really practiced or improved his skills.

Emery had his swordsmanship foundation with the basic knight skill taught by his deceased father. It was then tempered and improved by his countless practice against the combat puppet back at Magus Academy, as well as some sword training by Magus Xion.

However, Emery really could never say the sword was his forte. Hence, he was interested to see how far he would fare against these two renowned swordsmen. He wanted to know how Earth's greatest swordsmen would be compared to the sword training that he had.

Clankk!! Clankk!!

Loud sound of metal clashing with each other resounded through the air, echoing throughout the arena. In terms of battle power, the two Hana swordsmen reached a similar level with him, which was definitely surprising.

Emery was a restricted rank 8, which made him comparable to a rank 7 acolyte at the very least. In addition, his Fey wolf bloodline gave him an above average increase in battle power. Hence, the fact that these two could match his battle power despite being a rank 8 was truly surprising.

Even though he still had many skills that allowed him to defeat them in his repertoire, he decided to put them aside, as he wanted to test his sword capabilities first.

Clank!! Clankk!!

Emery exchanged strike after strike with the two master swords masters; he gradually found himself in a difficult situation. It was normal though, as he was currently fighting against not one, but two of the greatest swordsmen Earth had to offer.

It only took a minute before his opponents bested him and Emery received one wound on his arm.

The two swordsmen's techniques were amazing, as he could see each of their attacks were coming flawlessly like a flowing river. Sometimes the strikes were calm and soothing, but other times they were extremely fierce and powerful.

What was even more amazing was the fact that the two's fighting style enhanced each other's strength, as well as compensated for their weakness. The two had seamlessly cooperated with each other and basically gave him nearly no chance to deliver a strike himself. Despite the fact the two were essentially polar opposite.

When one went fast, the other would be slowing down, creating a confusing rhythm in the battle. When Broken Sword attacked from the left, Flying Snow would search for an opportunity to attack from the right. This made Emery had to forgo his attempt of attacking Broken Sword otherwise a heavy wound awaited him.

Broken Sword was superior in fierce and impactful attacks with his short, broken-looking saber. Meanwhile, Flying Snow really thrived in the opposite scope, filling in what the former lacked.

Splattt!! Splattt!!

Emery couldn't believe what he was currently experiencing. He couldn't believe the sword technique they used was better than a level 5 sword skill he learned from the Combat Institute back at the Magus Academy.

Several minutes later, the two sides had somehow managed to understand each other's thoughts, as they separated from each other and took a breath on their own side of the arena.

"Young man, I must praise your extraordinary accomplishment. Your swordsmanship is truly amazing that it has no wasted movement at all. It's direct and effective, aiming for the roots. Unfortunately, it won't be enough to defeat our prized technique, Dao Sword." said Broken Sword, a hint of praise was seen on his face.

Emery didn't say anything and only smiled at the other party's compliment as well as contempt.

Shortly after, the two seemed to be ready for round two, as they were seen dashing at Emery again. This time, he could tell they had increased their pace.

Apparently, they intended to showcase the next stage of this Dao Sword technique and its impact was apparent, as Emery found himself being cornered even faster than before. He even had to resort to his [Heroic Slash] battle art to fend off and push the two back.

Even though they were caught surprised by Emery's heavy blow, it was apparent the two swordsmen didn't falter, as they immediately came at him again. Parrying and receiving every slash they sent to the best of his ability, Emery couldn't help but be once again amazed by their swordsmanship.

Not only did their sword variation and combination seem endless, they both also had some amazing footwork techniques that made their steps hard to track and as light as a feather. The two sword masters seemed to be jumping and floating here and there instead of dashing to him

Spalltt!! Splaattt

Emery received hit after hit as time went on, wounds gradually accumulated themselves on his body. However, this was not in vain as he slowly learnt his opponents and started to adapt. Though his body kept getting more cuts, there was nothing deep enough to be of concern.

