

GODS' IMPACT 291

Chapter 291 Questions and Answers

"I have no idea what you are talking about," Xie Lua said while averting her eyes even though it was obvious from her face that she was trying to hide something.

"Come on. Just drop this act. The mark has already been activated, and I saw everything. I saw... everything..."

"Yes. I wanted to confirm if the mark had activated or not because I needed to know how much information I had to reveal," Xie Lua nodded and added. "I didn't want to interfere in master's plan."

"Okay, so before I ask my second question, can you tell me what you call him master?" Zach asked curiously.

"Because he is my master?"

"I remember you mentioning that you are a thousand years older than him, and I also remember you talking about the contract when I mentioned father's death. You said the contract is still not served, so there are chances that father is alive, right?"

"It seems so."

"So... what exactly was your relationship with him?" Zach turned his face to the side and said, "I don't want to go too personal, but since my father is known for well.. the harem, I was curious to know if you were—"

"Stop right there." Xie Lua glared at Zach and said, "Don't you dare say one more word, or I will get mad."

"I should have apologized before asking, I guess."

"No, that's not the point. jokes about such topics are not funny."

Zach smiled wryly at Xie Lua and uttered, "Did it look like I was joking?"

"Talking about something you don't know is the same as an insult to me, and insult is a joke," Xie Lua retorted.

"I guess you are right. So I will just ask without holding back." After a brief pause, Zach asked, "What was your relationship with father?"

"We had a relationship of a master and servant, nothing less or more than that. And since you already went as far as asking me about his harem, then let me answer it. My relationship with master was as pure as a relationship between a father and child."

"Thank you for answering honestly."

"Now, let me ask one question." Xie Lua placed her hands on the booth and asked, "Why did you ask me that?"

"I am not really sure. You said you are the one who gave me the phoenix's blessings, but I always thought you died with father that day. However, now that I know the full truth, I know father saved you by locking you with the ten rings."

Zach had always seen Xie Lua in her phoenix form, and the first time he saw her in her human form was the day of the third impact, which he forgot because of the trauma. Had he remembered that day, he would have recognized Xie Lua on their first meeting.

"I don't blame you for not recognizing me since you don't remember anything of that day, but I—"

"How... do you know that I don't remember...?"

"Huh? Isn't that obvious. It's because of the mark," Xie Lua answered in a neutral tone.

"Wait, what do you mean?"

"The mark allowed you to visit that memory, but you would have never been able to visit it if you had remembered it from your perspective. You can think of it as a necessity for the mark to work," Xie Lua explained.

"So that's the reason I didn't remember anything. I thought it was because of my trauma, but I am glad to know that I didn't forget that day because I was too weak to accept the reality."

"Why would you even think that?!" Xie Lua asked with an annoyed face. "Stop having so low self-esteem."

"I am talking about the seven-year-old me." Zach grinned at Xie Lua and said, "I have developed some self-esteem and ego, which is required to live."

"So, do you have any more questions? I would be glad to answer them as long as I know them."

"Well, I have tons of them, but I want to know why the sun god attacked us? I know that one of my father's friends snitched on him, but still, there was no need to launch such a world-threatening attack, right? He was ready even to blow up the entire planet, and he would have done that if father hadn't stopped him. Wasn't he a god? Aren't they supposed to protect humanity?"

"No, Gods don't care about humanity; it's simply one of their creations. You have to see everything from their perspective. For them, you humans are nothing but dust. They see no difference between an insect and a human. They can create as many worlds as they want and destroy them too."

"Hmm..." Zach hummed in wonder and said, "That makes sense. But Uncle Tim said that it was the third impact. I don't get it. How did father trigger the third impact? He was only having a lovely conversation with mom."

"It wasn't master who triggered the first impact, it was the sun god."

"Oh.... let me guess, there are no consequences of the impacts if the gods trigger them, am I right?"

"Indeed."

"Fucking hypocrites!"

After a brief silence, Zach asked, "Do you know anything about the order of the universe?"

"I do have my fair share of knowledge, but you shouldn't count that on me. Ask someone who knows everything about it. Try asking Erza once you get out of the game."

"Well, I can ask Aria. She might not be as knowledgeable as mother since she was always in slumbers, but she should be able to give me some information."

"Aria...?" Xie Lua's eyes soon widened as she realized what she had just said. She covered her mouth and said, "You idiot! Why did you take her name?! Don't you know she shouldn't be named!"

"Hmm?"

"That... she is a goddess of death and destruction, the almighty annihilator. Her weakest creation alone can destroy the world over and over again!"

"Uhh... I am not sure if it's the right time to say this, but... she is my wife."

Chapter 292 Questions and Answers

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Chapter 293 Talk About Marriage

"What?!" Xie Lua exclaimed.

"Aria is my wife."

"Wait, there might be a misunderstanding." Xie Lua laughed awkwardly and said, "We might be talking about a different Aria here."

"No, I am sure we are talking about the same one. The goddess of death and destruction, right? And Sister of mother."

Xie Lua's face turned pale after hearing that.

"What's wrong with you!" she yelled.

"What do you mean?" Zach asked with a confused look on her face.

"You father and son are crazy! One has the goddess of life and prosperity as his wife, and his son has the goddess of death and destruction as his wife! What are you even trying to achieve?!"

"Nothing, actually. And I didn't know that she was technically my aunt when I met her."

"I am not even talking about that. And yes, what would your mother think if she got to know that her son married her sister?"

