GODS' IMPACT 211

Chapter 211 - Angel Of Annihilation

[Leveled up!]

[Congratulations! You have reached level 34!]

STAB! SLASH!

Aurora plunged the sword to the ground and took a deep breath because of exertion.

She was excessively exhausted, and if it weren't for Lyda's blessing's first benefit, she would have already collapsed.

'I am already level 34. But… there are still a lot of monsters to beat…'

Aurora looked at the titans, who seemed to be the strongest of all.

"If I end them, all the small monsters might retreat in fear…" Aurora muttered. "But I am not going there."

Aurora decided not to interfere with the titans unless they attacked the others first.

When Aurora glanced around, she saw the Risen Warrior's guild members fighting alongside her. She was so immersed in fighting that she didn't realize they had joined to help the others.

"If they are here, then it means—!" Aurora glanced around with a cheerful smile on her face, hoping she would see Zach fighting somewhere, but she was met with disappointment.

"He is not here…"

Suddenly, a loud, high-pitched noise rang from the sky and spread across the entire realm.

There wasn't a single-player or NPC who did hear it.

It was so loud that the players and NPCs were forced to cover their ears. But those, who were in the fight, couldn't do it, so they had no choice but to endure the pain and the feeling of getting their ears ruptured.

Soon after that noise, demons started jumping down from hell.

It was the beginning of the second wave.

Just when the mood of the war was getting lighter after Aurora's unimaginable feat and the help of the guild members, the second wave started and turned the tide.

The demons in the second wave were much stronger than the first one. They were bigger in size, their skins were thicker, faster, and they had weapons.

In the first wave, it was easy for everyone to defeat the monsters because they didn't have anything to block the sword attacks. But now, everything had changed.

Aurora caught her breath and plucked her sword out from the ground.

"Time to use the other skills before it's too late…"

She dashed at the demons and kept swinging her sword. Of course, they blocked and tried to attack Aurora, but she was too fast for them.

Aurora increased her speed to the maximum to the point where she was almost invisible by the naked eyes.

Then, Aurora activated Lyda Strike and swung her sword over one thousand times in one second.

Before Aurora's stats had reset, she could strike ten times in one second. But now that her AGILITY had increased by 100 times, she could strike over a thousand times.

Using Lyda strike skill, one strike dealt 100,000 HP damage, and Aurora struck over one thousand times.

All the demons who had jumped down in the second wave, and the monsters and demons who were already there, were chopped into tiny pieces by Aurora's attack.

She even cleaved the legs of the titans, but couldn't kill them entirely as her strikes were aimed at the monsters and demons on the ground.

The impact of her strike traveled miles, and the sharp wind attacks produced by it cleaved everything on its way—

There were over 20,000 monsters alone in the forest, which Aurora killed unknowingly.

Luckily, there were no players and NPCs on the way.

Within one second, Aurora had killed over 500,000 monsters and demons. Now, there were no demons left alive on the ground, but there were still many in the air.

[Leveled up!]

[Congratulations! You have reached level 43!]

That day, Aurora gained the title of 'Angel of Annihilation' among the players.

Aurora's vision turned red as she dropped to her knees. But she used her sword as support and managed not to fall flat.

"Aurora!" Misha rushed over to Aurora and helped her stand up.

"You should rest!" Misha uttered with an anxious look on her face.

"There are still many monsters and demons left in the sky…"

"Don't worry about them. We will—"

Another noise rang in the sky, but it was a familiar sound.

SHOOT! SHOOT!

The monsters and demons' bodies fell to the ground with every shot.

Everyone looked up to see what was shooting the monsters, and they saw a flying carrier descending on the ground.

"That's…" Misha recognized it because it had the 'Risen warrior' guild symbol on it.

The flying aircraft carrier was about half the size of the flying guild castle.

SHOOT! SHOOT!

It was filled with deadly ranged weapons shooting bullets and magic attacks.

There were rangers, gunslingers, mages, and warlocks who were powering up the weapons of the aircraft carrier and shooting down the flying demons and monsters.

Then a few more small-sized aircraft carriers detached from the big carrier and descended to the ground.

One carrier stopped near Aurora, Misha, and Kayden, as the voice followed, "You guys looked like a baked potato."

"That voice… Shay?!" Kayden exclaimed.

Shay showed himself to Kayden and Misha as he uttered, "This is too much for a wedding party, don't you think?"

"What are you doing here?!" Kayden asked with a surprised look on his face.

"I came here to help, duh!" he beckoned them all and said, "Come on. Hope on."

"But what about the other players?" Misha asked.

"Don't worry about them. More carriers are on their way. I am going to get every one of you out of here," Shay stated with a forced smile on his face.

Misha and Kayden carried Aurora to the carrier. And a few other players who were exhausted also got on it.

"Wait… the NPCs…." Aurora managed to mutter.

"Huh? They are just NPCs, so they will respawn, right? Let them die," Shay responded with a confused look on his face. "Why worry about them?"

"No… they are.. real…"

Shay didn't doubt Aurora's words as he had no reason to. He knew that if she was Zach's lover, she would never lie, just as Zach never lied to his friends.

He nodded and said, "Alright. We will save them too."

Chapter 212 - Hope And Despair

Shay turned on the carrier and slowly flew it in the air towards the sky.

"The guild castle is on the other side of the realm, so it's going to take a while to get there," Say stated.

"I am surprised Elliot let you take these carriers," a guild member commented.

"That… he didn't," Shay scoffed. "When the guild was informed about the tragedy on the 75th floor, he couldn't care less about it. And when this… secret event… or whatever this is; he said we shouldn't waste our troops saving others."

"So… you went against his orders and stole the carriers?" the guild member asked.

"Not exactly." Shay turned to everyone and said, "Since our guild recruited 50,000 players last week, the guild's economy has drastically dropped. So I am now the official funder of the Risen Warrior guild."

"…!"

"I pay for everything, including the guild members' expenses—such as food, weapons, and other things. I also funded these carriers, so I am technically the owner of everything," Shay asserted in a solemn voice.

"While on papers, I have no ownership; without my funds, this guild is almost nothing. And with Victoria leaving the guild soon, this guild is now doomed. Unless, of course, someone like me takes the responsibility," he added. "So Elliott can't do shit to me, nor can he order me around. The guild is nothing without me, and Elliott knows me. And he can't afford to take a risk to anger me. Otherwise, he will know what he is worth."

