Extras 531

Chapter 531 Divine Battle [Pt 1]

'What the hell…?'

As Rey stared at the Beast in front of him, he felt a massive surge of fear press upon him.

Even when he activated [Dead Calm], which allowed his previously unfocused mind to become much sharper than usual, he still felt vestiges of fear rush up to him.

'How strong is this thing?!' Rey found himself asking, his thoughts as precise as possible.

Right now, he was the strongest he had ever been. His Stats had reached six digits, and he could feel himself overflowing with so much power.

Yet… for some reason, he still felt inadequate—dwarfed by the creature that stood before him, ready to cut him into pieces.

'Its fast!'

In swift motion, Rey used [Domain Of The Lord] to switch his position from where the scaly monster stood.

But—

~SZZTZZ!~

—He was met with a buzzing interference, followed by a forceful activation of his Skill, which allowed him to switch positions with the furthest zone available.

Just about five meters away from the enemy.

'Again? It's affecting the activation of my Skill that I can't go beyond five meters!'

Rey felt himself growing ever so desperate, clenching his teeth as he glared at the creature in front of him.

'How is this happening? What is going on…?'

From Rey's observation in the short while since he first encountered the Beast, he had observed a few things.

'I can't actively use any Skill below SS-Tier. The energy around is too saturated for the function to be properly activated.'

Of course, Buffs were an exception since they affected his own body. However, if it was a Skill that required some form of external manifestation, they would be rendered invalid before their complete activation.

'I only have 9 Divine Tier Skills, and even those don't seem to be very effective against this thing.'

For one, his [Domain Of The Lord] suffered heavily from the presence of the Beast. His [Divine Ray], while effective against the monster, was something it could evade.

'I didn't even bother charging it up, since that would take more time, yet it was able to avoid the hit. How fast is it?!'

Once again, Rey had to switch positions again, else the monster would catch up to him again and probably deal heavy damage on him.

Speaking of damage…

'My body still slightly aches from that strike it gave me earlier…' Rey found his thoughts trailing as it stared at the monstrosity that relentlessly chased him.

'It's undoubtedly stronger and faster than I am… even with [Natural Enemy] being active.'

Rey already tried to use [Absolute Appraisal], but—just as he suspected—it didn't work on the thing. After thinking hard about it, with what little time he had to actually think, he could only arrive at one conclusion.

'This is a Divine Beast, isn't it?!'

Using [Domain Of The Lord] allowed Rey's senses to spread through the areas that surrounded him. He had long noticed the three corpses of the Dragons lying on the ground, as well as the unconscious bodies of his classmates.

It was thanks to this that he was able to tell that they were all alive—though some were barely clinging to life.

'If I don't act quickly… things could end up escalating beyond control!'

As such, Rey decided on the best approach he could think of, considering the current circumstances.

'Alright! Let's do this!'

With a single thought, he shifted Alicia's position from his hand to the floor behind him, then, strengthening both of his hands, he pushed his body forward and charged towards the creature that also rushed towards him.

'[Perfect Divine Defense] doesn't work against it. It must have some kind of ability that allows it to bypass defenses… or maybe it was just interfering with the Skill's effects again, same as with [Domain Of The Lord].'

That meant Rey's only defensive Skill was useless in this situation. Evasion was the only way he could avoid damage, and even that had its limits.

'Every use of the Skill drains my Mana considerably. If I keep this up, I'll start losing more Mana than I recover.'

That was the problem with the use of Divine Tier Skills.

'[Divine Ray] is the best way I can really see myself damaging it, but… it's not the only option!'

A sudden burst of wind rushed from Rey's position as the entire area around him crackled with power.

'[Divine Elemental Magic: Almighty Wind Gale]'

With the power of [Divine Elemental Magic], he had a more versatile approach in dealing with the opponent. Also, with [Divine Magic Supremacy], he didn't need to chant any Spell or wait for activation.

Whatever Magic he used would not only be stronger than normal, but their effects would be instant.

~BOOOOOOOOOM!~ Rey's 'Almighty Wind Gale' forced the Divine Beast high into the air, propelling him up like a rocket ascending at light speed.

~VWUUUUSH!~

The creature's ascent caused everything around it to tremble, but Rey stood his ground as he watched the whole thing happen. He also surrounded his allies with the golden lights of his [Perfect Divine Defense].

With his gaze resting on the floating creature—who was still fighting against the invisible forces of wind, like the mindless savage that it was—Rey stretched both hands into the air, allowing golden flashes of lightning to dance around them.

'[Divine Elemental Magic: Perfect Lightning Descent].'

~RUMBLE!~

Everything vibrated for miles, as an instant burst of golden lightning descended from the sky, right above the Divine Beast.

It fell, clashing with the creature within a heartbeat—no, much faster than that.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!!~

The beam of golden lightning struck the ground, easily creating a massive crater that spanned hundreds of meters from its point of impact.

The entire forest was ruined by the shockwaves, debris, and plumes of smoke that scattered everywhere.

The last of the trees were blown apart or burned away, leaving a barren land in sight.

~TTZZTZ…~

Flashes of golden lightning, remnants of the attack, still filled the trembling air, as Rey lowered his hands and heaved a steamy sigh.

"Now… for everyone…" He turned to his classmates, a gleam of determination in his eyes.

'I know that probably isn't enough to finish the job. I'll have to act quickly and transport everyone away from here—as far as I can.'

Now that the creature was far away from Rey, he found that he could use [Domain Of The Lord] a lot better—though not to its full capacity yet.

'I see. So the closer it is to me, the more my powers get disrupted.' Rey thought to himself.

He didn't have time to dwell on analytics, though. There was no telling when the monster would rise out of the rubble, so time was of the essence.

'The Royal Estate still has that barrier surrounding it. And last I checked, the influence of that incorporeal dome of saturated energy didn't reach that point…' His thoughts trailed as he narrowed his gaze.

He had already seen and memorized the layout of the city from his position in the sky, and once he activated his Skill, he would be able to detect everything around him in great detail.

'Sending them there is pushing the limits of what I can do right now, but I should be able to achieve it.'

Rey poured out a vast amount of Mana, focusing it on those he desired to save—Alicia, Adonis, Lucielle, Brutus, Belle, and Justin.

He still didn't sense Eric, but [Dead Calm] didn't let him worry about it.

As for Snow, he already figured she was dead. Why else would Alicia try to use her [Divine Beast Summon]?

He also saw Billy die, so that meant everyone else was accounted for.

'[Domain Of The Lor—]'

~WHOOOOOOOSH!~

In a flash, even by Rey's standards, the Divine Beast suddenly appeared before his eyes.

At that moment, time seemed to slow down, and Rey's body could barely move. The only one who seemed to be moving perfectly was the Beast itself.

And… its maw was wide open—ready to devour.

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Chapter 532 Divine Battle [Pt 2]

For the first time in forever, Rey felt the fear of death.

It was so raw and vivid, as he watched the Divine Beast close in on him with its mighty jaws and overwhelming presence.

Then—

~FWISH!~

In one swift translocation of space, he was able to shift a few meters backwards, completely avoiding the fatal strike from the mindless beast.

"Haa… haa…!" Rey's widened eyes, moist from the fear, gazed upon the Divine Beast as he breathed heavily.

None of his classmates were in sight, which meant their transportation was successful. Lucielle and Brutus were also not present.

'Good! That's good!' Beads of sweat appeared on Rey's face, and his throat slowly began to itch. He swallowed the saliva that had formed inside as he kept his gaze on the terrifying monster in front of him.

'This thing… it's too dangerous!'

The more he observed it, the more Rey could see Ater's point about challenging a Divine Beast. Not only did it have better Stats, but most of Rey's Skills wouldn't even do anything to the thing.

'Fighting it head on is impossible. It's far stronger and faster.'

The reason Rey could keep up somewhat was due to the spatial manipulation and awareness that [Domain Of The Lord] offered him. It was almost like precognition.