"In all fairness, Erza and I don't have any connection. And... Erza doesn't know that I am her nephew."

"So you are deceiving her. Actually, scratch all that, how did you even manage to seduce the goddess of death?!"

"I did not seduce her. In fact, it was her who charmed me with her beauty. And besides, she is not as scary and dangerous as you make her out to be. She is so cute and innocent, just like a maiden in love," Zach uttered with a smile on his face.

"You have got to be kidding me! How can a goddess of death be cute? THAT's the best joke I have ever heard in my entire life."

Zach furrowed his brows and said, "Are you insulting her?"

"..."

SIGH!

Xie Lua shook her head and uttered in a low voice: "I should have expected you to get angry. And I apologize for what I said. I personally have never met the goddess of death, so it was wrong for me to call her with names. I was just... worried about you."

"Hmm?" Zach raised his brow with a curious look on his face and asked, "Worried about me? Why?"

"Well..." Xie Lua fidgeted a little and said, "I am your wife, after all."

"Uhh... okay, hold for a second there." Zach recalled all his memories with Xie Lua and said, "I can't recall when I got married to you."

"We didn't yet. But we will soon," she said with a flushed face.

"Uh... why?"

"Huh?"

"I am not saying that you don't look pretty. You look hot... I mean, you are the phoenix, come on. Who wouldn't want to marry you? But I am unable to comprehend the reason why we are supposed to get married."

"Wait..." Zach facepalmed himself and said, "Did father make a stupid promise with you or something?"

"No, it was your mother," Xie Lua replied instantly.

"Umm... which one?" Zach asked with a sigh. "I have many mothers, but I prefer Erza as my mother rather than my real mother. So unless it's your promise with Erza, I am not taking it seriously."

"It was... Erza..."

"..." Zach stared dumbfounded at Xie Lua and said, "Okay. We will get married if you want to."

"Are you sure? Just like that?!"

"Well, if mother wants us to marry, then I can't go against her wish. I will put her words on the top and consider them an order."

Xie Lua was jumping with joy. All the time she met Zach, she wanted to inform him, but she never got a chance.

They had an awkward meeting when they met for the first time, but Xie Lua was still about to tell him. However, Zach got angry when she mentioned his father, so she didn't tell him.

The next time they met was also a perfect chance to tell him about the marriage since their relationship had improved a lot, and she had also admitted that she was the phoenix who blessed him. However, Aurora was with him, so she felt a little insecure mentioning that in front of her.

Their third meeting was a disaster as Zach visited her after the demon invasion. She knew for sure that mentioning anything about the relationship would backfire.

But now, this was the perfect chance since they were already on the topic of marriage.

"Ummm... before we discuss further on this. Can you tell me what exactly did mother tell you?" Zach asked with a curious yet calm look on his face.

"She summoned me to the real world and asked me to take care of you," Xie Lua said with a smile on her face.

"..."

"..."

"What? That's it? I was expecting more."

"Well, she ran out of power, so I..."

"So... what part of that conversation says anything about our marriage?"

"Taking care of you means marrying you... right?"

"Why would you think that?"

"Huh? Did I misunderstand it?!" Xie Lua panicked.

"Uhh... yes," Zach nodded.

"I see..." All the happiness and the cheerful smile on Xie Lua's face vanished in seconds.

"I apologize for causing a misunderstanding. Please, forget about everything I said," Xie Lua uttered in a disdainful tone.

Zach squinted his eyes and asked, "Do you love me?"

"W-what?! What gave you t-that idea?"

"Well, you are the one who misunderstood what mom was trying to say."

"So w-what? I was only up for the marriage because she asked me to. It's n-not like I wanted to marry you or anything," Xie Lua uttered while averting her gaze.

"I didn't know you were a tsundere," Zach laughed out loud and said with a grin on his face, "It's clear as day from the look on your face that you have feelings for me."

"How can you be sure of that?"

"Out of all the blessings I could have activated, only the wrath of phoenix was triggered even though the blessing seal was still intact. And after the seal was removed, it was the phoenix's blessing that had the most impact on me."

"..."

"Aria told me that the blessings might react to my emotions, but I didn't understand what she was saying. I never intended to use your blessings. Unless, of course, it was the other way around."

Xie Lua's face flushed red as Zach revealed everything.

"You were thinking about me all the time, and hence, the connection to your blessing increased drastically. But of course, I wasn't sure about that. However, now that you mentioned the marriage, I beg to differ," Zach said with a grin on her face.

Chapter 294 Marriage Proposal?

Zach raised his brows at Xie Lua and asked with a judging look on his face: "So... do you love me or not?"

Xie meekly nodded with a flushed face.

"Wow."

"Please don't make fun of me!" Xie Lua yelled to hide her embarrassment.

"When did I make fun of you?"

"You are grinning all over your face!"

"I can't help it, okay? It's just funny thinking someone as mature as you misunderstood a marriage proposal and then daydreamed about me. But I admit that it's cute," Zach said with a grin.

Xie Lua's face flushed even more as her eyes got teary out of embarrassment. She couldn't take it anymore, which was visible on her face.

"Listen, I am in no way making fun of you. I promise on Zoe's name. And it's just... uhhh... I don't know how to describe this feeling, but it's kind of a mix of pleasure or... love and lust."

Xie Lua stepped back from her booth and said, "You lust after me?"

"No... Well, not until now. But you broke the boundaries, so I can't help but see you as a..."

Xie Lua hugged herself and covered her chest with her hands.

"Can I ask if this is your first time loving someone?" Zach asked curiously.