"I didn't know you were a kind person," a guild member remarked.

"Oh, please. I am far from kind. I am doing all this for myself. I have to survive, and so do others."

"True…"

Shay glanced at Aurora and thought, 'I don't know what happened to her, but her condition looks serious. And that attack… or whatever it was that I saw from the sky that razed everything within miles… she did it, right?'

"Is there a healer on his carrier?" Shay asked with an anxious look on his face.

'I can't let anything happen to Zach's acquaintance!'

A female guild member raised her hand and said, "I am a priest."

"Great." Shay pointed his finger at Aurora and said, "Can you heal that girl over there."

The guild member walked to Aurora and healed her for a second. But then she turned to Shay with a baffled look on her face and said, "I healed her to her max HP. But her condition doesn't seem to be… improving."

Shay turned to Kayden and asked, "Where is Zach?"

"Dungeon expedition with your guild members and Victoria…" Kayden replied with a confused look on his face.

"Yeah, I know that. But I expected them to retreat after floor 75. But I guess I should have known it better." Shay sighed and muttered, "Zach always tries to do everything on his own."

"Well, that's not a bad thing, is it?" Kayden uttered. He stood beside Shay to have a talk with him.

Shay smiled wryly at Kayden and said, "Did you forget it was us who forced him to play the VR game."

"...."

"He kept saying no, but we still insisted. He agreed because we were pestering him. If he hadn't agreed to play with us, he would still be in the real world."

"..." Kayen didn't say anything and simply lowered his gaze after realizing what Shay was trying to say.

"We both know how much he values his family, and that's something I admire about him. I want to become like him, but I can't. I am a douchebag, and I will always stay as one. "Shay placed his hand on Kayden's shoulder and continued, "But you, Kayden. You are his best friend. You have been with him since you both were seven years old, and you know him better than anyway."

"Yeah…"

"We should admit it by now that the reason Zach is stuck here is because of us. I am sure he thinks the same deep down. He might be blaming us. I wouldn't be surprised if he hates us," Shay scoffed wryly.

"Zach is not that petty!" Misha yelled from the back.

"Misha…" Kayden shook his head at Misha and pointed his gaze at Aurora, seemingly trying to say the crepe incident with Aurora.

"And as far as I know, Zach is… complicated. We all know how he changes his personality depending on where he is. And not to mention how his mood changes suddenly during a conversation. It's almost impossible to predict him," Shay muttered.

Kayden patted on Shay's back and said, "Come on, man. What's up with you? Why are you suddenly depressed?"

Shay bit his lips and murmured quietly: "The girl I liked in the guild… died on the floor 75th…"

"Oh…"

Kayden raised his brows and thought, 'I have never heard him mention liking or loving any girl, like ever. Maybe it's because we are stuck in this death game that he realized how cruel life is? The first girl he liked died…. That's indeed cruel.'

'I mean, to be honest, this world is no different than the real world. Humans are monsters in the real world. Those who hold power rules the world. At least, we can live at our free will here. The only difference between the real world and this world is that everyone is equal here. Everyone started the same… maybe with a bit of benefit here and there, but all of us were level 1. Everyone risked their lives to be what they are now.'

Kayden patted on Shay's back and asked in a calm voice: "Are you okay?"

Shay nodded and said, "Yes."

"Cheer up, man. You are not the type to get sad. I know you must feel terrible now, but there is nothing you can do about it."

The carriers had reached their maximum height, and now, they were going towards the aircraft carrier to drop all the players on it.

But suddenly, a horned figure jumped from the crack in the sky and destroyed one of the carriers in front of the other carriers.

Chapter 213 -Third Wave

A horned figure jumped from the crack in the sky, landed on the carrier, and crashed it on the ground 100 meters away.

"...!"

Then, another horned figure jumped and did the same with the other carrier.

Then, swarms of hundreds of thousands of demons started jumping down to the ground and one the carriers.

It was the third wave, and it started without any warnings, unlike the second one that gave time to the players to get ready.

However, that sound was not a warning. It was a signal to the demons and the monsters that more of their kind was going to join them soon, so the demons would feel more encouraged.

It was a call of hell.

One by one, all the carriers were destroyed, and only a few, including Shay's carrier, had remained.

"Can't you drive it faster?!" Shay shouted.

"No. This is the first prototype, and many of its functions are not working. The only reason I brought the aircraft carrier here was that it was the easiest and the fastest way to reach you all," Shay replied as he swiftly drove the carrier through the swarms of the monsters and the demons.

The players on the ground had already started fighting the third wave's demons. While the aircraft carrier was constantly shooting down the demons in the air.

The aircraft carrier had two offensive mechanisms. One was being controlled by the rangers and the gunslingers— that was shooting arrows and bullets. And another was controlled by the mages and warlocks— that was shooting magic attacks of various types.

However, as it was controlled by the players, firing it continuously was draining their MP and making them exhausted.

"What should we do?!" Misha panicked. "If we fall from this fight, we will lose a lot of HP."

The aircraft carrier was still far away, and it would take him more than 10 minutes to reach there.

"Should I land the carrier on the ground?" Shay asked Kayden. "It will take us around 3 minutes to land."

"No, keep going!" Kayden shot a glance at Aurora and said, "We have to get her out of here first."

A few demons dumped off Shay's carrier, but Kayden, Misha, and the few other players killed them all.

"We will take care of the monsters," they said.

A moment later, yet another horned figure jumped on the carrier right in front of Shay's carrier and destroyed it in one punch.

The carrier crashed to the ground, and so did the demon. But, the demon jumped again and destroyed Shay's carrier.

Fortunately, Shay had already predicted that, and he was prepared for it. He turned off the engine and let the carrier descend at full speed.

"What are you doing?!" Kayden exclaimed.

Shay ignored Kayden and placed his hand on the steering wheel. And when they were 20 meters above the ground, Shay turned on the engine to cushion the impact.

Sure, it still destroyed the carrier, and the players lost their HP, but it wasn't as much as they had expected.

"If I had kept the engine on, it would have failed, and we would have crashed harder. So I restarted the engine to start all the processes again. But obviously, it failed because the carrier was damaged. But it did help us reduce the impact," Shay asserted in a solemn voice as he jumped out of the destroyed carrier.