Adding that to his experience fighting Monsters, his battle prowess, and intelligence—compared to the mindless creature—he was able to somehow hold his ground.

That wasn't enough, though.

'The only way I can win is to somehow use my number of Skills, and even with them…' Rey clenched his teeth as he tried his best to breathe normally.

[Dead Calm] had never been under as much strain as it was right now.

'Come to think of it… I've not seen it use any Skill. Or maybe it has Passive Skills that I haven't noticed. If I can use the same Skills, then I can stand a chance here…'

Before Rey could check out his Skill List, however, he noticed something.

'H-huh?! Where is it looking?' The Divine Beast completely removed its attention from Rey and turned in a particular direction.

He already knew, just from a single glance, the location of significance that existed there.

'The Capital? No… the Royal Estate?!' With his eyes popping out of his eyes, Rey remembered what he witnessed prior: the Beast targeting Alicia before he came to save her.

'Is it targeting her because she summoned him? A-ah, could it be…!' Rey had read quite a bit about Summoning Magic and Taming, and in it were recorded behavior of summoned creatures.

If a creature was summoned through a Taming Skill, its first instinct would be to attack the Tamer—though this depended heavily on the malicious nature of the Summon.

That was because a Tamer could potentially bring the creature into subservience and force it into becoming a loyal subordinate.

This was why Magic Barriers usually came along with Familiar Summoning.

'I mean… Ater would have also done the same to me if it wasn't for that barrier.'

Rey would have wondered why Alicia allowed such a creature out of its cage, or even summoned it at all, if he didn't see the Dragon Corpses or the destruction within the city.

Chances were… it was a desperate attempt to save everyone.

'This is all my fault. I…' Before Rey could think any further, however, he noticed the Divine Beast pressing itself on the ground.

Its weight alone caused the area to tremble, and everything around it began to leak out cracks.

'No, you do—!'

~BOOOOOOOM!~

The Beast took off before Rey could even complete its thoughts, ascending high into the sky as it charged towards its intended destination.

'Divine Light Whip!'

Rey swiftly summoned a long string of golden light, one end wrapped around his hand, while the other already swirling around the body of the escaping beast.

'You think I'll let you leave?!" His thoughts roared as he planted his heel on the ground and pulled with all of his strength.

He was sure now… the Beast's target was Alicia.

'Taking her to the Royal Estate made it change focus to that location. It's currently distracted, which means I'll be able to—!'

Much to Rey's surprise, the intense rope of light that was supposed to tightly constrain the enemy began to melt off.

'E-eh…?!'

Like butter on a hot surface, the golden rope loosened and softened, all in an instant, causing the Divine Beast to freely proceed with its launch—even kicking away at the air so it could resume its ascent.

Rey was so glad it couldn't fly, but its sheer speed alone made it impossible to catch up at this rate.

'Unless…!' His eyes shone brilliantly as he utilized his [Domain Of The Lord], swiftly changing his location with another place in the air.

Thankfully, since he was a distance away from the monstrosity, his Skill worked flawlessly, and in no time at all, he was right above the city.

He didn't have time to rejoice, or even breathe, however, considering how the Divine Beast was currently charging towards him like an unstoppable meteor.

'[Divine Ray]!' Rey swiftly pointed both hands ahead and allowed the pure white energy to coalesce into a pure beam of unstoppable light.

The result?

~BOOOOOOOOOM!~

The blast of light showered on the Divine Beast, sending it back down to where it came from.

'A-ahh! That was close!' Rey, once again, could not rest. The moment he brushed the sweat off his brow, he hurtled himself downward, preparing another Divine Rey in one hand as he let it charge.

~WHOOSH!~

As he charged downward, he noticed the Beast rush past him in the form of a blur.

He would have missed it completely if he hadn't focused all his senses on the creature in an attempt to better read its moves.

'No you don't!' Rey grabbed the Divine Beast's tail in a hurry, using all his strength to pull and spin in the air.

"You're not…"

After spinning for a second or two, nearly creating a hurricane that would blow apart the city beneath him, he flung the Beast high into the air.

Then, he pointed his open palm towards it.

"... Getting anywhere near her!"

~VWUUUUM!~

The massive roar of Rey's [Divine Ray] parted the air, and destroyed everything in its path as it rushed towards the helplessly flying monster.

As expected, it made impact.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!!~

A shockwave of power burst through the area for miles, at the very least, causing everything to tremble under the pressure of such a powerful attack.

"Haa…" Rey could feel the drain of Mana on him, with beads of sweat even forming on his face and his parched throat seeking a source of refreshment.

As he hovered above the capital, watching as the figure he struck descended on the barren ground that he had caused from his Lightning Magic attack from before, he narrowed his gaze and strengthened his sight.

'What now?' He wondered, looking at the falling creature while also opening his Skill Tab.

In both instances, he was met with shock.

For one, under his Skills within [Doppel], he found the most unexpected result.

[New Skills: Please Select Their Categories]

~Nil~

[Total Skills: 75]

'N-no Skills…?!' As his eyes were still recoiling from the bone-chilling revelation before him, he heard a powerful cry that was equally as horrifying.

"URRRROOAAAAAHHHHHH!!!"

The roar emerged from the barren lands, and the one who sent it out was none other then the standing Divine Beast.

… Ready for yet another round of battle.

Chapter 533 Divine Battle [Pt 3]

"UROOOOOAAAHHHH!!!"

Dagon's roar shook the heavens and terrified the earth. Its cry emerged from the very depths of its beastly lungs, and its body shook violently as it let everything out.

Saliva danced out of its gaping mouth as this echo burst forth, and the surrounding rubble—even the ground beneath his feet—scattered apart and were crushed, due to the pressure alone.

In mere seconds, Dagon stood at the center of a massive crater of its own making; one spanning hundreds of meters.

Then, it cast its attention to the being that stood high in the sky.

For a while now, Dagon had been distracted—no, held back—by two major things that caused its movements to appear sluggish and lack any precision.

One was its instinctive drive to kill the Tamer.

That, more than anything, was its drive. Even now, as its body boiled in violent rage towards the obstacle before it, the demise of the Tamer was the major desire its primitive mind had.

As for its second distraction… that had to do with the 'mark' that it sensed within the opponent. It was similar to what it sensed from the blond girl earlier, but this felt a lot stronger.

At the very least, they were both placed by the same entity.

"GRRRRRRRR…."

The very fact that it sensed this warding mark made it hesitate in slight, but important ways. It was distracting, to say the least.

Due to these factors, Dagon had not been operating at full strength. But now…?

"GRRRRRRRRRRRR….!"

Its body was steaming hot, and its silvery blue scales began to shed, losing all of the blue parts to transform into an entirely silver entity.

The sole horn on its bald head ascended a few more inches high, the spikes behind it grew larger, and its entire muscled form began to grow much bigger and denser. From three meters, it became five meters tall.

It also stood upright, releasing itself from the hunching gait it once had. At this point, all the damaged silvery blue scales had been shed, revealing only pure silver to shroud its massive form.

Right at that point, Dagon evolved.

"HUUUUU…" As it let out this deep breath, it noticed the obstacle was preparing yet another blast aimed at it.

The last ones hurt Dagon a lot, even going as far as shaving off its Life Force, so it became averse to the sensation. Sure, its scales were tougher now, but its survival instincts told it to evade regardless.

Then—

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!~

—The brilliant lights of judgment descended.

"GRAAAAHHH!" Dagon charged forward, its limbs clawing their way on the ground as it began to race ahead.

It was able to escape the brilliant ray of light, albeit barely, and began closing in on the obstacle.

~VWUUUUUUM!~

The ray followed behind it, attempting to close the distance and burn through its scaly flesh with its overwhelming power.

But Dagon was fast—much faster than the light of destruction.

In mere moments, it returned to its site of summon, easily lifting itself into the air with a single leap.

~BOOOOM!~

The ground shattered as it ascended high into the sky, diving straight towards the one who was sending the light his way.

As Dagon got closer, its instincts quickly kicked in.

—There was a second one!