"I am not answering any of your questions! And stay 10 meters away from me!"

"How can your husband give you a goodbye kiss if he stays 10 meters away from you?"

"You are not my husband!" Xie Lua hissed.

"But you thought of me as your husband, right? I am sure you also dreamed about running the magic shop together or something."

Xie Lua's face got even more red as Zach uncovered all her dreams. If she had one more of her dreams exposed, she would go insane.

"Okay, I will stop there. I am in no place to judge you. But would you answer my question, please?" Zach uttered in a calm voice.

"I... I never had a lover or someone I loved. I saw master as my father, and you are the only man I came to love so..." Xie Lua replied while stuttering.

"That makes me happy, but aren't you over a thousand years old? How can you think of my father as your father?"

"To be honest..." Xie Lua walked back to her booth again and held Zach's hand in her hand before continuing, "I... don't remember anything about me. When your father found me 20 years ago, I was sealed inside a shrine. I had no memories of what I was before or who sealed me."

"Who named you then? Father?"

"No." Xie Lua shook her head and said, "My name was written on the shrine, so I used it as my name. Also, I was young. So when I say I am over a thousand years old, I am only 47 years old. I don't know how old I was when I was sealed, but judging by my appearance when I was unsealed. I can say I was about your age at that time."

"Hmm. Still, you are more than twice my age." Zach rubbed his thumb on Xie Lua's hand and asked, "How does it feel to love me?"

"You mean, how do I feel after watching you get along with other girls while I watch everything from a distance?"

"No. I want to know how it feels to love a boy who you gave blessings to when he was born, saved when he was eight years old, and now thinking about marrying him when he is 18 years old."

"I don't know how to answer that. For me, age doesn't matter, just like every other high race who lives for thousands of years. But I understand what you are trying to say. I basically saw you grow up, and I even played a lot with you after you got my blessings. So I guess... I do feel a little excited after realizing our relationship can be considered immoral."

"I didn't expect you to answer honestly, not going to lie." Zach kissed Xie Lua's hand and asked, "So? What do you want to do?"

"About what?"

"Do you still want to marry me?" he asked with a gentle smile on his face, seemingly reassuring Xie Lua that he was serious.

"I... don't know. I feel stupid after knowing it was a misunderstanding, but what's done is done." Xie Lua looked into Zach's eyes with a confident look on her face and said, "I will keep loving you."

"I feel flattered..." Zach couldn't take his eyes off Xie Lua. He had started seeing her from a different perspective. Now, she was no longer his father's friend or his mother's acquaintance, or his benefactor; she was a girl who loved him wholeheartedly.

"What about you? Do you... love me?" Xie Lua asked hesitantly, seemingly afraid of knowing the answer.

"I... don't know, honestly. I do like you as a person, and we have become good friends. But... I don't think I love you in a romantic way. We had so many prior relationships, and after how you confessed to me just now, it's... complicated. But I can promise you that I don't mind being your husband. However—"

Xie Lua placed her finger on Zach's lips and said, "No need to complete that sentence. I know what you are trying to say, so let me say it for you."

After a brief pause, Xie Lua continued, "I won't force you to love me back, nor do I want you to divert your attention from your goals. So first, clear this game, and we will advance our relationship after that, okay?"

"Are you sure about that? Do you think you can hold your feelings till then?"

"They say love is a strange thing. It can give you a reason to live and take it away too." Xie Lua smiled brightly at Zach and said, "For me, my love for you gave me a reason to live."

'I don't think I will be able to do that, though. And I am sure you wouldn't be able to do that later.'

Zach noticed tears in Xie Lua's eyes that she was trying her best not to show.

"..."

He pulled her close to him and grabbed her face without saying anything. Then, he pressed his lips on her lips and gave her a long kiss.

Chapter 295 Long Lasting Kiss

There was nothing but silence, covering the entire magic shop dimension. There was no sun from the beginning, but there was never dark either.

The aura light from the cosmos blessed the magic shop dimension with its light, and it could be controlled by Xie Lua and her emotions— although they reacted to her thoughts which could be considered as her feelings.

After Xie Lua told him that she could wait for him and hold her feelings, she couldn't do that after all. She couldn't hide her sadness and ended up crying even though she was trying her best not to let her tears fall. Otherwise, Zach would notice them, and he would feel bad.

However, Zach had something else planned from the start. Sure, he was going to tell her the same thing she told him, but he never intended to keep her waiting.

After seeing tears in Xie Lua's eyes, Zach grabbed her and pulled her closer. But the booth between them and Zach didn't want to pull Xie Lua more as it could hurt her.

So he jumped on the other side of the booth and pulled Xie Lua in her arms. Of course, Xie Lua was left stunned, and everything was happening so quickly for her. But not for Zach.

He quickly sealed Xie Lua's soft lips with his lips and kissed her.

"..." Xie Lua's eyes widened in surprise.

She had to make sure she wasn't daydreaming again like every time, but the warmth and the taste of Zach's saliva in her mouth proved otherwise.

Xie Lua didn't care what was happening or why Zach was kissing her. But she wanted to enjoy the moment while it lasted.

It was Xie Lua's first time getting kissed, so she had no idea what to do. But she had seen people kiss, so she followed Zach's lead and wrapped her arms around his neck.

They both rubbed their bodies against each other and kept kissing. While Zach could feel Xie Lua's breasts hitting his chest, he couldn't help but get more excited.