The carrier had crashed in the garden near the gazebo where the NPCs were taking shelter.

"Well, we are not getting back up anytime soon." Shay sighed and glanced at Aurora as he said, "Take her away from here. We can't let anything happen to her."

Shay unsheathed his sword and walked ahead of Kayden and Misha.

"Are you guys joining?"

"You don't say…"

Kayden, Misha, and the other players joined Shay.

They slew dozens of demons, but their quantity wasn't decreasing.

Suddenly, the three-horned demons who had destroyed the carriers in one shot jumped in the air and landed in the garden in front of Shay and the others.

Their size was three times the size of a normal adult, but they looked more intimidating than most of the other demons they had seen so far.

The other monsters also jumped beside them, and the players chased after them.

One of the three demons frowned its face and flicked its finger in the air, razing everything on its way, including the monster, demons, players, buildings.

The demon standing in the middle looked past Kayden's shoulders at the gazebo and opened his mouth to say, "I smell power."

"...!"

All the players in the garden—who heard the demon's voice, were baffled.

'A speaking demon?!' Kayden exclaimed.

"Tch!" Shay bit his lips and thought, 'According to what I learned in the past week, the monsters' intelligence level depends on their characteristics. And a speaking monster is close to the highest level.'

The three demons were the arch-demons of the first hell.

"Humans…" the third demon smirked and uttered in a raspy voice: "I haven't seen a human in 18 years after 'he' closed the gates of hell. It's always fun to crush them."

The first demon turned to the third demon and said, "Aureon. Why did you have to say that?"

"What, Nargeon?" he asked with a confused look on his face. "Don't tell me you don't like crushing humans and hearing their screams."

"Why did you have to mention 'him'? Now I am more angry."

"Hah?! I am more angry than you!" Aureon yelled.

"No, I am!" Nargeon yelled back.

"..."

"Bro/ Dominic! Tell him that I am more angry!" They both turned to the second demon.

The second demon frowned his face and said, "Shut up! Or I will kill you both!"

Dominic slapped the first and the third demon on the face and sent them flying miles away. Then. he banged his fists with each other and grinned viciously at Kayden and the others.

"I will crush them alone," he said.

Chapter 214 - The Three Archdemons

Shay, Kayden, Misha, and the other players stood their ground in front of Dominic, but the other players around and the guild members couldn't stop shaking.

It was natural for them to act like that since they saw one of the demons raze dozens of monsters and players with a mere flick of a finger.

"I don't even have to try to kill you. You will die even if I simply place my hands on you," he scoffed out loud.

Shay walked forward and said, "Try me."

"You…!" Dominic conjured a fireball in his hand and shot it at Shay, Kayden, Misha, and the other players standing in front of him. However, they all suddenly disappeared before the fireball could hit them.

"...!"

Dominic glanced around with a confused look on his face and saw them near the gazebo with Aurora in between.

'What did she do?!' Dominica yelled inwardly.

Aurora had used the second benefit of Lyda's blessing that allowed her to stop the flow of time for three seconds.

Even Shay, Kayden, Misha, and the other players were also confused as to how they suddenly got near the gazebo when they were at the end of the garden a while ago.

The fireball that Dominic had shot traveled all the way across to the other side of the garden, and everything in between was obliterated.

'If that fireball had hit us, it would have killed us all!' Shay exclaimed inwardly and gulped down in fear.

'I was trying to act brave, but no one here stands a chance against these demons. Maybe…' Shay shot a glance at Aurora and thought, 'Maybe she can, but she is not in good condition. I definitely can't let her fight.'

'What about Kayden and Misha? They got married a few days ago. If something happens to either of them….' Shay gritted his teeth and frustration. 'Goddammit!'

'I want to call back-up from the guild for help, but I don't think Elliot would send help. And to be honest… even the strongest members in our guild— who just hit level 100, can't stand a chance against them. Or maybe they can?'

Shay shook his head and thought, 'There is no way Elliott would send them. They are like the shield and the sword of the guild.'

Dominic began walking towards the gazebo with an amusing look on his face. And by the time he reached there, Aureon and Nargeon also landed beside him.

The three of them stood in front of the gazebo with varied expressions on their faces.

Dominic smirked and said, "Well, well. It seems I am going to have some fun. Good good. I was bored in hell for a long time. Entertain me a little, and I might kill you less… cruelly— hah!"

"Not fair, brother! Why do you get to kill them and not us? I was also bored all this time!" Aureon remarked.

"Me too, Dominic! You need to let us have some fun too!" Nargeon commented.

SIGH!

"Fine~" Dominic sighed with a groan. Then, he pointed his finger at Kayden, Misha, and Shay and said, "Aureon, you can play with them."

"Thank you, brother!"

"Nargeon." Dominic pointed his finger behind them at the NPCs taking shelter in the gazebo and said, "You can have some fun with them."

"That's my brother!"

Dominic cracked his fists and licked his lips as he looked at Aurora and said, "I will deal with the strong one."

Nargeon jumped on top of the gazebo and broke it in one punch. The NPCs under it started yelling and screaming in pain as they ran away.

"Ahaha! This is so much fun!" he said out loud.

Meanwhile, Aureon slowly walked to Shay, Kayden, and Misha with a grin on his face.

"You know, I have never fought with humans before. Because they were always too weak to fight back. So please, don't disappoint me. I am truly excited to fight you all!"

Kayden and Misha stepped forward and stood in front of Aurora to protect her. They knew that Aurora might be standing still and holding her sword, but she was barely managing to keep her eyes open.

She was in no state of fighting.

Furthermore, Aurora had already used the two benefits of Lyda's blessing, and they were now on a long cooldown. While the first benefit was still active, and that was the sole reason why she was still able to stand.

Aureon dashed at Shay, Kayden, Misha, and the players at fast speed.

Shay dashed towards Aureon and cast a magic attack while swinging his sword in the air. However, before Shay could even reach Aureon or complete casting the magic attack, Aureon swung his fist at Shay and sent him flying to the other side of the garden.

Then, he circled around the players and sent each of them in all the directions with another swing.

Now, only Kayden and Misha remained, who were protecting Aurora.

Aureon would have attacked Kayden and Misha when he attacked the players, but as they were protecting Aurora, he was afraid that he might hit Aurora. And Aurora was Dominic's target.

If Aureon had hit Aurora, even by mistake, Dominic would have killed him.