The human obstacle sent his second hand towards Dagon, sending the coalesced beam of light charging at point-blank range.

If it had been the Divine Beast of the past, it would have gotten hit and found himself sprawling on the ground once again, but Dagon was no longer the same as it was before.

It had become much stronger; both in body and in mind.

Before, it saw the human as a mere obstacle—a distraction from its main goals—so it never really gave it everything. Plus, the marking kept warding it away.

However, Dagon no longer cared about any of those things.

It had changed its assessment of Rey—especially after that previous blast that sent it flying so far away. Right now, it was going to ignore the obvious warning sign that existed within the boy and aim for his life anyway.

Yes… right now, Dagon saw Rey as a threat.

And for a Beast like itself, there was only one action that could be taken when a threat was identified.

… Eliminating it!

~WHOOOSH!~

Dagon dodged the blast at point-blank range, quickly reaching out for Rey's hand and ripping off that very moment.

"Gaaahhh!" It heard the human scream, but that was nothing.

Dagon grabbed Rey by the head and easily crushed its black mask, hoping to completely destroy his skull as well.

However, Rey sent a powerful wave of Wind Magic flying towards the Beast, one that would have blown it away in the past.

And, it worked… somewhat.

Dagon felt the impact and was stunned, flying away a few inches, before grabbing onto Rey's second hand and using it as a tether to propel itself towards prey.

Rey's second hand was torn apart in the process, and Dagon was able to close the distance in a single moment.

Then, it felt a shift in the world around it.

Dagon recognised what was happening at that moment. Whatever Rey was about to do, it would involve him teleporting away to create some distance between them.

That was another annoying trick that the human had—one that this Divine Beast could no longer tolerate.

And so, like a jet at full speed, Dagon kicked the air behind him and rushed towards Rey right as the Zones were about to shift.

Needless to say, the human's efforts ended in failure.

~WHAM!~

Dagon grabbed Rey's bloody face right before he could succeed, causing the entire Zone change to be aborted.

There was a reason why Rey never used the [Domain Of The Lord] Skill directly on Dagon. —He couldn't.

Dagon had nigh immunity to Skills and Magic, so none of those worked directly on it. The closer it got to the source of the power, the more those effects would be affected. And, if it made physical contact with that source, any power activated would be aborted.

No one in the world knew this, but this was a manifestation of Dagon's Null Art—an Ancient MajiK that became nothing more than an instinctive part of itself.

Rey, or anything he could muster at this point, did not stand a chance.

~WHOOOOOOM!~

Dagon flung Rey's body towards the dome-like barrier that stood at the highest point of the city.

That was where its prey was.

With his body helplessly flung towards that direction, the Divine Beast dived downward, raising both of its hands in the air as it sent its knees crashing on Rey's chest.

"Guark!" Blood spurted out of his lips, but that was none of Dagon's concerns.

The boulder-like fists, clasped together in destructive harmony, fell upon the boy's face.

~BOOOOOOOOOOM!!!~

The shockwave that resounded in the air spread for miles, and the resulting impact caused Rey to fall faster than ever, easily creating a hole in the Magic Barrier that protected the whole estate.

As Rey fell, Dagon followed, something blue-like glowing in its throat.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!!~

Rey's descent caused a massive crater at the point of his descent, and while he struggled to get back up despite his severe injuries, Dagon crashed right on his stomach, causing him to cough out even more blood mixed in with saliva.

On this site of destruction, Rey was on the ground—fallen, and absolutely beaten—and the Beast stood triumphantly atop its body.

There was only one thing left for Dagon to do.

'ELIMINATE!'

Chapter 534 Divine Battle [Pt 4]

'Am I... going to die here...?!'

When Rey first woke up from his slumber and desperately arrived in the Capital, his motivation was to save his friends and the humans he resolved to protect.

He never really considered the possibility that he would ever find himself in this kind of situation; one where he was so powerless.

... So weak.

Forget about saving others, he couldn't even protect himself.

Even though things hardly ever went according to plan, he always saved the day somehow. He protected the entire Capital from the Dragon Commander's assault. He helped take down an entire Criminal Organization, and he conquered a Grand Calamity Class Dungeon.

He was able to defeat an Undead Dragon Lord, and while he wasn't quite sure about the height of power he had reached, Rey felt confident that he could possibly take on a Dragon Lord very soon.

Perhaps that was all his hubris at play.

Maybe he truly didn't realize that his undeserved power-while incredible-was not perfect.

[Doppel] didn't make him invincible.

The arrogance of the strong... despite his best attempts at trying to ensure he never fell for its temptation, Rey didn't realize when he started slipping into it.

It was a subtle process... one that he fully displayed by his lackluster approach in obtaining more strength, and his careless use of his abilities.

'I messed around too much...'

Why? Why did he play along with so many charades, when he could have been actively pursuing strength-the goal he had set for himself from the start?

He grew so concerned about others--his classmates, Esme, the Adventurers-that he failed to realize that he was too weak to afford that luxury.

A sinking man can not afford to save another who drowns.

Just because he had acquired some power-elevating himself above those who were around him-he had become less concerned about the power he so hungrily sought after at the very beginning.

Perhaps this was all wrong too...

Maybe he indeed tried his hardest and the emergence of such a threat was not something he could have ever anticipated.

He did his best to make sure everyone was strong enough in order to avoid a situation where-in his absence-everyone who mattered would perish.

Should he not have focused more on the development of his allies even more? If he had been a bit more selfless, then they wouldn't have had to resort to [Divine Beast Summon] against the Dragons.

If they were just a little stronger... if he was only a bit stronger...

Rey didn't know the right answer, and to be honest... there was no room to contemplate on it.

'I-It hurts...'

Both of his arms had been ripped out, and he wasn't even regenerating properly. Most of the bones in his body had been shattered, and he could feel some of his ribs poking his internal organs.

He gurgled blood in his burning throat, and his chest felt so hot. Everything hurt.

It didn't stop hurting.

It felt like hell, just laying on the floor, watching the colossal being standing right on top of him.

'Ahh... ahh... it hurts... ahhh... p-please...!'

Tears began to fall from Rey's eyes as he felt the pain sear into all parts of his body. His brain was overloaded with this nightmare, and there was nothing his helpless body could do to stop it.

Then, Rey's blurry gaze witnessed the brilliant glow that began to pulsate from the throat of the Beast.

At that moment, Rey knew his end was nigh.

"S-Sir Ralyks...!"

"...lyks!"

"Ra...ks!"

He could hear the distant screams of those he tried to save, all of their voices oozing shock and desperation.

It seemed they had all regained consciousness-most likely due to the [Absolute Healing] he infused with [Perfect Divine Defense] after sending them away from the range of the Divine Beast's disruptive zone.

But... what was the point?

Rey's execution drew near, and he was currently too weak and scared to do anything to stop it.

Once Dagon was done with him, there would be even more casualties. Best case scenario, only Alicia would perish. Worst case... everyone was going to die.

All of his power-all that progress he had made-it would all be lost.

"G-guys..." He managed to leak out a sound despite the blood that remained stuck in his aching throat.

Rey's entire head pounded uncontrollably, and his heart raced.

He didn't want to die. He didn't want to lose. Yet... here he was; doing the very thing he swore never to experience.

"... I'm so sor-"

~BOOOOO0000000000000OOM!!!~

Before Rey could render his tear-filled apology, the brilliant blast from Dagon washed upon him like an uncontrollable wave.

It destroyed his body in an instant.
Nothing but blue vestiges of ash was left once the destructive echoes of the Divine Beast were sent forth. All of Rey's body was disintegrated-reduced beyond even dust.

The only thing left on that crater... was Dagon.

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Dagon.

- Race: Deity (Fallen)

- Class: Divine Beast (SS-Tier)

- Level: 2 (21.83% EXP) 2

- Life Force: 300,000

- Mana Level: 250,000

- Combat Ability: 150,000

- Stat Points: 10,000

- Skills (Exclusive): [0@#$$%^^!)#G]

- Skills (Non-Exclusive): NIL

- Alignment: Neutral Evil

[Additional Information]

A fallen deity hailed as an embodiment of chaos and destruction. Now a mere vestige of its former self, reduced to a mindless creature with no real sense of reason, this entity follows only its basest instincts.