The more he was attacked and cornered by the two, the more Emery got the trick behind their sword technique. At first, he was confused as to why he was able to do this, but he eventually understood.

The "Dao Sword" technique seemed to have taken inspiration from how water was, it appeared that Emery's understanding of the element of water helped him learn the essence of the technique. Thus, the reason for the current scene where Emery started to be able to dodge the attacks of the two.

Clankkk! Clank!! Clannkk! Splatt!!

Unfortunately, understanding theory was different than actually mastering said theory. Once again, the two sword masters seemed to utilize another level of their technique and Emery had once more found himself getting pushed back and even received a deep gash on his body.

Splat!! Splat!!

Another wound was carved onto Emery's hand and it made him involuntarily release the sword in his hand.

It was at this moment that Klea leaped to the air and grabbed the mid-air sword. Then, to everyone's surprise, the Egyptian girl joined the fray fighting the two Han swordsmen with the sword in hand.

Clankkk!! Clank!! Clank!!

Unexpectedly, Klea was able to meddle in the fight between the swordsmen, caught up onto the pace, displaying formidable swordsmanship, as she assisted Emery to defend the attacks coming at him.

Klea's abrupt involvement in the battle threw the two sword masters off, causing them to move back to assess the situation again.

"You don't mind if I join the fun, don't you Emery? I have seen enough from the sideline and felt it's time for some action."

Hearing the words and seeing the swordsmanship Klea displayed earlier made the two sword masters confused.

"Young man, didn't you say the girl has no experience with the swords?"

"Yes, I did." replied Emery with a wry smile.

He could only shake his head in helplessness. Well, what did he expect?

The genius girl kept surprising those around her all the time, after all.

Chapter 499: Teamwork

The Egyptian queen had always been gifted, even during her time in the Academy, she was always the fastest growing in magic and combat, often overshadowing her peers. So far, she also managed to defeat opponents up to a Stage 4 Combat Puppet, which was just a level below Emery. Unfortunately, she had only ever practiced with the staff as her weapon of choice. Now she was trying her best to adapt with the sword. It wasn't going to be that easy, but the girl always seemed to find a way to adapt.

The main problem was that her basic Battle Power, which meant her natural physical strength, only came up to about 45 points and 36 with the restriction. Hence the reason why she needed an extra boost to compensate for her limitations.

The girl knew this, so when she joined the fight, She quickly cast a Tier 4 lighting spell, [Energize], which allowed her body to be recharged by the lighting magic, thus increasing both her strength and speed.

"I am ready for anything!" Said Klea confidently, a grin on her face.

Emery, however, was rather concerned. He frowned a bit as he turned to face her.

"Stay close to me, Klea," he murmured.

These words only widened Klea's self-assured grin.

The two swordsman masters started to swing their swords around, not as an offensive attack but more like a dance between the two. The way their weapons interacted with one another flowed seamlessly, like water passing through a stream. It acted as a kind of preparation for them to accelerate to the next stage of their skills, and Emery could tell their Spirit Power was steadily increasing.

"Young man, we are now at the peak of our skills," one of them said in a serious tone. "We are now ascending to Dao Sword Stage 4; if you are able to best us in this battle, we will admit defeat."

"Yes Elder, we are ready," said Emery. He felt himself grip his weapon tighter in his hand.

Once again, the two masters' techniques impressed him greatly. Their movements were extremely refined, the two were almost flying as their swords charged toward him and Klea.

Emery quickly stepped forward in advance to hold off most of the attacks before they had the opportunity to reach Klea.

In line with her feisty spirit, though, she refused to get left behind and leave all the fun to someone else, so they both quickly charged in together.

But the two masters' movements were simply too overwhelming and unpredictable. The differences in their teamwork also played the biggest part in the effectiveness of their attacks. The two masters' attacks were flawless, they were in complete harmony with one another, almost as if they were one person. Meanwhile, the dynamic between Emery and Klea was completely out of balance, while he was overly invested in trying to protect Klea, she was simultaneously trying to get in on the action, wanting to become more involved in the fight herself.