One kiss. Two Kisses. Three Kisses. Four Kisses. Five Kisses. They were kissing like crazy. Like their lives were dependent on it.

Zach gently slid his tongue inside Xie Lua's mouth, but it was demanding too.

Zach had kissed Aurora, Aria, Victoria, Ruli, and Aquarius many times, and it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call him Kissing Master.

He had learned every way of kissing, and he pleased his girls with them whenever they wanted.

Now, it was Xie Lua's turn to experience the feeling and the pleasure of the kiss. Her heart was beating fast and loud, but that didn't stop her from kissing Zach back.

She did the same thing Zach did to her and inserted her tongue in his mouth. She moved her hand from Zach's neck to his head and gripped his hair with her fingers before pulling him even closer.

After a few more kisses, Zach pushed Xie Lua onto the booth and kept kissing her. Xie Lua let Zach take the lead, but Zach didn't stop there.

He moved his hand down from her shoulder to her chest and copped a feel of her breasts.

Xie Lua immediately pushed him back and covered her chest with her hands.

"I am sorry. I did that out of habit," Zach apologized.

"You kiss your harem like this every day?" Xie Lua asked with a flushed face.

"Yes."

Xie Lua touched her lips and said, "Not going to lie, I am jealous of them."

"Well, I visit the magic shop every day to deliver 100 potions, so I will kiss you too."

"So... what is our relationship now? Are we husband and wife? Are we married?"

"No, that's not how marriage works. But somehow, I don't blame you for not knowing that." Zach caressed Xie Lua's face and said, "Aurora will fully recover in a week or two. After that, I will bring all the girls in my harem here, and we will spend a nice long day together."

"Also, after two months, I am going to the Sea Realm to pick up Aquarius and maybe Ruli too. But I plan to get married there," he said in a calm voice.

"With who...?"

"Aquarius, Ruli— although I will need to have to talk to uncle Tis about this, Aurora, Aria, Victoria, and you too," Zach responded with a gentle smile.

"Do you... think the girls would agree on me joining your harem?" Xie Lua asked meekly.

"Of course, they will. And I didn't want to say this, but I will say it." Zach looked into Xie Lua's eyes and said, "I am happy to have another hot milf in my harem."

Xie Lua puckered her lips and said, "I didn't know you were a pervert."

"Ouch. Don't call me a pervert. I am not a pervert, but Aurora is." Zach placed his hand on his chest and proudly declared, "I am a mere man of culture."

"Now I have a reason to look forward to. I wonder what Erza would think about this..."

"She is going to get shocked when I introduce you— her friend, and Aria— her sister as my wives," Zach grinned.

"Also, you can now keep 100% shares of the potions. Consider it as my token of love and—"

"No!" Xie Lua placed her finger on Zach's lips and shook her head before saying, "Let's not do that. We shouldn't mix our personal life with our professional life. Things can get weird over time."

Zach opened his mouth and started sucking Xie Lua's finger, but she pulled her hand back and glared softly at Zach.

"So cute..."

"Stop that!" she hissed with a flushed face.

"How are my gloves? Are they repaired yet?"

"Oh! Yes." Xie Lua turned out and summoned Zach's gloves in the drawer of her booth. "Here to you."

"Nice..." Zach instantly wore them and opened and closed his fist. "I missed this feeling. Now I am ready to rock again!"

Chapter 296 Predator Zach smiled while looking at his gloves and said, "They feel the same as I wore them for the first time."

"I tried my best repairing them," Xie Lua stated.

"You mean, with love?" Zach teased with a grin.

"Wha—!" Xie Lua's face turned red as she gritted her teeth out of frustration.

Zach grinned even more after seeing her reaction and let out a soft chuckle.

"Do you always tease the other girls like this?"

Zach shrugged his shoulders and said, "You will have to come and see it with your own eyes."

"Hmm. I don't think I can enter the game, though," Xie Lua muttered.

"You can't?"

"I can open the portal to the game, you know?"

"Hmm. So it's just like how Aria's domain works. Even though she gave me the token to open the portal to her domain, she herself can't open it because of the restrictions and limitations of her powers due to the Gods' Impact, while she can open the portal from the inside because the domain is not the part of the game, but connected to it," Zach murmured.

"...."

"Have you ever tried entering the game?" Zach asked curiously.

Xie Lua shook her head and said, "No, and I don't intend to. I am a merchant, and I would like it if I remain a merchant. I don't want to interact with something created by the gods who want to end the world."

After a brief pause, she said, "I am Xie Lua, the universal merchant of all the worlds and realms, nothing more."

Zach conjured a dagger in his hands and muttered, "Yeah, it's working."

"You should learn to use your powers with the help of the gloves," Xie Lua remarked.

"But they make me strong. Without them, I wouldn't have made this far, you know?"

"What do you mean? The gloves are only mere weapons. They don't contribute anything to your success," Xie Lua asserted. "If you give a sharp sword to a 5-year-old kid, he wouldn't be able to fight, but if you give a dull sword to a 15-year-old, he would still fight and even win depending on the opponent."

"..."

"Similarly, these gloves are useless without you. Even when I was wearing them, I couldn't use them to their full potential," she added, "In fact, no one would be able to use the gloves as you used them."

"But that's because father made them for me, right?"

"Yes, but only to help you use your powers and learn them." Xie Lua looked into Zach's eyes and said, "These gloves are hindering your true powers. You can do everything you do with the gloves, even without the gloves. That's why I said you need to learn to use your powers without gloves."