It is a true monster.

[End Of Information]

The eyes of all went wide the moment they witnessed the demise of the undefeatable warrior.

The Dark Adventurer-invincible champion of mankind-fell that very day, under the dimming ray of the sunset.

Not even bones, or ashes, were left of him.

Adonis, as well as his allies, all of them locked within the confines of the [Perfect Divine Defense], watched as their last hope perished before their very eyes.

His death was brutal, and the aftermath was equally as horrific.

"GRRRRR..." Once Dagon was done with him, it cast its gaze ahead and stared at the clustered humans-powerless and weak to do anything against it.

They were next.

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Chapter 535 Divine Battle [Pt 5]

What does death feel like?

Those who know the answer to this question are not present with us, so it remains a mystery.

How swift is it? How painful is it? No one alive can say.

However, the fear of death is enough to give people incredibly accurate descriptions on how dying feels, or would feel like.

Perhaps a light at the end of the tunnel... or some sort of eternal void.

That wasn't what Rey felt as he supposedly sank into the world of the abyss-entering the grasp of death.

Rather than a world engulfed in sheer darkness, or some sort of afterlife that would claim his dear soul, there was something else.

It was a panel, spread out before his nonexistent eyes.

[SYSTEM NOTICE]

~You have suffered a fatal attack~

~[Near-Death Effect] will now be activated-

{As long as you don't die immediately, you can recover from a fatal attack-can only be used once a day}

[Initiating Recovery...]

Dagon stood in front of the brilliant golden barrier that protected the humans-particulary its prey-from its grasp.

Its massive stature cast a dark shadow on the group, and its maw twisted to form a terrifyingly toothy grin. It had just elimited the strongest mankind had to offer, so it didn't particularly consider any of these ones to be threats.

The humans huddled together in a group, staying as far away from the creature as the barrier would allow.

Then-

~ZTTZZ~

-The creature of terror took a step forward, entering the golden haven that was supposed to have warded off all danger.

The barrier melted, like butter would when confronted with heat.

It seemed so easy for Dagon. Its silver scales merely glittered as the barrier crumbled before its might. Before long, its huge body was within the barrier-along with all the humans.

As soon as this happened, the golden haven vanished from sight, dissipating into nothingness.

Nothing could withstand Dagon... nothing at all.

"Huuu..." Dagon stared at Alicia with its absent eyes, its wide grin stretching even more like the monster that it was.

Now that it had completely gotten rid of its obstacle, it was finally time to kill its prey.

But-

~BOOOOOM!~

A sudden explosion of light erupted from right behind the Divine Beast, causing it to stop dead in its tracks.

The light was pure white, and it shot right above into the skies overhead.

Everything around trembled, and the grounds shook in response to the birth of this mighty power-or rather, the being that was emerging from within it.

"G-GRRRR...?!" Dagon slowly looked back, its grin vanishing completely as it became struck with confusion.

It was sure that the enemy had been eliminated. It was certain that there was not a single remain of its adversary. So why?

How was this possible...?

Right behind it, about a few meters away, was a naked human who stared down at it with a look of complete animosity.

The young man's frown triggered Dagon. Its own monstrous face also frowned as it instantly cast all of its attention from the initial target.

Something was overriding its previous disposition.

At first, killing the Tamer was its primary goal, while destroying the human who stood in its way was only secondary. But now, the whole thing had been reversed.

Killing this one came first.

"GRRRRRRR..." Dagon kept growling as it left the vicinity of the gasping, shocked humans, moving towards the still opponent.

From behind it, he could hear a lot of murmurs from the insignificant worms, but none of those mattered to it.

Its tail lashed on the ground, easily creating cracks and potholes wherever they struck.

In no time at all, it arrived right in front of the enemy.

... Rey.

Somehow, he seemed distracted. As if blankly staring at something right in front of him, and not the Divine Beast that overwhelmingly overshadowed him.

~WHOOOSH!~

Before Rey could even act at all, Dagon sent a powerful blow towards him.

~BOOOOM!~

It connected, creating a powerful shockwave that seared through everything around them. The entire area was destroyed as a result of the force that the blow generated, and the shivering humans were blown away by the strike.

The earth around them broke into pieces, and the buildings that were close-by were left devastated.

However, amidst the dust cloud that tose from the point of impact, two silhouttes remained standing-one massive and the other smaller.

... Much smaller.

"Ow..." Rey mumbled as the hot fist of the Divine Beast still remained plastered on his slightly shifted face.

The earth directly beneath his feet had caved in significantly, but his heels were planted very deeply on the ground so his body hardly bidged.

His neck was turned to a side, but his eyes were still on the Divine Beast.

Then-

~WHOOOOOSH!~

In a much swifter manner, Rey sent his own blow from his right fist, coating it with white-colored light.

The result...

~BOOOOOOOOOM!~

... Was far more devastating.

Dagon was forcefully sent flying high into the air as a result of the uppercut that Rey dished out, causing even more of the

surrounding area to get razed down.

As soon as it ascended high into the sky, Rey was finally able to take a deep breath, spitting out blood-filled saliva from his mouth.

His face hardly showed it, but the pain from that hit was still incredibly disorienting.

But... he held it in.

'I can't afford to make another mistake again! His thoughts trailed as he gazed up, seeing Dagon still ascending high into the sky.

'If I get careless, I'll die... and for real this time!

The only reason he was able to survive Dagon's point-blank and insta-kill attack was because he killed himself before the attack landed.

Back then, Rey remembered his Class Privilege-one that guaranteed his recovery as long as he didn't die instantly.

Dagon's attack would have done him in with one blow.

Upon recognizing this, Rey decided to use his own Skills to inflict damage on himself, hoping that would somehow create a loophole in the System.

It was quick-thinking on his part, something he could never have been able to do without the help of [Dead Calm].

Right before Dagon sent out its devastating breath, Rey squeezed out the remnants of his Mana and coated himself in flames from [Divine Elemental Magic]. The flames clashed with Dagon's blast, mitigating the blow while roasting him until he reached that treshold.

Once it came, his body was completely consumed by Dagon's attack... but not before the [Near-Death Effect] came into play.

That was the only reason why he survived.

'And it seems I got a new Skill for my troubles...' Rey thought to himself, still readying himsef for the battle that was about to ensue. {Skill Details}

[Sacrifice]

Tier: S

Ability: By offering your Skills, you can gain additional Stats. Once a Skill has been sacrificed, you can never get them again. 5

[End Of Information]

'I've already sacrificed ten Skills, and that puts me on the same level

of strength as that thing, but it isn't enough if I can't get past its defenses and healing factor...'

Humans were weak. They had limits, and their natural features were very mundane, compared to that of Monsters and Beasts.

'Beating it up isn't enough...' Rey thought to himself as he stared into his Status Screen, looking at the most viable solution to his current problem.

'I have to use the [Unknown Box] Skill:

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Chapter 536 Divine Battle [Pt 6]

[The Unknown Box] Skill…

Rey was able to obtain it by a stroke of luck after watching Adonis use it against the Skeletal Dragon Lord.

Yes, it was through the lens of his clone, but since his [Doppel] worked regardless, he was able to take the ability that the Box itself offered.

… The power to upgrade any one Skill to its full potential for a limited amount of time.

Rey's current gaze was on the ascending Dagon when he figured he would have to use this Skill if he wanted to stand a modicum of a chance against the Divine Beast.

'It's more affected than physical attacks, so [Sacrifice] would have been the better option. But…' Rey clenched his fist and strengthened his muscles.

'I need something to finish it off decisively!'

Dagon had incredible regeneration, and its Life Force was too high for Rey to possibly kill in one hit. In comparison, Rey's life force was much lower, so if it came down to a head-on battle, he had a much lower chance of victory.