Kayden and Misha stood their ground with an unwavering glare in their eyes, as though they didn't care if anything happened to them, but nothing should happen to Aurora.

Aureon approached Kayden and Mishha from the left, while Dominic walked to them from the right.

But Dominic reached them sooner.

Dominic grabbed Misha by her neck and raised her in the air.

"Don't come in my way!" he yelled.

"Let her go you—!" Kayden swung his sword at Dominic's hand, aiming to cleave it. But instead, his sword broke.

STAB!

At the same time, Aureon penetrated Kayden's back with his sharp claws.

"Argh!" Kayden grunted as he coughed blood from his mouth.

Then, Aureon pulled out his claws and kicked Kayden to the ground.

SIGH!

"What a disappointment," Aureon uttered with a weary sigh.

Chapter 215 - Zach

Kayden's HP started decreasing at high speed. But suddenly, it stopped and started increasing.

"....!"

Aurora was still a healer, and she healed Kayden before his HP could hit Zero.

"Brother!" Aureon yelled with a furious look on his face.

Dominic threw Misha to the side and punched Aurora, slamming her into the broken Gazebo. She couldn't block or dodge the attack as she was healing Kayden.

Aurora slowly got up and prepared to dash at Dominic, but her body stopped responding, and she fell to the ground.

When she opened her eyes again, she found herself standing in front of Lyda, once again in the white space.

[...]

Lyda stared at Aurora in disbelief without speaking a single word.

"Am I… dead…?" Aurora asked with an anxious look on her face.

[No,] Lyda responded in a calm voice.

SIGH!

Aurora sighed in relief and said, "Then send me back. Fast! My friends need me!"

[My blessings… they are absolute; the strongest. I was supposed to give them to Zach when he met the requirements, but I chose to give you my blessings.]

"..."

[Now, I can't give them to him. Blessings are power, strength, or whatever you want to call it. We can choose to give blessings to anyone, but we can only give them to one person. Unless that person dies or ceases to exist, we can't give them to anyone else.]

"...!"

[Do you realize the responsibilities you have? The power you possess can defeat the gods if you use them correctly. And yet...]

"What...?" Aurora asked reluctantly.

[I gave you my blessings, so you don't die in this war. You are Zach's heart. You had to survive. And what did you do?]

"But you said I am not dead!"

Lyda frowned her face and said, [Answer my question.]

"I did what I thought was right. I saved as many people as I could. I fought against the monsters and demons. If I hadn't, many along with me would have died," Aurora replied with no hesitation and a resolute expression on her face.

[You wanted to save lives. That's a noble thought, and I respect that. But who is going to save you? Right now, on that battlefield, you are the strongest. And history can testify that no one has ever come to save the strongest,] Lyda uttered in a disdainful tone with a distant smile on her face.

"... what are you trying to say?" Aurora asked with a confused look on her face.

[Are you trying to become a hero?] Lyda asked.

"...no..."

[Good. But do you know what heroes do?]

"They save everyone?"

[No. Everyone wants to save their loved ones, but that doesn't make them a hero.] After a brief pause, Lyda said, [Maybe for the person they are trying to save, but not for all.]

[What you did was without a doubt a remarkable thing. And you used my blessings the way one should. But do you know why I gave you my blessings?]

"You said a while ago that you did it so I could save myself."

[Correct. And Why do I want to save you?]

"Because…"

[Not because you are a princess of an enormous dynasty, nor because you are beautiful; that has nothing to do with it. I didn't give you my blessing because you love Zach. I gave them to you because Zach loves you.]

"That's…"

[You see, Zach… he was born dead.]

"….!" Aurora stepped back in surprise and muttered, "What…?"

[Yes. He wasn't supposed to be born. But an anomaly happened, and he was born. Dead.]

"How… is that possible…?"

[He had a soul, but he had no body. He only had a heart, which wasn't beating either. His father begged and rubbed his head in front of all the powerful beings he knew; friends and foes, both. He wanted Zach to live.]

After a brief silence, Lyda continued, [They all agreed on one condition, and that was that Zach would have to be indebted to them.]

"But it was his father who asked for help…" Aurora mumbled quietly.

[Yeah, but they were doing a favor on Zach. His father had no other choice but to agree, so he did.]

[All of the supreme beings gathered at one place and performed a sacred ritual. They gave their blessings and formed the body of a newborn by using each of their body parts. Then, they inserted Zach's soul inside the body of a newborn and sealed all the powers.]

That was the reason why Zach's soul powers hadn't awakened on birth; because his soul never belonged to that body.

[Of course, they used his original heart, but everything else in his body belongs to someone else.]

"I… don't know how I should feel… about this…" Aurora muttered under her breath.

Lyda turned to Aurora and said, [That's not what you are supposed to say. You are supposed to ask, 'Why are you telling me all this?']

"Why are you telling me all this…?"

[Because you are his heart. The only thing that belonged to him, he gave it to you. Now, your life is no longer yours; it belongs to him,] Lyda stated in a solemn voice.

"I know that. Even if you hadn't told me that, I am going to dedicate my entire life to him. If his heart is mine, and my entire body and soul belongs to him," Aurora asserted without any hesitation in her voice.

Lyda furrowed her brows and said, [Do you think you are in any condition to say that? Don't promise something if you don't mean it.]

"But I truly…!"

Lyda waved her hand in the air, and a mirror appeared in front of Aurora.

"What is…" Aurora was left speechless when she looked at her reflection in the mirror.

Her entire body was filled with cracks as though her body was breaking apart. She looked similar to Lyda but in worse condition.

"What… happened to me…?" she asked as he touched the cracks on her body.

[You tell me. Can a normal human walk, run, jump, and fight for more than six hours without any breaks, water, or food?]

"…."

[The answer is no. And my blessings increased your AGILITY by 100 times. That's 600 hours, which is equivalent to 25 days.]

"…!"

[You fought continuously for 600 hours straight. Can a human run, jump, and fight nonstop for 25 days without any rest? No. Not even the higher beings can. But you did that without thinking about any consequences. What do you think will happen to you?]

"I…"

[If I hadn't stopped you, and if you had used my blessings for even a single nano-second, your entire body would have been destroyed— in this game and the real world too. Leaving you with a painful death,] Lyda stated with a glare in her eyes.