"Wait, wait, wait..." Zach raised his brows and asked, "Are you telling me that I have been doing everything with my own strength and not the gloves?"

"Did I stutter?"

"Wow..."

Zach felt happy after knowing that his progress was not because of the gloves but because of his own powers.

"Thank you for telling me this. Now I am brimming with confidence!"

"You are welcome. It's a duty of a wife to please her husband, am I right?" Xie Lua said with a grin on her face.

Zach leaned forward and kissed Xie Lua on the lips before saying, "See you tomorrow."

After that, Zach left the magic shop dimension and walked around the capital to gain information about the seven members' party.

"Weird. I was expecting to get information about them as such cases always get rumored around. But they are not..." Zach muttered in confusion and kept walking.

Meanwhile, in some forest on the second realm, seven players were sitting on the trees. Out of the seven, five were males, and two were females.

"Tch! No prey today, it seems," one of them said.

"Don't jinx it!" the second yelled.

"Yeah, the day has just started," the third said.

"Screw all that. What are we going to do about the two kids from yesterday?" the fourth asked.

"I thought they would enter the dungeon, and we would set them in a trap, just like we did with our prey. But who knew they were so smart to not enter and run away!" the fifth yelled.

"I think they weren't smart. They were just cowards who couldn't dare to enter even the first floor of the dungeon," the sixth uttered.

"Yeah, that has to be it!" the seventh seconded.

"So what are we going to do about them? I went to kill them last night and followed them. Luckily, I found them sleeping in the garden, completely defenseless. But the girl suddenly woke up and ruined everything. Then, they ran towards the church, so I backed away. After all, I didn't want to catch attention."

"Just admit that you chickened out."

"I didn't!"

"Even if you had chased them, no one would have seen you. It was night, and no players were around at that time."

"But some NPCs are. And what about the nun at the church? What if—"

"Who cares about the worthless NPCs. I kill them for fun whenever I run into them in empty streets."

"Let's go kill the two kids and the nun tonight!"

"Yeah. But hey, have you seen that nun. She is quite hot~"

"I know, right? Damn, her boobs are so big! I want to sleep on them!"

"Hey, hey! How about we have some fun with her before killing her? It should be satisfying, right?"

"Now that you mentioned it. I haven't gotten laid in a week."

"Well, if we are going to r*pe the nun, let's do that to the little girl too. I heard little girls are—"

SLASH! SLASH!

As they all were talking, a sharp strike chopped the surrounding trees, and they all dropped to the ground.

Some were even crushed beneath the branches.

"What happened?!"

"A monster?!"

SLASH! SLASH!

With another strike, all of their bodies were chopped their body parts into pieces.

"It's breakfast time, Cerberus."

Chapter 297 Red Name TagZach was strolling on the streets, dropping by the places he could find to be beneficial for the players.

"Why does no one seem to recall the seven members' party? I mean, I would remember if I saw someone shady. And I did remember them as soon as Noah described them..." Zach muttered.

'Unless there is no one to spread the talk? Why are there no other victims or witnesses? Could it be that they killed everyone they scammed?'

Zach's guess was right on the mark, but he still had to find them.

SIGH!

'I think I wasted a good thirty minutes looking for those thugs. Maybe I should head to the church and spend the rest of the day with the girls?' Zach thought to himself.

'Come to think of that, if my guess is correct, that they don't leave any victim or witness behind, then they would surely come to finish their job.'

'Then shouldn't I be at the church instead? What if they tried to kill them— but well, I don't have to worry too much. Victoria and Aria alone can handle a few thugs.'

Zach was on his way to church when a thought suddenly crossed his mind.

'Thugs and bandits usually hide in the forest. And the dungeon also happened to be near the forest. What are the chances that they are in there?'

Zach changed his route to the forest, but he was getting late, so he decided to run instead.

As soon as he entered the forest, he could hear people talking. He quietly listened to their conversations and couldn't help but get enraged after hearing them.

"Hey, hey! We forgot about the rewards we get after we scam and kill everyone. Who knew there was an easy way to level up."

"I know, right? If I had known this sooner, I would have killed a lot of players when they were still weak. Now, most of the surviving players are strong enough to fight anyone in a duel."

"Levels don't really matter in this game, you know? I am level 70 right now, yet, my physique is low as fuck."

"ARGH! Don't mention physiques! Freaking gods! They must have known that there would be players like us, and that's why they introduced physique."

They talked for a while and continued their conversation. Zach wanted to listen more as they were revealing information without any care, but when they mentioned doing bad things to Ninia, Zach snapped.

He summoned a wind sword in his hand— that was only the shape of the sword made by the wind— and released 5000 MP in it to make it concentrated.

SLASH! SLASH!

Zach simply swung his hand in the air, and all the surrounding trees were chopped into chunks. He purposely missed the seven players because he wanted them to see the face of their killer.

Once they fell to the ground and got crushed by the very branches they were sitting on, Zach stood in front of them and beautifully chopped their body parts but kept them alive.

Some of them were missing their limbs, while some were severely injured.

"It's breakfast time, Cerberus," he uttered in an emotionless voice.

Cerberus came out of Zach's shadow and bowed down to him.

[My liege...]

"What's wrong?"

[I don't want to eat them. I feel like they will leave a bad taste in my mouth.]

"Fair enough..." Zach looked at the players with a lifeless glare in his eyes. "How sad. I wanted to see you all get eaten alive. But I guess you deserve an even painful death."

Zach turned on the Phoenix Mode and burned all the players alive, including the trees around.