There was only one Skill that had been shown to do major damage to Dagon; his [Divine Ray].

'Which is why I should use [The Unknown Box] on it.' That was Rey's initial thought.

However, after considering the speed and abilities of Dagon, as well as his own weakness, he thought against it.

'[Divine Ray] is already in the SS Tier. I'm not even sure if it has a higher form. It would be a waste if that wasn't the case.'

[The Unknown Box] had to follow the same rules as the Item it spawned from, which meant Rey could only use it once a day. Unless he actually used [Merger] to—

"That's it! I have to use [Merger]!"

~BOOOOOOOM!~

The moment Rey said this and beamed, the colossal Divine Beast kicked the air above it, creating a powerful wave that resounded across the area like thunder.

Rey watched as it powerfully thrust itself back to the ground, readying its fist for it once it drew near.

He launched his fist, and Dagon did the same—both clashing to create a ferocious storm around them.

More buildings were devastated, and the fields were reduced into dirty patches of land. Once again, space became unstable, and the distorted waves of power filled everything around—both the energy of Rey and of Dagon.

"Guh!" Rey felt a recoil after receiving the Beast's hit head-on.

'It's a lot tougher than last time!'

Before he could pull himself together, however, the Divine Beast utilized its tail and wrapped itself around Rey's much smaller body.

"W-wha—!"

~WHOOOOSH!~

It swung the boy away, sending him flying away from the confines of the Royal Estate. Rey, despite trying his hardest, could not resist the incredible force that thrust him away.

At least, not immediately.

He violently flipped in the air, unable to even get his bearings right, as all of his internal organs jammed against one another. Finally, after sacrificing a few more Skills and utilizing his excess energy to control his movements, he was able to stop.

But—

~WHOOOSH!~

—Dagon appeared right in front of him as he did so, dishing out a blow that sent him crashing down in one swift descent.

~BOOOOOOOOOM!~

A powerful dist cloud rose into the air as the crash caused the surrounding buildings to shatter into a million pieces.

Almost as if an earthquake was ongoing, the ground trembled, and cracks appeared in multiple parts of the city. All of this, in a city that had already suffered earlier attacks from Dragons.

"Urgh…" Rey groaned as he rose from his crater.

However, as soon as he did so, Dagon's heavy body fell on him, forcing him back to the ground. The beast dug its claws into Rey's body, pushing him to the ground, so it shattered even more.

"Gahhh!" Rey sent a powerful pulse forward, pushing Dagon a few steps away.

However, not long after that, the Beast regained its momentum and rushed towards Rey once again. In response to this, he did the only reasonable thing possible.

—He ran.

~WHOOOOSH!~

His legs moved swiftly until he found himself floating through midair, escaping the wrath of the mindless creature who chased ferociously from behind.

Rey watched as the monster crawled like an animal, gaining on him like the blur that it was.

'Damnit… I was wrong!'

As Rey stole constant glances at the Beast who violently trod the ground to catch him, he gritted his teeth and felt beads of sweat falling down his face.

'It's still stronger. Or, at the very least… much faster!'

No… that wasn't quite it. At a point, Rey had been on a similar level of speed as this creature. But, that suddenly seemed to be changing.

Why was that?

'M-my Skills! The buffs are running out…!'

In essence, unlike Dagon who was operating on its peak physical a hundred percent of the time, Rey had to rely on his multifarious buffs for assistance.

… And those buffs were slowly fizzling away.

'Why? Their duration shouldn't be over yet. Could this be another interference from this bastard?!' He gritted his teeth even more as he navigated his way through the buildings that stood in his way.

At first, he made sure to avoid buildings so as not to destroy even more public property, but right now… Rey was desperate.

He broke through houses and structures, just so he would avoid Dagon's wrath.

As one would expect, his efforts were in vain. After a couple of seconds into the chase, Dagon finally caught up to him.

~FZZT!~

Rey was able to use [Domain Of The Lord], albeit barely, to escape the Beast's clutches, as soon as it tried to grab a hold of him.

Appearing about three meters above Dagon, he ascended upward, trying his hardest to escape once again.

Since he had a Flight Skill and Dagon did not, he figured he would have a much higher chance of escape if he went this route.

And so, he charged up.

But—

~BOOOOOOOOOOM!~

Dagon burst through the ground beneath him, causing everything to cave in as it shot high into the sky within barely a moment.

The buildings… and people… were all reduced to shreds as it made its swift ascent.

Rey never stood a chance.

"Guh!" It grabbed Rey by the throat and used its tail to whip away his two hands when he tried to struggle.

"S-stay away!"

Rey wasn't commanding this. His horrified tone and terrified expression made that incredibly clear.

He was begging!

Dagon didn't listen, however.

It kept its hold on Rey, while using its second hand to constantly pummel the boy as they made a freefall in the air.

~BOOOOOOOM!~

~BOOOOOOOOOOOM!~

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!~

The sounds only got louder as more of the Beast's fist landed on Rey's softening body. By the time they neared the ground, Dragon stopped the beating and pointed Rey's face the ground.

"P-please—!"

~BOOOOOOOM!~

It sent Rey face to the devastated earth, forcing him to eat dirt. The impact caused even more layers of devastation, and Rey found his body helplessly bouncing off the surface of the earth once he landed.

Dagon didn't wait for him to recover before grabbing his hair after it landed on the ground in a ferocious manner.

"GRRRRRIIIAAAA!"

It raced across the city, scraping Rey's bloody face on the ground. This continued for a long period, with his body only spasming once it reached a particularly bumpy path.

Once Dagon was finished, it thrust Rey forward, sending him crashing back to where they were just coming from—the Royal Estate.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!~

The Rey that fell there was a bloody mess, with his classmates all huddled together to watch his barely breathing body.

All of them opened their lips to whisper the same word.

"R-Rey…?"

*

Chapter 537 Divine Battle [Pt 7]

It first happened when Ralyks died, and then re-emerged from the dead.

All of the Otherworlders, as well as the Kingdom's Strongest, were relieved to see the re-emergence of their champion.

They prayed—hoped—that he would emerge victorious this time.

Dagon was not an opponent any of them could even think of beating. It was an entity that far surpassed the capabilities of a Dragon Lord—an entity beyond reason.

Ralyks was their only option for victory.

But… the one who emerged from the depths wasn't Ralyks at all. It was a much shorter, less attractive version of the man they all revered.

He had dark hair, sure, but his plain face and slightly above average stature gave a much different vibe from the Dark Adventurer.

What's more… he resembled a classmate of theirs—one who was supposed to be dead.

At that moment, the audience was no longer looking at Ralyks. Instead, their gaze was on the most unexpected man behind the mask.

—Rey Skylar!

And so, as the tremors continued throughout the fight between Rey and Dagon, they tried to reconcile what they saw with their pre-existing notions.

"B-but how…?" One asked.

~BOOOOOOOOM!~

"R-Rey is dead, right? Why is he…?"

~VWUUUUUM!~

"Why does Sir Ralyks look like Rey? T-that makes no sense…"

~BOOOOOOOOM!~

"What is going on exactly? Is that really him?"

Confusion ran amuck among the students and their teachers, with eyes wide and faces worn thin. They were all too exhausted to join the battle, and even if they were at top form, their weakness made it impossible to contribute in any meaningful way.

They were meant to be spectators only.

Much to everyone's concerns, the only one who was still unconscious was Alicia. Perhaps it was because of the Summoning, or some other reason beyond that, but she hadn't yet opened her eyes.

Lucielle was currently using Magic on her, while the rest were charged with protecting her if things ever went awry.

They were all going to be cannon fodder if that were to be the case, which was why they had so desperately prayed for Ralyks to win.

But—

~BOOOOOOOOOOOM!~

They saw his body flung in front of them, almost like a ragdoll, and once again… they were met with Rey's bloody face and battered body.

He was naked, with scars and bloody markings all over his body.

The amount of damage evident through his body was indescribable. It was a miracle that he was even breathing after everything.