"So… am I going to die…?" Aurora asked hesitantly with tears in her eyes, seemingly afraid to know the answer.

[No. You are safe. However—]

Suddenly, the white space started quacking vigorously, and the mirror in front of Aurora shattered.

"What's going on?!" Aurora asked with an anxious look on her face.

Lyda looked into Aurora's eyes and uttered, "Zach is here."

Chapter 216 - Meanwhile

After Aurora's body fell flat to the ground, she was pulled into the white space by Lyda to save her life.

Meanwhile, the three archdemons— Dominic, Aureon, and Nargeon were spreading havoc around the capital.

Nargeon was grabbing and flipping the NPCs in the air as though they were dolls. Aureon was playing with the players and the guild members. While Dominic was on his way to the gazebo so he could fight Aurora.

However, Kayden and Misha dashed at him from behind and tried to stop him.

Of course, they failed to do that.

Dominic grabbed Misha by her neck with one hand and Kayden by his neck with his other hand.

He frowned his face with a glare in his eyes and uttered, "I would have loved to crush your necks, but fortunately, you are not my prey. So get out of my way!"

Dominic threw Misha and Kayden at Aureon and yelled, "Take care of your prey, or I will have to take care of you!"

Dominic reached the gazebo and stood in front of unconscious Aurora. He moved his hand to grab her, but suddenly, he was sent flying a few meters away by something.

He landed on his feet but stumbled a couple of times before crashing into one of the buildings.

When he looked in the direction, he was attacked, but he saw nothing. It was as though he was attacked by no one.

Confused, Dominic jumped into the air to see if someone was hiding nearby, but he couldn't find anyone.

He could only see hundreds of thousands of monsters, a few thousand players, and a few hundred NPCs.

He looked up at the sky to check whether someone attacked him from the air, but he could only see the flying monsters and demons and the gate of hell, from where thousands of demons were jumping out.

"What was it?" he muttered in annoyance. "No being can push me away like that. Yet… something …"

After glancing around, Dominic landed on the ground and slowly walked back to the garden. But this time, he was cautious.

"Whatever it was, may attack me again. So I just have to catch that mongrel at that time," he murmured with a furious look on his face.

It didn't take time for Dominic to get to the garden, and as he had expected, he was attacked again, but this time, he caught the culprit.

"Found you!"

Dominic jumped in the air and landed on the other side of the garden. He swung everyone on his way and walked to the damaged carrier.

"You can't hide anymore!"

Dominic penetrated his hand into the carrier and pulled out the attack from inside it.

It was Shay. He had used the carrier's attack mechanism and amplified the wind attack to aim it on the Dominic.

The first attack sent Dominic flying because he had been charging it for a few minutes, while the second attack did nothing because it was fired soon after.

Dominic grabbed Shay by his face and yelled, "Did you seriously think you could get away with this?"

Shay struggled to break free, but then, he suddenly scoffed and said, "Who said I was trying to get away?"

"Hah?!"

Dominic's eyes widened in realization. He quickly looked back and gazed at the gazebo, only to see Aurora wasn't there.

"...!"

"Hey…" Shay looked into Dominic's eyes and said, "Guess what?"

"..." Dominic raised his brows with an amused look on his face and said, "I can crush your head any time I want, yet you dare to speak with me?"

"Jokes on you, I can say the same to you."

"Hah? What can a puny human like you can do—"

Shay pressed his feet on Domini's chest and pushed him away, causing Dominic to let go of him because of yet another wind attack.

Before Dominic pulled out Shay from the carrier, Shay had charged the attack. He was simply wasting Dominic's time while the wind attack got amplified stronger, and when the time was right, Shay broke free from Dominic's clutch.

He also did that to distract Dominic from Aurora while the help arrived.

After Shay was flung away by Aureon at the start, Shay thought of every possibility to save him and his friends. And the best solution he could find was to inform a certain someone about that attack.

Dominic glared at Shay and uttered, "You seem to have a death wish! I will rip your body apart and wear your organs on my body! I will bath in your blood and—"

"Eww. So cringe. Is everyone in the hell so edgy?" Shay scoffed out loud.

Shay was simply buying time to delay everything. However, Dominic realized that when Shay kept glancing at the gazebo again and again.

The NPC nun, who had been hiding from plain sight, dragged Aurora with her and healed her.

Misha saw it, and she thought the nun was trying to harm Aurora. So she got up and dashed at the nun.

When she saw the nun touching Aurora, she placed her sword on the nun's neck and asked, "What are you trying to do?"

"I am healing her," the nun replied without looking back at Misha or stopping the healing process.

"Why would you want to heal her?" Misha asked. "You are an NPC. While you may be real, you charge coins to heal people. So I find it hard to believe you are healing Aurora without asking anything in return."

The nun healed Aurora's HP to the max and then turned to Misha. She smiled at her and said, "I exist for my lord. I have devoted my soul and body to him, and I would do anything to him. But he hasn't acknowledged me as his follower yet."

Then, the nun looked at Aurora and spoke, "This girl is important to my lord. And if I can't help my lord, then I have failed. My faith in him is unyielding, and that's why, I—"

QUAKE!

"...!"

RUMBLE!

The entire first realm, and the realm above; the hell, and the heavens— everything in between, as well as the white space dimension, rumbled as the clouds covered the sun, and the thunder followed.

Chapter 217 - Massacre

QUAKE! RUMBLE!

The clouds covered the sky and the sun as the thunder followed with the rumble.

Lightning sparked in the clouds as it electrified each and every monster in the sky and pulverized them.

"..." Dominic, Aureon, and Nargeon glanced around with confused looks on their faces as they couldn't comprehend what was going on.

The clouds had blocked the gates of hell, but the demons were still jumping blindly.

It was at that time when Dominic realized he was being played by Shay, and everything he did was to buy time.

"I will deal with you later!" he said to Shay and jumped in the air.

'Since they all are trying so hard to save that girl, she must be a very important person to them. And she is strong too. She possesses a mysterious power.'

'But her current condition is bad, so this is the only chance I will get to kill her. If not, she might become a threat to us demons and hell one day!'

"Aureon! Nargeon!" Dominic called out their names as he landed on the ground. He pointed his finger at Aurora, who was being protected by the nun and Misha.

"Get rid of that girl!" He yelled out loud and dashed at Aurora.

Nargeon was close to them since he was near the gazebo, so he reached their first.