Cerberus also stepped back to make some distance between him and Zach because he didn't want his fire to get in contact with the Phoenix's fire.

[Leveled up!]

[Warning! You have killed a player!]

[Leveled up!]

[Leveled up!]

[Leveled up!]

[Leveled up!]

[Leveled up!]

[Leveled up!]

[Warning! You have killed players!]

[Warning! You have received seven negative Karma Points!]

Zach watched his name tag turn red, but he didn't seem to care about it.

Zach switched to his normal form and let out a sigh in disbelief.

[...] Cerberus walked to Zach and uttered, [My liege, can I ask something?]

"Sure," Zach responded without looking at Cerberus as he was enjoying the players' bodies getting burned into ashes.

[Are all humans like this?] Cerberus asked in a low voice.

He could hear and sense everything, even from Zach's shadow, so he listened to the conversation between the seven party members.

"Of course not. But some are. You can't really tell the difference between them. They can be bad guys wearing a mask of good guys. Humans are..." Zach sighed without finishing his sentence.

[Why do they do bad things? Do they get ordered by an evil god? Or whispered by a demon?] Cerberus asked curiously.

"Every human has their own life story. All of them go through some shit, but some just give up and choose the dark side. There are robbers, who could easily do any job, but they are too lazy to do that and instead choose to rob. There are homeless people who are often not truly homeless. They could use their body and knowledge to become someone greater."

"Of course, there are also truly helpless, homeless people who need food and shelter. I would love to help those people. In short, humans make choices and do what they think is right, which is often wrong. Sometimes, they have no choice but to do certain things, but that's not an excuse to become a worthless piece of shit."

"Honestly, humans are beautiful creatures made by Aria and Erza. But I guess they also blame themselves if some of them turn out to be detestable," Zach uttered in a disdainful tone.

[My Liege, why did you kill these players even though you knew you would get a red name tag? You could have asked me to kill them, and I would be glad to do so.]

"I am fed up with that. And I think it's better this way."

[What do you mean?]

"When a player reads another player's name and sees the color, they feel relieved knowing they aren't a bad guy. I want them to see my red nametag to know I am not the good guy," Zach asserted in a solemn voice.

Chapter 298 The Girls' Reaction After buying ingredients from the market, Zach went back to the church.

Ninia was praying by the Altar, while Noah and Elina were talking about something in the back.

Aria and Victoria weren't there, so Zach assumed they went to look for him.

"I am back," Zach said to make his presence known.

Noah and Elina stopped talking and looked at Zach, while Ninia stopped praying and greeted Zach with a smile on her face.

At the same time, Aria and Victoria also returned, and their shadows covered the doorway, making the sunlight unable to fall inside the church.

They all had the same baffled expression on their faces, and Zach was well aware of the reason behind it.

"Come on~ Why are you all surprised?" Zach asked in a playful manner.

"Why... is your name tag red?"

The first to speak was Elina, who seemed scared of Zach.

"Hmm? Even though you are just a kid, I am sure you have read the rules about this game. Don't you know why a player's name tag turns red?" Zach asked jokingly.

"You... killed a player...?" Elina asked while stuttering.

Zach simply shrugged his shoulders in response and asked, "So why do you look surprised? I killed the players in the ten battles too, you know?"

"Zach, what did you do?" Victoria asked with a judging look on her face.

"I killed the party that scammed them," Zach said while pointing his gaze at Noah and Elina.

"Was killing them necessary?" Aria asked in a calm voice. Seemingly, she didn't care about Zach's answer.

"They deserved to die, even if they hadn't done anything wrong. They dared to even think about hurting my beloved prophet. That alone is... a death sentence."

Zach was facing his back to Ninia, so he couldn't see her reaction. But Aria and Victoria were facing both Ninia and Zach.

Aria noticed Ninia's face turn sad for a few seconds before she forced herself to smile.

'Hmm? Weird. I expected her to be happy since Zach did something for her sake, so why is she pretending to be happy?'

Victoria didn't know what to say. She surely wasn't angry at Zach for killing the players, but she wasn't happy about that either.

"I don't want to be the one to ask this, but was there another way you could have handled the matter?" Victoria asked in a calm voice.

"Actually, I thought about that after my anger calmed down. But then I remembered a philosophy I had read in the library. I am talking about an actual philosophy, by the way, not the one you find on the internet which can be written by some wanna-be philosopher."

Zach cleared his throat and uttered, "In that philosophy, it said about the books and their authors. Games and their developers. Basically, every creator in general."

"I have read that too. Just recently, like a week before the Gods' Impact," Elina quipped.

"Oh?" Zach raised his brow with a curious look on his face.

"I was studying in the library for exams with my friends but got bored after reading for three hours straight. So I decided to take a break and went to walk around the library where old books were kept. There I found that book you are talking about. Although it may be a different one or a different version as those books were just a compilation about the quotes of old times," Elina stated.

"You know, there is also a philosophy that says that a person's understanding level depends not on age but maturity instead. And it continued by stating that it may also affect the meaning of the philosophy and the level of understanding depending on a person's maturity. Understanding philosophy is often easy, but finding the meaning is quite hard. So I am curious to know what you understand from the philosophy you read."

"Ummm..." Elina scratched her head and uttered, "It was about how the creators are judged on what they create, right?"

"Umu," Zach nodded in response.

"Basically, what I understood from that is how people call out the creator for creating something not-likable and say that the creator is the same as them. For example, if in a game, the developer or rather the story writer added hideous crimes or made the characters do some unspeakable things, people would say that the storyteller is the same kind of person who promotes such things."