"R-Rey…?" As they whispered this, the hulking form of the creature descended on the scene.

The instant they saw this, all fell silent.

Adonis was frozen rock solid as his eyes witnessed this sight. A million thoughts were going on in his mind, but he couldn't focus on a single one.

He just blankly stared as the scene unfolded.

The expressions of everyone else was the same; a blend of surprise, fear, and hope.

All of them, without exception had trembling hearts—one that gazed upon the bloody one and desired for him to rise again.

… He didn't.

****

"G-guhh…" Rey groaned as his swollen eyes opened slowly.

His vision was blurry, and much to his surprise, his allies were the first things he saw when he opened his eyes.

He could barely pinpoint the expressions on their faces, but he raised his hand, slowly and groggily towards them.

'S-someone…' Tears were forming in his eyes, mixing with the blood that occupied his battered face.

'... Please help me.'

His lips were too busted to move. He could run no longer, not after his legs had been broken by the enemy more than a few dozen times.

He found it difficult to breathe, and even moving his hand was all he could manage.

'I'm scared…'

His head hurt so much that he felt it would explode at any given moment. His naked body scraped upon the rough earth, rubbing on the countless bruises and marks that had been dealt to him.

'It hurts…'

No one could hear these thoughts. No one but Rey.

Only he could feel the experience the hellish sensations that kept on torturing his body despite his pleas for them to stop.

He wanted to run away… to save himself.

He wanted someone to save him.

But it was too late for that at this point. He couldn't save the people in front of him, just as they couldn't save him.

In this current moment, they all shared the same quality.

'W-weak…' His thoughts trailed as he felt the dark shadow of the Divine Beast behind him. 'I'm… so weak…'

He felt his body slowly raised in the air, with pain shooting into his brain from his head. The Divine Beast pulled him by the hair, almost as if he was nothing but a filthy rag. Compared to the

shimmering silver form that Dagon had, Rey could indeed be mistaken for something that dirty and unclean.

He simply hung lifelessly, like a coat on a rack, slowly dancing in the air like a pendulum.

"GRRRRRR…" Dagon's growl seemed to hint at amusement, but Rey's barely listening ears couldn't process emotions right now.

All he heard was the growl of a monster—one that signified his demise.

'S-Sacrifice… must use Sacrifice…' His thoughts trailed as his brain pounded and his vision blurred.

If he didn't do anything now, he would die.

His Status Window opened, and he could hardly see the content that was placed in front of him.

'If I die now… that's the end. I have to avoid that at all costs…'

Even if it cost all of his Skills… even if he had to lose everything he worked so hard for all this time… he didn't mind if that would provide him with the chance to survive.

[System Notice]

~You have chosen the Skill [Merger] for a temporary upgrade using [The Unknown Box]~

{You can now 'Evolve' Skills with minimal time required and a higher success rate. Would you like to choose the Skills to upgrade, or will you leave it to the automatic function available to you?}

[NOTE: It is preferable to use the automatic method]

As Rey saw this, also with blurry vision, he also heard the voice of the System tell him all of this in his head.

'N-no… not [Merger]. I don't have enough time. I'm about to die here…'

He needed Stats to survive.

[System Notice]

~Too much time has elapsed, hence the automatic method has been chosen for optimal results~

{All Skills will be temporarily disabled for the [Merger] process to fully take place. Please patiently wait for a moment while your Skills are recalibrated}

'N-no… NO! SACRIFICE! GIVE ME SACRIFICE!'

Unfortunately, it was too late at that point.

Rey was left all alone, dangling helplessly in the air, with no Skills left to assist him.

His Buff Skills dissipated, leaving him with the meager Stats that he had at the start. With nothing but pain completely overwhelming his body, Rey felt tears roll down his eyes as he finally wished to die.

'I don't want to die… I don't… but…'

Living was hell.

The fear of being in front of such a monstrosity, with no power to resist at all, it consumed him whole.

'I… It's over.'

Chapter 538 Divine Battle [Pt 8]

Rey hung nigh lifelessly as he took one final glance on his allies before Dagon turned his body so he could only see its hideous face.

Once it saw the beastly grin on the creature's face, Rey already knew there was no hope.

No… he already knew that, but… something within him just snapped.

'You were right, Ater…'

If only he had him by his side at this moment, perhaps the fight would have gone a lot differently.

'No. What would he have done? There's no way an S-Tier would beat an SS-Tier…' Rey's thoughts trailed as he closed his eyes.

Throughout the battle he had considered summoning Beasts to fight, but it wouldn't have worked either way. Even if the space around them was stable, and his Skills weren't being affected, all of his Summons would be Level 1 Fodder who would never be able to match the Divine Beast.

If he summoned a Divine Beast, it would only escalate the problem, since both creatures would desire to kill Rey—for various reasons, but still…

Rey couldn't control a Divine Beast, so it was useless.

In the end, there was no one to save him at this precarious hour.

'It's all my fault…' He felt his body grow numb and cold, and the rate of his heartbeat slowed down considerably.

It seemed, without the buffs aiding him, he was going to die without the Divine Beast even lifting a finger.

"GRRRRRRR…."

… Not that the horrid creature would allow such an end.

Dagon raised its second hand, its claws gleaming dangerously as it licked its scaly lips while staring intensely at Rey.

It desired to end Rey's life itself, and would most likely gain another Level as a result.

'It's over…' This was far from the future that Rey envisioned for himself, but it was indeed what he was dealt with.

Sadly, he was going to die.

~SQUELCH!~

****

Dagon's claws went through Rey's chest, his weak body offering no resistance at all. It ripped out his heart, causing blood to gush out in the process.

The crimson stains on the Divine Beast turned into nothing but particles and were burned away, while the rest of the liquid splattered on the ground.

Once again… it Leveled Up.

The Divine Beast, now Level 3, let Rey's pathetic corpse go, watching as it collapsed into the puddle created by his blood.

Needless to say, there was no resistance.

The body landed on the bloody mess on the ground, and it remained there—completely motionless.

Dagon's instinctive desire was fulfilled. It had killed off the threat, and now it would finally recieve its just reward.

—Killing the Tamer!

The initial mission returned to the forefront of its mind, and this prompted it to move towards the cluster of helpless humans that watched it with fear for their impending doom.

The sheer bloodlust rushing from the Beast was unreal. It made everyone weak in the knees, shivering in the face of such impossible adversity.

Something told them it wouldn't be like before… and they were correct.

The powerless humans were right to be afraid.

In the past, Dagon would have ignored them and simply gone for the prize. But, after all the trouble it went through with one human, its assessment had been completely flipped.

Its neutral disposition towards the entire race was different now.

'KILL ALL HUMANS…'

That was its current imperative, and it desired to fulfill all of it to the letter. But first… the Tamer.

It took a few more steps forward, hoping someone or something would stand in its way so it could tear them to pieces. Dagon had already decided to kill all of them on its way to the Tamer, who was still unconscious at the rear, but it still wanted some amusement from them.

It wanted to see them struggle until they met their inevitable end and died—like how Rey did.

However, none of them could move a single muscle.

… Not before its divine power.

Then, right as it raised its claws, ready to mow them all down where they stood…
~VWUUUUUUUUUUM!~

A certain vibration coursed through the air, forcing the world around it to tremble. Two distinctly colored lights rose into the sky—one red, and one blue. Like pillars, they pierced into the heavens, causing rumbings to resound in the sky.

Dagon instantly halted its movements as he turned to face the cause. It glared, very intensely, at the two brilliant creatures that hovered above the corpse.

The creatures looked similar in every way, except for their colors. They seemed to be made entirely out of flames, and they had the form of birds.

Their wings majestically spread out, and their fiery feathers gleamed brilliantly under the setting sun. Their brilliance was impossible to ignore… and the heat they offered instantly banished the cold of the evening.

Dagon felt something within it tremble slightly.

It had only felt this sensation once—back when it cast its gaze on those Dragons earlier. Something about the Dragons felt threatening, so it made them its first priority—eliminating them before going after the Tamer.