He looked at Misha and the nun and said, "You first!"

Nargeon raised his fist in the air and squished Misha with his punch, or so would have happened if Zach hadn't stopped Nargeon's punch with his one finger.

"....!"

Zach looked at Nargeon with an emotionless glare in his eyes and muttered, "Die."

Nargeon's body slowly disintegrated into ashes as he looked back at Aureon and Dominic and said, "Brother—!"

"You—!" Aureon yelled with a furious look on his face and jumped on Zach. He raised both of his hands in the air and formed a fist for a heavy attack as though he was trying to end Zach in one hit.

However, before Aureon would even reach near Zach, a huge fire sword dropped from the sky and penetrated Aureon's body.

Aureon landed on the ground with a grunt in front of Zach and called Dominic for help.

"Brother!" he yelled in pain.

However, Dominic couldn't move because his body wasn't responding. Even he was surprised to see his body trembling as he couldn't believe his eyes. He wasn't scared, not in the least. But his body was.

Zach's glove of the right hand started glowing as it glowed when he had used the 'Wrath of the phoenix'. However, instead of simply glowing, it started burning.

The fire burned the entire glove, but it was undamaged. Soon, the fire spread on Zach's entire arm, and it looked as though it was a Phoenix's wing.

Zach grabbed Aureon's head and crushed it as his body first turned into lava and melted.

After seeing two of his brothers die in front of his eyes, Dominic was enraged. He wanted to dash at Zach, but his body couldn't move.

He watched the fire from Zach's hand spread to his eyes and later covered his head.

It looked as though Zach's hair and eyes were made of fire.

However, even after all that, the fire wasn't burning or dealing any kind of damage to Zach.

The fire was slowly spreading over Zach's body as his veins glowed. Seemingly, the fire was coming from inside Zach's body.

The clouds rumbled even louder, and the lightning started striking the demons on the ground too. They tried to dodge, but lightning found its way to hit them.

After realizing they were doomed, the demons in the capital stopped whatever they were doing and started running away.

The scene was the same as how the players and NPCs ran when the crack to the hell opened, and the demons invaded the first realm. Now, it was their turn.

The only difference was that they were in abundance while Zach was alone.

Zach looked at his fire-hand and inspected it with his eyes by moving his fingers and forming a fist. He was checking whether the arm was still functional or not.

Then, Zach moved his gaze to Dominic and moved his hand towards him.

"Do you know who I am?" Zach asked in a cold and raspy voice.

"I…" Dominic's lips trembled as he struggled to speak.

SIGH!

Zach closed his eyes and opened them again, but there was no fire in his eyes this time. Instead, the white in his eyes had turned pitch-black— that resembled abyss, while his pupil had turned red, and it was pulsating every second, seemingly, resonating with his heartbeats.

"What about now? Do you know who I am?" Zach asked again.

It was at that moment when Dominic realized he had messed up.

Earlier, Dominic's body wasn't responding to him, and now it had stopped responding.

He turned around and ran as fast as he could. He didn't know where he was going. He simply wanted to run as far as away possible from Zach.

However, Zach didn't chase after him, nor did he try to stop him. Zach jumped in the air and hovered for more than his three-second limit.

He flew even higher within the clouds and looked at all the chaos caused by the demons. He gazed upon the Dead bodies of players and NPCs, the destruction of the capital, and the crack to hell.

After confirming all the players had sided with the NPCs on one side, Zach raised his fire-arm in the air.

Suddenly, thousands of small portals opened in the sky behind Zach, and fire-weapons came out of them. Some were swords, spears, bows, tridents, daggers, and other various types of weapons.

Then, Zach lowered his fire-arms, and all the weapons were launched to the ground on the demons.

The demons ran in all directions, but the weapons hit them eventually. More weapons kept coming from the portal and killed most of the demons.

If the demons' invasion was annihilation, then Zach's attack was a single-handed massacre.

Chapter 218 - Pure Rage

One after one, Zach hunted each and every demon. It wasn't long before they had realized that they had nowhere to go.

No matter how far they ran or flew, thousands of fire-weapons killed them all.

At fast speed, the weapons looked as though they were phoenix's feathers.

Even the demons watching from the crack to hell had stopped coming into the first realm, because they knew that they would die the moment they entered.

Among the hundreds of thousands of demons, there was a demon who was the most afraid. He was cowering while running, hoping Zach wouldn't find him.

That demon was none other than Dominic, who had realized that he messed with the wrong person.

Furthermore, he recognized who Zach was.

"Why… why… Why is 'her' kin here?! I thought their bloodline had gone extinct. I thought 'she' was the last of them!" Dominic muttered violently.

"If that man is true 'her' son, that that means he is the grandson of the—"

Out of a sudden, Dominic stopped running because he saw Zach standing in front of him. He was walking in the opposite directions of all the demons, looking deep into Dominic's soul.

If glares could kill, then Dominic would have died over a million times.

While the fire-weapons were still launching themselves and annihilating the demons. While Zach had gone to take care of Dominic personally.

When Zach was a few meters away from Dominic, he banged his head on the ground as though he was trying to surrender to Zach.

"Please forgive me, I didn't know you were the—"

Before Dominic could even growl properly, Zach cleaved him into pieces using a fire sword made from his fire-arm.

"I missed the part where that's my problem…" Zach uttered in a disdainful tone.

One would have thought everything had ended since the third and the last archdemon had been slain by Zach. However, that was just the start of the massacre.

Once Zach had taken care of the big enemies, he hunted down the small ones. He killed and killed without stopping or caring for anyone.

Luckily, all the players and NPC had already been evacuated by Victoria and Aria.

After making sure everyone was safe, Aria rushed to Zach and tried to stop him, but Zach wasn't himself. He was lost in rage.

Aria had realized that long ago ever since she saw him summon the 'phoenix's rage' and borrowed her powers to conjure the portals with thousands of swords at once.

Zach normally wouldn't have been able to do that under any circumstances because his body still wasn't qualified to use phoenix's powers. But he had already received the sigil from Phoenix. Furthermore, the gloves once belonged to Xie Lua— the phoenix.

'I have to stop him otherwise, he won't stop until he destroys everything. But how?' Aria asked herself.

'The only person who can stop him in this state is Aurora, but Aurora's current condition is beyond functional.'