Elina anxiously glanced at Zach and asked in a low voice: "Did I... understand it correctly?"

"Not entirely, but yeah, pretty close," Zach replied with a gentle smile on his face. "I am also not sure myself if I understood it correctly or not, to be honest."

"So, what are you trying to say by bringing up the filosofi or whatever it's called," Aria asked, seemingly flustered because she was the only one who couldn't understand.

"What I was trying to say is, there are 90% chances that bad people in the real world who are stuck in the Gods' Impact are also evil in the game. Maybe, some of them finally gained wisdom and realized and regretted their choices, but most of them must have remained criminals," Zach asserted and continued:

"Similarly, it's not like all the normal people stayed normal. Some became evil after gaining powers, or some simply became evil to release their stress and frustration on others."

Zach looked at Aria and Victoria and asked, "Now, you tell me. What's the difference between the players who were already evil before and those who turned evil after Gods' Impact.?"

"Well..." Victoria tried hard to speak.

"The only difference is their thinking," Aria answered. "The players who were already evil got a chance to become more evil. There was no one to punish them, no one to stop them. While the players who were normal before realized the same thing and became criminals."

"Exactly!" Zach smiled wryly and uttered, "There is no difference between them. Once you have stepped into the dark side, there is no return. It is always too late to regret. What's done has been done, and that's never going to change."

At that time, none of them realized that Zach was talking about himself.

Chapter 299 Followers Influx "Well... whatever. Let's stop talking about this." Aria nudged Victoria and pointed her gaze at the bags in her hands.

"Ah... right..." Victoria showed the bags to Zach and said, "We brought some ingredients to cook your favorite dish."

"It may not taste the same as it does when Aurora makes them, but I assure you it would taste somewhat similar," she said with a smile on her face.

"Well..." Zach showed the bag in his hand to Victoria and said, "I bought ingredients for your favorite dish..."

Aria squinted her eyes and asked in a teasing manner: "What about ingredients for my favorite dish?"

"You eat anything served on the table, so I wasn't quite sure what to buy for you..." Zach replied.

Zach turned around to look at Ninia and said, "Ninia, is it okay if we cook food here?"

"Of course, it's okay." She pointed her finger at the room in the corner and said, "That's the kitchen. You will find everything you need to cook. And if there is something you don't find, we can go to a restaurant and cook there. I am sure your followers would be happy to be of your help."

"I bet they will, but let's not trouble them. I want them to be glad to be my followers, not afraid of me. The other god may rule by spreading terror. I won't do that. I want them to give them a reason to follow and worship me."

"I will do the honor and start making lunch then." After saying that, Victoria left for the kitchen.

"I will help—"

Aria walked after Victoria, but Zach stopped her by grabbing her hand.

Surprised, Aria turned to Zach and asked, "What?"

"Let her go."

"But she alone can't..." Aria stopped when she noticed a serious look on Zach's face. "Fine."

Zach turned to Noah and Elina and said, "You two can go play outside. I need to have a chat with Ninia and Aria."

Elina clenched her clothes tightly after hearing that, seemingly, she was still afraid to go out.

'Well, I would blame her for getting traumatized.'

"It's okay. You two can stay," Zach said calmly with a smile on his face and thought, 'It's not like I am going to have some adult talk with Aria and Ninia.'

Noah and Elina sat on the floor, but they kept their distance from Zach and Aria.

'To be honest, I could just take Ninia and Aria into a room and talk with them, but I have a few questions to ask Noah, so I guess this place is good. I was planning to ask him while eating as the mood, and the atmosphere would be the best, but fuck it.'

Zach and Aria also sat down on the floor, and Ninia did the same, even though she didn't want to sit on the same level as Zach on the praying ground.

"So, what do you want to talk about?" Aria asked curiously.

After a brief silence, Zach said, "When I was in a slumber, you girls got me more followers, am I right?"

Ninia and Aria nodded in response.

"How many followers, exactly?"

"Umm... can't you see it in your stats?" Ninia asked.

"Unfortunately, no." Zach shook his head and continued, "This game doesn't have that function, so I am unable to see that. Gods weren't meant to play this game, after all."

"So, how did you know that you got more followers?" Aria asked. "Do you feel strong or something?"

"No. I mostly feel the same, but my SS (Soul Strength) and SD (Soul DEF) have increased, so it was easy to guess," Zach replied with a shrug.

"So can't you tell by the increase in followers by comparing the increase in your SS and SD?"

"It's possible but very difficult. And even then, I don't think I would get an accurate number. BUT my SD is 10% of my SS, so I know how that works," Zach responded in a calm voice.

"Hmm..."

After seeing Zach interact so calmly with Ninia and Aria, Noah and Elina felt relieved knowing Zach was as kind as they thought.

"Why did you want to know the numbers of your followers?" Ninia asked meekly.

"I wanted to calculate how much SS I get from one follower. That way, I can plan to use my blessings and SS. The only blessing I can control is Pheonix, and the demon sigil is still unstable, so I don't want to risk using it," he stated.

'I might go berserk in my demon mode since the only thing in my mind is annihilation when I activate it. At least, that's what had happened during the demon invasion. If Aria hadn't stopped me on time, I would have been consumed by rage.'

"Oh! You got your gloves back!" Aria exclaimed with a cheerful face after noticing Zach's gloves.

"Yeah, I went to the Magic Shop." Zach looked into Aria's eyes and said, "That also reminds me about... actually, nevermind. I will tell you later tonight."