This felt similar too… with those two creatures who floated magnificently over a corpse.

Within a moment, though, that all changed.

"Kiyuu!"

One of the two—the blue one—echoed out something, and then it burned brighter than ever.

Its brilliance caused even Dagon to brace itself, taking a step back as it watched this display of pure, primal energy.

Then… just as the brilliance reached its precipice, the blue bird exploded.

~POOF!~

The explosion was small, considering the scale that its brilliant light covered. Even Dagon was left confused.

But… as soon as it exploded, its glittering ashes fell on the corpse beneath it. Then, the true miracle occurred.

~FSHUUUUUU…~

A world of steam suddenly manifested as they made contact, and energy coalesced into the fallen man.

Then—

"Haaa…"

—The man slowly rose, all of his wounds and marks completely gone.

The smoke parted, revealing his new form.

His body glowed gloriously, and his naked form showed nothing but immaculate perfection. His plain face had an allure to it, and every aspect of his body seemed carved by absolute wonder.

This boy's average form was maxed out to the fullest.

Blue sparks danced around him, and almost as soon as he rose to his feet, the crimson bird flew to his shoulder, perching itself perfectly there.

~VWUUUUSH!~

That instant, a powerful force echoed from where they both stood.

All of the power that was pushed out immediately returned, coalesced to form a regalia that he donned in a mere moment.

Garbed in a brilliant crimson cloak, adorned in darkness and golden marks of perfection, the boy's naked body was covered in a magnificent outfit.

His skin began to burn brightly as well—an azure colored flame that finely contrasted the crimson robe it had on.

In a sense, it had taken on the nature of the blue-colored bird, while the red one also blessed him with its power.

"I see…" As he parted his flaming lips, Rey's voice came in a warbling whisper.

He stared at his open palm for a while, feeling the flow of energy dancing inside him—overflowing like never before.

"So you gave up your life for me…" Clenching his fist in resolve, he cast a quick glance at the other bird who was perched on his shoulder.

A smile formed on his face as a determined gaze shifted straight ahead.

"Thank you."

Chapter 539 Divine Battle [Pt 9]

There is a certain creature known as the Phoenix.

Legend has it that this magnificent creature is not only incredibly powerful, but also immortal. By burning up itself, it reemerges from its own ashes; a brand new creature.

Well… the legends aren't particularly wrong.

However, the Phoenix also has the power to grant this power to another—the one it considers worthy.

Rey was chosen by one of such—seed of the Azure Phoenix.

****

Dagon growled ever so louder as it set its nonexistent sight on the enemy.

Rey was covered in blue flames, while also coated with a fiery red cloak. His body burned bright, like flames that would never be extinguished, and his eyes reflected the overall state of his body as he stared back at the Divine Beast.

Once again, they would confront each other; each side desiring nothing more than the destruction of the other.

~WHOOSH!~

Without delaying in the slightest, Dagon rushed towards Rey—easily closing the distance between them—and thrust a powerful blow his way.

~FSHUI~

Like a flicker of fire from a candle-light, Rey danced away from harm's way, appearing right beside the fist that sent the blow forward.

Dagon bent its neck in confusion, surprised by the swift and unpredictable evasion.

~WHOOOOM!~

After sending another blow to its side, knowing fully well that it would hit Rey merely based on how fast it was going, as well as the intensity of its attack, Rey still evaded the assault by flickering and appearing at the other side.

"GRRRRRRRR!!!"

Dagon gritted its teeth, the frustration slowly becoming more evident in its countenance. Veins popped out of its scaly face as its muscles bulged even more than usual.

In no time at all, it entered into a frenzy.

"RUARHHH!"

~BOOOOOOOOOM!~

It struck the ground, but Rey evaded the assault, taking a couple of steps back for good measure. However, Dagon easily closed the distance and struck again.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!!~

More of the ground was shattered, and the surrounding structures took another solid blow from the impact. Yet… Rey seemed fine.

Dagon could not understand.

It was faster than Rey; stronger too. Every hit was supposed to land as usual, yet for some reason, he would dodge it at the last minute.

As a being of no intelligence, Dagon couldn't process complicated stuff. Instead, it simply decided to work faster than normal.

"HUUUU…" More veins appeared through its body, and it let out steamy breaths.

Then—

~BOOOOM!~

Everything around it shattered into pieces as it charged forward, hoping to destroy Rey by a single strike.

A powerful punch was thrust forward, capable of blowing a hole through several buildings with ease. Destruction was coalesced into that fist, and it sought a solid target to hit.

But…

~FWUSH!~

Rey swiftly dodged the attack, held Dagon by the very hand that it sent out, and then used the creature's own force against it.

In one set of deft movements, he was not only able to dodge the attack, but he carried Dagon and slammed him on the ground—using all the generated force as momentum.

~BOOOOOOOM!~

Once Dagon fell, creating another gaping crater on the ground, Rey raised his legs and tried to stomp on the creature's head, but Dagon evaded it very quickly and used its tail to swoop Rey down as well.

This worked, and just as Rey stumbled and fell, Dagon rose and attempted to land a strike.

"No, you don't!"

Twisting his body in the air, he was able to avoid—albeit only barely—Dagon's assault, while also spinning to create a powerful kick on the creature's stumpy neck as a counter.

~WHAM!~

The kick landed perfectly, causing the monster to stagger a few steps back. However, it almost instantly recovered and went after Rey once again.

Sending blow after blow, Rey would avoid them with precision, the ferocious strikes only barely missing their mark.

This dance continued for a few more seconds, with Rey avoiding attacks, dealing counters, and then returning to avoiding attacks.

Dagon's blows were devastating and raw, but they never once connected with Rey. As for the attacks that the latter offered; they were precise, and while they landed, nothing of note changed after the strike.

Dagon would heal very rapidly, rendering the struggle nigh futile. It almost seemed like Rey was yet to land any real hit on the creature.

'Damnit… my Stats are just too low!' His mind sharply commented as it grabbed Dagon by the tail and managed to slam him on the ground.

He then whisked the Divine Beast once again, flinging him to a nearby wall, destroying the whole thing in the process.

"Haa… this is impossible!" Rey muttered as he narrowed his gaze on Dagon.

As he expected, the thing was still perfectly fine.

'The azure flames help me with defense by healing me and also automatically shifting my body away from preconceived harm. The crimson cloak helps me with amping my stats, which allow me to dish out a decent counter.' His thoughts trailed as he slowly exhaled steamy breaths.

'But this isn't enough!'

If only his Stats were higher, or the Phoenixes had a much larger Level, things would have been a lot different.

'I still have no idea how they were able to leave my Inventory, and why they automatically bonded to me despite being out of the cage. The System didn't even tell me anything…'

However, he was lucky they were helping him.

'The only problem is… I don't know how long this stuff will last. I can't use any of my Skills as long as this Merging thing is happening, so there's no way to win right now…'

[Merger] usually took a while to fully fuse Skills, especially depending on compatibility and Tiers. Sometimes it took hours; time that Rey didn't have at the moment.

'Since [The Unknown Box] Skill has been applied to it, the process most likely wouldn't take that long, but still…' Rey gritted his teeth and strengthened his fist, ready for another round with the Beast.

'I have no idea how much longer I can last.'

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Chapter 540 Divine Battle [Pt 10]

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The battle once again broke into the city square, with Dagon destroying everything in sight as it howled like an insane Beast.

The frustration of not killing its prey was getting to it, causing the creature's mind to go mad.

Devastation spread about, with Dagon flinging buildings at Rey, as well as sending several blasts from its mouth towards him—all of which were skillfully avoided. 3

"GRRRRRRRRR!!!" Dagon was trembling with annoyance at this point.

Its primitive mind could not comprehend why Rey was still alive, so it went on a full-on frenzy.

-VWUUUUUUUM!~

He set the Capital on fire with its blast, killing any human it set eyes on. Anything to sate its wrath was exploited, and through it all... Rey kept intervening.