Within just a few seconds, both Emery and Klea were cornered. Even the strength of a Heroic Slash was not enough to push them back this time.

The two swords just kept charging quickly towards them and they were both steadily getting pushed into a corner. No matter how hard Emery tried to follow their attacks, no matter what methods of analysis he utilized to predict their movements, he was simply unable to catch on. The two masters just had too many variations in their attacks, which forced both Emery and Klea to go into a defensive position.

Although Emery was not worried about being hurt, he simply couldn't entertain the possibility of Klea getting hurt because of him. He knew she was able to handle herself and stand on her own two feet during a battle, but he couldn't help worrying about her.

The two swordsmen were relentless. After a few more minutes of fighting, Emery finally admitted to himself he was never going to win in a sword battle against these two masters. He knew he would have to rely on his magical skills in order to secure a victory against them.

When one of the swordmasters was finally able to break through Emery's defense, he immediately grabbed Klea by the waist and cast [Blink] to make a quick escape, ending up right behind them, facing their backs.

The two swordmasters were stunned for a second before they realized what had happened; in reaction, they instantly changed their stance. At an amazing pace, the two turned on their feet to meet their opponents head on.

"Attack!" Emery yelled, both charging in the direction of the swordsmen. With that move, their swords brutally met yet again, sparks flying in the air as steel met steel.

Clank!! Clank!!

With their positions switched with Emery and Klea's, the two masters began to change their stance to counter the barrage of jabs and slashes that were coming their way, but once again, Emery had disappeared out of sight. They looked around frantically, the first show of uncertainty from them during the entire fight, but Emery had already reappeared in a different spot.

"Now!" He shouted hoarsely. "Attack!!!"

Emery was constantly using [Blink] in order to gain the upper hand in terms of mobility and this resourcefulness on his part proved to be an effective measure against the two masters.

Unfortunately, the two master sword skills were even better at defensive techniques than offensive ones, in the end, even using [Blink], Emery was unable to penetrate their defenses.

It was at this time Klea decided to let herself go from Emery.

"As much fun as it is, we can't win like this!" Said the Egypt queen

And with that, Klea pushed Emery away and dashed forward, deciding to attack by herself.

Once again, this change in tactics confused the enemy momentarily. They could see a lot of openings in the charging girl attack, but as they tried to counter Klea's attacks, Emery would [Blink] to another location and attack them from a different side. When the master swordsman changed their stance, once again they saw the girl fiercely charging toward them. But again they couldn't attack her, as Emery would [blink] and come at them from another side.

This tactic definitely increased their mobility and made their opponents more vulnerable, but it required Klea to trust that Emery would come and save her.

The two masters were finally overwhelmed with the duo's fighting style. It was something they never imagined before; it gradually broke down the previously immaculate flow of their swordplay. They had to admit to themselves this method of fighting was extremely physically taxing. Once again, the fight grew stagnant, with no clear winner in sight.

Finally, the two sword masters put their hands in the air, dropping their weapons to the ground in a show of defeat.

"Young man, we admit that we cannot defeat you," one of them said solemnly.

While Emery was relieved Klea did not get any severe injuries, he was slightly disappointed as well. After all, he really wished to break the enemy's defense.

Emery answered his opponent politely. "Elder, you are much stronger than me in the way of the sword, I am simply fortunate to have different skills, that's all."

The Elder smiled in return. "Young man, I know you still have skills you have hidden, being able to match our sword skills was enough to tell who the winner is. I also have to complement how you two would perform really well together."

Those last words were definitely a nod to Klea, who, upon hearing them, started to grin nonstop.

Emery leaned down to bow to the two masters. "Thank you, Elder, for your lesson."

"Young and humble, I see. You are a young hero, please accept our respect." Both of them bowed in return.

"So Emery... Have we won?" Asked the queen of Egypt standing next to him.