Aria had a faint idea, but she wasn't sure about it.

'If it didn't work, then he might also end up attacking me…'

Of course, Aria wasn't afraid of getting hurt by Zach, but she was afraid that Zach would feel guilty about hurting Aria when he got back to his senses.

However, Aria had no choice but to take the risk.

She dished her head onto Zach and tackled him down. But, Zach stood up a second later and pushed Aria to the side.

However, Aria pulled him close to her and sealed his lips with her lips. She kissed him and kept kissing him until his eyes went back to normal.

That was the first sign that her plan was working. Soon, Zach's hair went back to normal, and then his arms.

Still, Aria didn't stop kissing him. She was waiting for Zach to kiss her back, and only then she would stop kissing him.

The weapons' portals vanished from the sky and the clouds scattered in the sky, revealing the crack to hell, once again.

Aria wrapped her arms around Zach's neck and kissed him aggressively until Zach began to kiss her back.

Then, she stopped kissing him and looked into his eyes as though she was waiting for Zach to do something.

"I would appreciate it if you don't kiss me like this in public," Zach scoffed. He glanced around and said, "Especially when we are standing between the corpses of players, NPCs, and demons."

Aria's lips trembled as she sighed in relief. She looked at him with teary eyes and said, "I was so worried! What happened to you suddenly? What was that move you used? Is that your new skill or something? And it was extremely overpowered!"

Zach looked at his glove on his right hand and said, "I don't know, but I think it was related to phoenix. I could feel the rage burning inside me. And…"

Zach stopped and lowered his gaze with a sad look on his face.

"And…?" Aria asked with a curious look on her face.

"I heard a voice…" Zach muttered.

"Whose voice?"

"I think it was Xie Lua's voice…" Zach uttered in a low voice.

"Hmm? Who is that?" Aria wondered with a puzzled yet curious look on her face.

"Uhh… you have never been to a magic shop?" Zach asked with a surprised look on his face.

After a brief silence, Aria hesitantly asked, "What is a magic shop?"

Zach stared at Aria and sighed as he shook his head in disbelief.

"What…? I don't know anything about this game. I mean…" Aria shrugged her shoulders and said, "I cheated my way to enter in this game."

Zach raised his brow with a confused yet curious look on his face and asked, "What do you mean?"

"Aurora had told me that you all got transported into this game because you tried to play a VR game, right?"

Zach nodded in reply.

Chapter 219 - Acquiring A New Sigil

"So, basically, I didn't. I can't enter into the mortal realm for personal reasons. Hence, I can't get my hands on the VR game. But I was able to connect to my domain, but I couldn't pass through the portal to enter the game," Aria stated.

"So… how are you here…? Wait…" Zach's eyes widened in realization. "Is this related to why your form... Or rather, the avatar is different in the game and your original appearance?"

Aria nodded and said, "I used the same trick I used on you."

After a brief pause, she said, "I pulled a girl into the portal and—"

Aria stopped when she noticed something on Zach's neck.

"What's wrong?" Zach asked as though he was completely oblivious to what Aria was shocked at.

"There is another sigil on the side of your neck…" Aria muttered with a horrified look on her face.

"What is it? What does it look like?" Zach asked in a calm voice.

"There are two horns, two eyes, and two long fangs…" Aria looked into Zach's eyes and uttered, "It's a sigil of a demon."

Aria expected Zach to freak out after hearing that, but Zach simply sighed in response.

"Why aren't you shocked?!"

"Well, this was to be expected. I used my demonic eyes, after all," Zach replied with a shrug.

Aria then recalled what Zach had once told her in her domain.

'When I was born, I was blessed by many celestial beings including elder Phoenix, elder dragon, grandmaster elf, demon lord, and apparently a god too.'

At first, Aria hadn't thought much of it as she assumed Zach had received normal blessings from them.

However, now she had realized Zach's origin.

'So Zach is the 'key' for annihilation.'

Aria looked past Zach's shoulder and muttered, "Let's go check up on your friends and…"

Zach and Aria went to the gazebo and saw all the players, NPCs, and the guild members of Risen warrior had lined up to meet him.

Some of them were grateful to Zach, but some of them were frightened.

It was natural for them to feel that since they witnessed something unbelievable that they couldn't comprehend the power of Zach.

How could a player do something like that? They all thought the same.

However, the guild members of Risen warriors had already witnessed Zach's strength before in the dungeon expedition.

Zach first walked to Shay and smiled wryly at him.

"That was a cool entry," Shay said with a smile on his face.

"Thanks for letting me know about all that. I don't want to imagine what would have happened if I hadn't made it on time," Zach asserted in a calm voice.

Zach then walked to Kayden and Misha and stood before them.

He looked at the blood and a hole in Kayden's clothes and asked, "That must have hurt a lot…"

"…"

Kayden didn't reply because he had nothing to say.

Zach turned to Misha and said, "Thank you to you both for trying to save Aurora."

"But we didn't—"

Misha tried to say something, but Zach interrupted her and said, "Thank you."

Zach ignored all the players, including the guild members, and the NPCs, who had no idea what was going on with their lives.

Zach passed through the crowd and made his way to the gazebo to meet Aurora.

When he reached there, he saw Aurora sitting with her head resting on Victoria's shoulder. And the NPC nun was giving support to Aurora so she could sit straight.

Zach walked to her and smiled at her with teary eyes.

This was the first time where Zach had shown his emotions like that.

Ever since his father's disappearance, Zach had learned to endure the pain and suffering without letting it show to anyone. Years after years, his heart turned to stone, and Aurora was the one who made him feel alive again.

All the emotions he had been holding jumbled up, and some of them ended up spilling out, resulting in Zach's eyes getting teary in front of Aurora.

When Zach looked at the cracks on Aurora's body, it instantly reminded him of the last moments of his master.

He dropped to his knees so he could get on the same level as Aurora. Then, he placed his hand on her face and said, "Hey…"

Aurora smiled at him and uttered in a low voice, "H…ey…"

Her voice was lower than a whisper.

"I am here," he said.

Aurora moved her hand and touched Zach's face with a smile on her face. Tears started rolling down Aurora's eyes as she remained Lyda's words about her condition.

"It seems we will have to postpone our wedding…" she said with a wry smile on her face.

Zach kissed Aurora's hand and said, "There is no need to. You are going to be fine."