Rey's attacks stung at best, but Dagon always recovered in a second or two. The frustrating part was that the Monster could not hit him as quickly as he could do to it.

'WHY?!'

The thought seemed to echo in Dagon's primitive brain as it glared hard at Rey.

Hundreds, if not thousands of corpses were already left at its wake, and this new fight had only been on for barely three minutes.

So many people were dead, and many more would die before Dagon was satisfied. Their lives were meaningless, since the horrid beast only desired Rey's life.

In a sense, he was to blame for the deaths of all the innocent residents who lost their lives.

~WHOOOOSH!~

Once again, Dagon raced towards Rey, racing towards him like an animal. It scratched away at Rey, hoping the long reach of his claws would at least tear of a limb from the brat.

Rather unfortunately... it didn't!

Next, Dagon sent its wide and deadly maw snapping forward, desiring to rip Rey in half.

Once again... its attempt was unsuccessful.

It thrust out its tail, but Rey stepped to the side and avoided the piercing attack, while Dagon sent its horn slashing at Rey, hoping to slice open his throat.

It failed this time. But-

"Squak!"

-A pained scream echoed from the bird that stood on Reys shoulder as the attack slightly grazed it.

Rey instantly leaped away, while Dagon paused for a brief moment. Its beastly mind needed time to process what had just happened— what it just heard.

One further glance at Rey, feeling all the energy and vibrations in the air, Dagon felt itself arriving at a simple conclusion; the solution for its current troubles.

-Kill the bird!

~WHOOOSH!~

It charged at Rey, who seemed to have also noticed Dagon's motives. The human raced away, flying into the air in a blur of red abd blue light.

Dagon followed, gleaming silver under the dark orange ambiance of the sky above. The latr evening was greeted with the sight of two kinds of light chasing each other, with the silver one gaining at a consistent rate.

Rey, in his flaming form, sent flaming constructs to carry buildings and other nearby structures, throwing all of them towards Dagon. His goal must have been to distract Dagon or slow it down in some way.

... That failed miserably.

"GRRRRRRUUAAA!" Seeing so many obstructions in its path only made it more determined to get Rey, so it bounced off the platforms that it evaded, using them as more stable footholds to propel itself even further.

Once that happened, its speed doubled, and it easily broke through any other obstacle that was thrust in its path.

~WHOOOOOOSH!~

Much faster than a mere blur, Dagon instantly closed in on Rey and sent its claws ahead, piercing the crimson bird from behind.

"N-NO-!" Distracted by the sound of squished flesh and spurting blood, Rey yelled out and turned back to react to the injury of his new Familiar.

However, before he could do any more, Dagon's tail whipped across his face, sending him crashing down.

~BOOOOOOOOOM!!!~

Rey fell to the ground, with the bird still hanging on Dagon's claws like a kebab.

"S-skwa...k..." As the crimson bird trembled under the mighty grasp of Dagon, it felt itself unable to move of its own accord.

It couldn't use its natural abilities of regeneration, or flame transformation. Not even teleportation, since that would save its life.

The Null Art that oozed throughout Dagon's body made all of that impossible.

"S-squa....kk..."

~SQUISH!~

In one swift action, Dagon crushed the bird, causing steaming hot blood to burst out. It decorated Dagon's hand for a moment, before drying up and vanishing from sight.

Like vestiges of dust, they scattered away, along with the flaming remnants of the bird's corpse.

"HUUU..." Dagon then descended to the ground, creating a cloud of dust upon its descent.

With the two flaming birds gone, there was only one more prey it had to deal with before the Tamer. Much to its satisfaction, the prey was just recovering from the hit that was dished out to him.

~WHOOOSH!~

Dagon charged towards him, its jaws wide open as it leaked out a beastly grin. Saliva drooped from its gaping maw as its tongue licked its scaly lips.

Its desire was laid bare, and it reached out to crush the human. But-

"No..." Rey sent out his hand to stop Dagon's blow, focusing all of the azure energy that surrounded his body on a single hand.

~BOOOOO0000000000000OOOOM!!!~

A shockwave was scattered throughout the entire city, and the nearby buildings-the ones that hadn't already been demolished- were instantly obliterated.

Dagon's shocked face was replaced by an even greater primal desire to win, so it sent its second fist forward, aiming at Rey's head in order to blow it away.

~WHOOOOSH!~

As the Divine Beast's attacks closed in on Rey, it saw tears descend from his eyes.

Something about that brought it satisfaction.

After all, most of those whom it slaughtered had tears in their eyes as they begged to be spared. It mercilessly killed them regardless, so seeing this happen before its eyes only made the kill all the sweeter.

What Dagon didn't know was the prior to this attack-right when Rey had fallen to the ground-he had gotten a notification.

[System Notice]

~All Skills have been updated, while the excesses have been offered to [Sacrifice] per your previous request~

{Would you like to revert this decision? If you do not revert it now, these results will be deemed accepted}

Right there and then... Rey had to respond with the only answer he could.

"No..."

And that was right as he stopped Dagon's attack.

The shockwave that burst away from the two clashing wasn't simply due to the power of one side. No... both of them had contributed an evenly proportional force.

As such, once Dagon's second fist emerged, something instantly shielded Rey, casting some sort of blockade that sent the Beast's fist flying backwards.

As this was happening, Rey whispered very silently.

"Status Window..."

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Rey Skylar.

- Race: Human (Otherworlder)

- Class: Anomaly (A-Tier)

- Level: 70 (00.00% EXP)

- Life Force: 3,000 (+231)

- Mana Level: 9,000 (+231)

- Combat Ability: 5,000 (+231)

- Stat Points: 10,000

- Skills (Exclusive): [Doppel]

- Skills (Non-Exclusive): [Merger]. [Dead Calm].[Sacrifice]

- Alignment: Neutral Good

[Additional Information]

You are an irregularity to the world. Achieving the unbelievable, shaking the balance of reality... you seek to overturn what is and isn't.

Will you succeed? Or will your failure be miserable?

[End Of Information]

"I see..." Rey whispered as he gazed upon the new Status Window that was spread out before him.

"I still don't have monstrous Stats, so this new way I feel must be due to my skills."

More tears fell down his eyes as he sniffed a little.

Dagon had mistaken these for an expression of despair, but the Divine Beast dod not really understand why Rey was crying.

These weren't tears of sorrow or pain.

They were of joy.

"[Skill List]." He whispered, ignoring the constant pounding that Dagon gave his trembling barrier.

There had to be a limit to the defense that it offered, but at the moment Rey didn't pay it any mind. Cracks appeared here and there, but it seemed sturdy enough to take a couple more hits without a problem.

Finally having a chance to catch his breath, he looked at the new list before him.

[ALL SKILLS]

{Original Skills}

Doppel (SSS-Tier)

Merger (S-Tier)

Dead Calm (A-Tier)

Sacrifice (S-Tier)

{Doppel Skills}

[SS-Tier]

Divine Weapon Creation (Active)

Perfect Divine Magic (Active)

Divine Power Ascension (Active)

Perfect Divine Ray (Active)

Divine Magic Supremacy (Passive)

Perfect Domain Of The Divine (Active)

Perfect Divine Defense (Active)

Perfect Divine Resistance (Passive)

Perfect Divine Immortality (Passive)

Perfect Divine Regeneration (Passive)

Perfect Divine Appraisal (Active)

Perfect Divine Martial Supremacy (Passive)

Perfect Divine Growth (Passive)

Perfect Divine Form (Passive)

Perfect Divine Adaptability (Passive)

{Total: 15}

[Active Skills: 7]

[Passive Skills: 8]

[END OF INFORMATION]

As Rey witnessed all of this, his eyes widened a little.

From over sixty Skills, everything had been compressed into fifteen. However, all of these were not only in the Divine Tier, but they had also reached their state of perfection.

It was why even Dagon was having trouble with his defensive barrier.

"Haaa..." The last drop of tears fell from Rey's eyes as he set his sights on the Divine Beast in front of him.

"Time for payback."