"I am not sure, really," Emery said and both decided to walk to their side to join the others.

The Abbot walk toward the center of the platform and give a bow to everyone before saying.

"Is there anyone else who wishes to challenge them?"

As there was no response from the rest of the invitee, the Abbot continue

"Thank you for participating, these are the people who will be joining the Heavenly harvest ritual, for the others, we can hope to see you all again next time"

It appeared none of the participants intended to argue, they gave such respect to the Abbot.

The Abbot looked toward Emery and the others and asked them to follow him, when all of a sudden, they were surprised by the sudden entrance of a man who had just walked in the gate.

The man casually said, "Aa did I miss the fight?"

With spirit reading, Emery could tell the man was very strong. It was at this time that Chumo whispered, "That man is a Rank 9, who is he?"

Chapter 500: Mysterious Figures

A rank 9 cultivator currently stood before them, looking around and speaking such words nonchalantly. This was the strongest level of power Emery and the others had ever seen since their return on Earth.

In an instant, everyone's attention was fixed on the figure who suddenly barged into the scene. The man looked like he was in his 40's, had a large and muscular build that was very apparent to the eye, as well as long blond hair that was neatly braided. He was wearing thick clothes made of animal fur. However, even though it looked barbaric at glance, there was a sense of grandeur in what he was wearing.

Casually making his way to the arena platform, the man once again addressed all of them with the same question in a casual way. But with the indifferent air that shrouded him, it created an eerie spectacle. "Aaa, did I really miss the fight?"

The Abbot looked at this mysterious man, his expression exasperated. "I'm afraid, you really did."

The man made an extremely bummed look, but it looked like he was still pretty nonchalant about the situation despite that.

Emery and the others could clearly see that the Abbot and the man seemed to be close, as they were talking to each other in a friendly manner.

The man's eyes shifted over to the arena and met Emery's eyes. Then, he looked away and continued to look at the others on the scene, or rather, Emery's friends.

The area was quiet, as everyone seemed to be waiting for what was next.

As expected, the mysterious man didn't let down the expectation that everyone placed on him. The next thing he said brought complete surprise to everyone without exception.

"One... two... Five. It's them, isn't it?" the man asked the Abbot, while looking so excited. He didn't even wait for the latter's reply, as he quickly approached the five.

"It's great to finally see you five!" the man said, before he even reached Emery's group below the arena. But when he was about to speak again, the Abbot swiftly interrupted him by telling them to follow him inside first.

As if he realized for the first time he was in public, the mysterious man raised his hands and said, "Ahh, right. My mistake. Let's talk later."

While they were still confused as to what was going on, Emery and the others nodded at the Abbot's words. As they walked toward the main temple, one of the invitees, the old shaman, approached the mysterious man and gave her respect by doing a low bow and a kiss on his feet.

"My honorable King, please heed my respect."

The man, who seemed to be a king, raised her from the ground before hugging her and kissing her cheek. While Emery and the others watched in astonishment, the old shaman once again bowed to the man, before slowly walking back and joining the others, who were making their way out of the place escorted by the monks.

This scene only made Emery's group more interested in the man's identity.

Eventually, the group reached the gate of the main temple. Emery and the others had the opportunity to witness dozens of monks helping and cooperating with each other to open the huge gate.

As they entered, they were surprised to see more than a hundred monks sitting in lotus formation, all chanting softly with their eyes closed. The sight was so serene and tranquil they all subconsciously lowered their voices and held their breath, afraid of disturbing this extraordinary atmosphere.

The Abbot calmly led the way, as they walked on a stone pathway, passing the hundred monks and going towards another closed door. Even before it was opened, Emery could feel a strong aura emanating beyond the door, making him wonder as to what the source was.

The moment the door opened, Emery's gaze was instantly locked on something in the middle of the room. A massive tree was standing quietly inside this space.