"I…"

Zach placed his finger on Aurora's lips and said, "Whatever you have to say, say it after we get married."

"…."

At the same time, Aria finally managed to get past the crowd and laid her eyes on Aurora.

She instantly covered her mouth to stop herself from gasping as she thought, 'That's the side-effect of messing with time…'

THUD! THUD!

The sound echoed around followed by the players' screams.

The fourth wave had started, and the demons started jumping from the crack. However, something was different this time.

None of the demons moved from their position and they stood with anxious looks on their faces. It was thought they were forced to jump from the back by someone superior to them.

If they were ordered by their leader, they would have no choice but to obey and follow the orders, no matter what they were.

Suddenly, they all covered their ears as though they were listening to a voice and they wanted to stop it. They thought if they couldn't listen to the orders, they wouldn't have to follow them, but it was useless.

"Zach…" Aria called out to Zach and looked into his eyes.

Zach nodded and carried Aurora in his arms. Then, he opened the portal to Aria's domain and entered it.

Then, he jumped in the air and landed on Aria's throne.

Aurora glanced around and chuckled as she said, "So this is Aria's domain? It looks terrifying."

"I know, right? I thought the same when I entered here the first time."

Chapter 220 - Zach And Aurora

Zach was sitting on Aria's throne with Aurora on his lap.

"Can you change the scenery of this place…?" Aurora asked in a calm voice. "I feel scared after seeing the lava and everything."

"Sure…"

Zach changed the scenery to a beautiful garden with lots of grass, plants, and trees. There were butterflies, birds, and small cute animals around to make the scenery more heavenly.

"This place suddenly changed from hell to a paradise…" Aurora said with a smile on her face.

The cracks on Aurora's body grew more and more and it looked as though she could break apart at any time.

Zach was barely holding back his emotions because he didn't want to make Aurora feel sad, especially in this condition.

Aurora was holding her tears back because she knew how Zach would feel if she showed any sign of pain.

They both stared into each other's eyes without saying anything. But the time was passing by.

"I…" Aurora opened her mouth and said, "I saw Aria kissing you…"

"Yeah…. We are lovers now…" Zach replied in a calm tone.

Aurora slightly smiled after that and uttered, "I missed my chance to tease her…"

"You can tease her all you want when she is done dealing with the demons outside." Zach caressed Aurora's face and said, "I will tease her with you."

"Zach… I am sorry…" Aurora uttered in a low voice. "I couldn't wait for you…"

Her voice was slowly getting lower and lower. Seeingly, it was fading away as time passed.

"What are you talking about, idiot? You are here in my arms, what more do I need from you?" Zach scoffed wryly. "There is no need to apologize. Just wait for a little more time and everything will be fine."

"I… met your master…"

Zach wasn't surprised after hearing that as the cracks on Aurora's body and her condition already gave that out the moment Zach landed his gaze on her.

"She did this to you…?" Zach asked in an emotionless voice.

"No.. she helped me…" After a pause, she continued, "She gave me her blessings…"

"I am…sorry…"

"Hmm? Why are you apologizing…?" Aurora asked with a confused look on her face.

"If I had arrived sooner…"

"You came as soon as you could, right? I saw your entry… It was amazing."

"..."

"I wanted to fight alongside you… but what a shame…"

"..."

"Zach…" Aurora slowly tried to reach her hand to Zach's face, but she was struggling to do that.

Zach grabbed Aurora's hand and placed it on his face after saying, "Yes?"

"I always wanted to get married to a man I love. I was happy when you told me that we would get married. I was… looking forward to it. I was excited for the wedding night too…"

"…."

"Zach… I love… you…"

"I love you too."

"I… feel tired. I will… take a little… rest…"

After saying that, Aurora closed her eyes and her hand slowly dropped from Zach's face.

"..."

Zach gritted his teeth and bit his lips so hard that they started bleeding. The same with his fists as he clenched them so badly that his nails penetrated his palm.

A few seconds later, a drop of tear rolled down his right eye, but it was burned and evaporated before it could drop from his chin.

He looked at Aurora with a painful expression on his face and hugged her tightly. Then, he stood up with Aurora in his arms and placed her body on the throne.

Since the throne was wide and long, many could fit it without any problems.

Zach then placed his hand on Aurora's forehead and closed his eyes.

"Lida, can you hear me?" he said in a calm voice.

However, there was no reply from Lyda.

"Tch!" he clicked his tongue and muttered, "Always running away from me."

Zach sat beside Aurora and placed her head on his lap. He stroked her hair and sang her her favorite lullaby.

A few minutes later, Aria walked into the portal with thousands of demons.

"...!"

She shot a glance at Zach and blinked at him as though she was trying to say everything was okay.

Once all the demons had entered Aria's domain, Aria closed her eyes as her body shined and she changed to her goddess form.

Naturally, the demons had freaked out because no matter how braindead the monsters and demons were; just like the animals, they could feel the difference between the prey and the predator.

Aria flapped her beautiful wings that were black with red and purple on edge and a bit of pink shade on them. But, instead of soft feathers, they looked hard as though they were crystals. They were sharp, shiny, and pointy.

When Aria flapped her wings, it sounded as though sharp blades were hitting each other.

Zach assumed Aria would use her wing attack and shoot everyone down, however, Aria did something unexpected.

She raised her hand in the air and snapped her finger with her thumb as she uttered the word: "Die."

The next moment, all the demons turned into ashes and vanished into thin air.

"What was that?" Zach asked with a curious look on his face.

"Hmm?" Aria turned to Zach and replied, "That was my commandant power…"

"If you had such a move, why didn't you use it sooner?"

"It only works if I am in my goddess form, and I can only transform into my goddess form in my domain; that too, only for a few seconds."

Aria's form changed back to Ameria and she landed on the ground.

"And besides, my order worked because we are in my domain. I can do anything I want at my will," Aria replied with a shrug.

"So... you could use this move when I met you for the first time too…?" Zach asked with an anxious look on his face.

"Obviously." Aria scoffed at Zach and said, "Didn't I say I was going easy on you."

"..."

Aria moved her gaze to Aurora and asked, "How is she doing?"

"You tell me."

Aria jumped on her throne and examined Aurora's body. She placed one hand on Aurora's forehead and hovered her other hand over her body.

A few seconds later, Aria turned to Zach and said, "She is just sleeping. And she is doing fine."