Zach wanted to tell Aria about his relationship with Xie Lua, but he thought the best time would be when Victoria was with them too. And Zach considered it improper to talk about it in front of kids.

Aria placed her hand on Zach's thigh and asked, "What do you plan to do next?"

"I am looking for a way to open the crack to hell, but I don't think I can do that without using my demonic powers. Wait..." Zach held Aria's hand and looked at her with a resolute expression on his face as he uttered, "You can do that, right?!"

"If I am in my goddess form, yes," Aria nodded. "But that would take time."

"Why?" Zach asked with a curious and confused look on his face.

"Just like how you need soul powers to change your form, I also need soul powers to change my form. And unlike you, I don't have any followers to worship me."

Chapter 300 New Followers?"So, how do you recharge your soul powers if you don't have them?" Zach asked with a curious yet calm look on his face.

"Lifeforce is the absolute form of power. You can use it as MP or soul powers, just like how this game allows HP to be used as MP in an emergency."

"You don't have to use your life force. I know a way to increase your soul power temporarily," Zach said with a grin on his face.

"What do you..." Aria stopped after noticing a smirk on Zach's face. She recalled her conversation with Zach in her domain, where they talked about dual cultivation.

"...!" Aria's face flushed red after imagining herself dual cultivating with Zach.

'I remember that conversation like it was yesterday. We talked about dual cultivation, and he asked a few questions to clear his doubt. Then, he said he wouldn't mind dual cultivating with me if that would make him stronger, to which I turned him down in response without even thinking about it.'

'No way!' She had said. 'But then I also told him that if he uses his authority over me and asks me to do it, I would have no other choice but to obey his orders.'

'Now that I think of it, I was in love with him at that time too. And I kind of wanted him to force me... wait! What am I thinking?! Could it be that I like being dominated by Zach?!'

Aria finally realized her first fetish.

'How could that be?!' She exclaimed inwardly. 'I am the goddess of death and destruction! How can I have such a fetish?!'

Zach watched Aria as she made varied expressions on her face.

'I thought she was ready for it. So what's with her reaction?' Zach wondered. 'She is usually bold and open about intimacy, so why is she acting like a maiden now?'

"Uhh..." After seeing Aria's reaction, Ninia and the two kids were as confused as Zach.

"Master Zach, can I ask you something?" Noah uttered in a low voice.

"Hmm? Sure. And don't call me master, please."

Noah lowered his gaze and muttered something under his breath, and even Elina, who was sitting next to him, couldn't hear it. However, Zach heard it. But he acted like he didn't.

"What did you say?" Zach asked Noah. "You will have to say it a little louder if you want me to hear it."

'If he can't even gather enough courage to speak out loud, he would never go. I wonder if father felt the same when he was training me?'

"Can Elina and I join your party?!" Noah asked out loud.

Even though it was Zach's second time hearing that question, he wasn't sure about the answer. He glanced at Aria to seek help, but she was still lost in her thoughts about dual cultivation.

'I don't think it's wise to let them join my party. It will cause many problems.'

"Umm... I am afraid I can't accept your request. We as a party go on dangerous adventures where we don't have time to look after each other's backs. And I don't want something to happen to you two," Zach responded in a calm voice, seemingly trying to reject them gently without making them feel bad.

"But no one else takes us in their party, and the only one who did turn out to be..." Noah muttered.

"And even if I let you two join my party, I am going to ascend soon, and you two haven't met the requirements. It will take a long time to increase your level and physique, so I would rather suggest you stay here in this realm and live freely."

Ninia bit her lips and clenched her fists after learning that Zach was going to ascend soon.

'But... I want to spend more time with him...' She uttered inwardly.

"But we don't have money or any resources!"

"..." Zach lowered his gaze and thought, 'There could be many players like them. Not the same age, but the same level and similar condition. They could be dying out helplessly. What can I do to save them?'

Zach's eyes widened as a thought crossed his mind.

"What if I create a guild?" he uttered.

"Guild is basically the same as a party. It just has more members, and everything is on an official level, and members are assigned various positions to handle and manage everything," Victoria asserted from the corner, who had come to check up on everyone.

"And...?"

"You can't carry a party of two low-level players, and you intend to carry a guild filled with low-level players?" Victoria remarked.

'I didn't even mention that. As expected, Victoria knows me inside out.'

"So you are saying that making a guild is a bad idea?"

"No, but if you create a guild, you will become the guild master, and you will get so busy managing the guild that you would forget about your own goals," Victoria stated.

After a brief pause, she continued, "I know it since I was a vice-captain before."

"I can't do party, I can't do guild, then what else can I do to guarantee their safety?"

"Why don't you make them your followers?" Aria suggested nonchalantly.

"Oh? You are back to your senses?" Zach scoffed softly. "And what do you mean by making them my followers?"

"Make them worship you. Ask them to join your religion. That way, you would be supporting them without affecting your life. Furthermore, you will also get soul powers, which would benefit you."

"Hmm..." Zach hummed in wonder and turned to Ninia to get her opinion. "What do you think, Ninia?"

"I think that's a great idea," Ninia nodded, "You current followers are only NPCs, so even if all the NPCs in this realm join your religion, your soul powers would eventually hit the ceiling."

"True."

"Unless you plan to spread your religion to other realms too," Ninia added. "So if you also have players as followers, your religion will automatically spread."

Zach shot a glance at Noah and Elina and asked, "What do you say?"