This particular room was indoor, but if one looked above, they would be presented with the view of the vast sky partially covered with thick tree branches and vines.

The Abbot walked forward, came closer to the tree and sat on one side. Meanwhile, the mysterious man followed on, as he casually sat on the other side.

While the two figures sat calmly below the tree, Emery and the others stood still at the entrance, as they were fascinated by the majestic tree. Emery could perceive a very similar aura to the Gaia tree that existed in the Forbidden Forest. However, the differences were the tree here looked much more weathered, from its huge trunk, branches and leaves.

As their gazes scanned from the trunk up to its branches, they could feel a powerful spirit emanating from what appeared to be its fruits. They were seen on the shriveled branches and, most surprisingly, there were ten of them hanging from the tree.

Seeing the group's interest, the Abbot calmly spoke. "Yes, what you think is correct. Those are the fruits known as Heavenly Fruit."

The Abbot's words caused Emery's group to turn to him, that moment was exactly when the mysterious man introduced himself. While sitting cross-legged below the tree, he said. "I am Fjolnir, son of Freyr."

Hearing the man's name, Klea couldn't hold herself from exclaiming in shock. "You are the Fjolnir? King of the Scyfling?"

A look of surprise was seen on the man's face as he turned to Klea. "Oh? How surprising. It seems someone still knows my name."

Faced with the inquiry look from the others, Klea briefly told them that Scyfling was a mysterious ancient kingdom situated in the north, that was said to be built by the gods.

Hearing Klea's brief explanation of his kingdom, Fjolnir commented, "The gods, huh? Yeah, I guess it's not wrong. My father and grandfather were worshipped as gods, after all. The same with my monk friend here."

Being mentioned, the Abbot opened his eyes and just nodded. However, when asked for further details by Emery, he said it was part of his past life and did not want to bring it up again.

Understanding the situation, Emery decided to introduce himself to these two illustrious figures.

"Greetings, esteemed elders. I am Emery, from the island of Briton." He then turned to Abbot and said, "Elder, I came here because of a vision given to me by Gaia, to find the sacred tree."

Upon hearing this, the Abbot unexpectedly nodded his head. A smile could even be seen on his face, as if he had expected Emery's words.

"Yes, Emery. we know."

"Yes. I and Fjorlnir have been waiting for you, or more precisely, the five of you for the last 1000 years. And yes, Gaia has told me of your arrival."

The words spoken by the Abbot certainly raised Emery's group curiosity as well as puzzlement.

These two people had been waiting for them for 1000 years? They weren't even born decades ago! How was that possible?

As if he could read their minds, the Abbot smiled and gestured at them. "I am sure you all have many questions, but don't worry, I will answer them all. However, the Heaven Harvest ritual is about to start. Therefore, please be patient for now and take a seat."

Emery and the others naturally followed the Abbot's request. In a moment, all five of them sat on the ground, facing the tree.

A few minutes later, a loud gong sound could be heard and a hundred monks, who sat in the other room began to chant loudly. In the blink of an eye, the group could immediately feel a strong wave of energy coming from the tree, before spreading to its surroundings.

While Emery and the others were awed by the spectacle, another gong sound was heard and the Abbot said, "When the ritual began, I want you all to just observe. Do not act on anything you see. Can you all do it?"

The group didn't want to be seen as rude, so they nodded their heads. Even so, more questions began to appear in their minds.

DONG!!!

The gong sounded again, and Emery could tell this time it sounded at shorter intervals. As predicted, the next one came again not long after. The chanting of the monks also began to become louder and faster, until another gong sounded and there was silence.

It was at this time that Emery and the others raised their heads as they suddenly felt a movement from above them. There, they were welcomed by a sight of the clouds opening up a way and from it, a strong spirit force could be felt.

"What's happening?!"

A figure shining in bright golden light appeared as it emerged from the clouds and descended like a star falling from the sky.

Emery and the others quickly realized what it was, or to be exact, who it was.

"A Magus!!"