

GREED 261

Chapter 261 Envy VS Envy

Niva's foray into numerous worlds has exposed it to various abilities. It has had the opportunity to pick what he fancies from the assortment of abilities of different gods from different races. Still, it had been careful not to be in the wrong place at the right time. Trying to witness the power of an entity so far beyond your level can be the death of you, literally. You might also fail to copy the ability after risking your life.

The sin of envy isn't infallible. A demon of envy cannot copy an ability that they can't wrap their head around. In other words, they can't copy an ability with a structure and composition too complicated for their minds. It is commendable that Nivo survived the risk and managed to copy the attack of a high god or the equivalent of a demon noble.

It chose the attack of the high god because demons are weak to divinity more than other attacks create by mana or sin energy. Also, the attack killed a demon noble, so it has to be strong. The attack can reach a power rating of 400. It had made two copies. One has been used to get its fortress and it was keeping the last one for a rainy day. Nivo preferred to keep the last one. As long as it doesn't release the attack, then he can store it again.

If Aeternus surrenders then all will be well. It would retain most of his strength which it is going to need dearly for the coming tough times ahead because of the weakened alliance. But if Aeternus is also a demon of envy and also has something up his sleeve, a trump card to deal with another demon of envy trump card. Then his sacrifice will be in vain and worst of all, they might actually die here.

"He is bluffing. He hasn't copied any magical ability since the fight started. He is no demon of envy. Even if he is, what are the odds that he has a trump card." The blade demoness said.

What she said is partly true. If Aeternus is really a demon of envy he would copied their abilities. In fact, he didn't produce any normal spells apart from the black flames he is wielding. How can a demon of envy not be able to cast spells?

Aeternus shrugged. He wasn't trying to convince them not to attack him so he shut up. He didn't copy their magical attacks because it wasn't worth it. He also doesn't need to tell them that every demon has a trump card. Even that disgusting worm fly that blew itself up isn't dead because of its trump card. To underestimate another demon is folly.

What he wants to do is rattle them up, and make himself seem falsely confident. Then they will use the trump card for sure. If he appears unconcerned and unbothered, it might give them doubts.

"Why don't you just give up? There's still hope as long as you're alive. There's no need for tricks. We could kill you if we want, but we need you alive. You can be sure of your safety if you surrender." The scorpion demon sighed and asked.

Aeternus ignored the good demon and bad demon act. To surrender is to place your fate in another person's hands.

He said to them. "Why don't you surrender? I'll be honest with you. Your safety is not guaranteed afterward."

Seeing as Aeternus was unyielding and showing false bravado, the demon scorpion said to the beholder. "Do it."

The beholder lit up. Its eye glowed like the sun, bright and out of place in the abyss. Demons could see the light of the attack for miles. They also understood that whoever that attack hit will perish as long as they are not demon nobles.

The attack was imminent but Aeternus stayed still and didn't dodge. He understood that he couldn't dodge and he couldn't effectively block the attack. The reason why attacks fueled with divinity hurt demons more is because of their combination with a spiritual component which changes the nature of the attack.

The attack has a spiritual and magical component. Targeting is done primarily by the spiritual aspect and power is carried by the magical aspect. The two aspects can switch functions and amplify each other. Just like spiritual attacks can't be dodged when they lock on to your soul frequency, It makes it impossible to dodge. The attack locks onto its target and will pass through dimensional walls to reach its target.

The damage is amplified because the attack does what it shouldn't be able to do. The spiritual component can damage the physical body and the magical component can also damage the soul because of their unique fusion.

Targeting and Damage aren't the only things that an attack like this does well. Blocking is also almost impossible unless the two components can be blocked at once.

All this knowledge flashed through Aeternus's mind as he considered his options. His claymore can block the magical component but not the spiritual one, while his soul can shrug off the spiritual component but his body will collapse from the magical one. The cloak of chaos energy around him is capable of blocking both components but the power rating of the attack is beyond his defense rating.

"Truly worthy of a trump card. Now it's mine." He said in admiration as his mark of sin worked in conjunction with his soul.

Since he let them load the attack he has a much better alternative. He doesn't plan to just sit there and take it. As the eye finished glowing and fired a large beam of light 1 meter in diameter at Aeternus, Aeternus began to glow too.

His glow wasn't shiny like that of the eye. It was dark and ominous, but the power of the beam he fired overwhelmed the beam that Niva fired. His dark beam was larger, it consumed Niva's beam and Niva too. The explosion also took the lives of the blade demoness and the scorpion demon of weakness.

Chapter 262 Looting And Pillaging.

The spell isn't shiny like that Niva the beholder produced. It was dark and ominous like something a god of death will produce, but the power of the beam he fired overwhelmed the beam that Niva produced and destroyed its producer too. The fallout from the clashing of the explosion also took the lives of the blade demoness and the scorpion demon of weakness. They were at the wrong place at the right time for them to become collateral damage.

Aeternus's vision was extended as he watched the beam of light warp from this location to numerous ones chasing after Niva the beholder. It seemed that the Niva that he fought was a clone of a large network but the beam was intent on killing every one of them. It struck each of these clones no matter where they were, underneath the ground or behind heavy defenses, and erased their souls. The beam was unrelenting in its efforts to fulfill its aim of eradicating its target.

"Wow, what power. I knew high-rank demons must have something good." He said in wonder as he admired the scene of destruction caused by their clash.

A gorge had been plowed that extended for about a kilometer and 50 meters deep. The gorge was created when the beam lost some power while trying to warp to other locations. If the warp had failed, the gorge will be deeper and longer. There is another crater 50 meters across and 10 meters deep created by the pillar of darkness that he had unleashed earlier. They were fighting in the crater, so the gorge started from the middle of the crater and extended into the distance. The fortress is no more. Only the abyss altar remains standing and unharmed.

"At least two of them are still alive."

Aeternus was standing at the beginning of the gorge while nodding appreciatively.

That beam that he fired was very powerful. He had copied Nivo but unlike Nivo, he was a faster caster and had a lot of energy to create the needed spell. He had warned them that he is a demon of envy but they misunderstood him. They thought he had a trump card while all he wanted was to steal theirs. Now their alliance has been totally destroyed.

"Now to collect my due."

He started his journey to their fortresses. Now that most of them are dead and since he killed them, their stuff belongs to him. He ignored the divine sense trailing after him. He didn't even flinch as the divine sense prodded him or laugh when the divine sense was corroded by the chaotic energy around him in its attempts. If the wielder of the divine sense wants to talk they will talk.

He reached the first fortress on his journey. The members of an alliance like to have their fortresses close to one another so that they can reinforce each other quickly and easily. The soldiers and the vice-commanders of this fortress were still reeling in shock because of the death of their boss. The fortress was in so much chaos that no one paid attention to him.

Even when he elongated his claymore and made it heavier as it fell on the wall of the fortress, no one paid special attention to it. A gigantic sword demolishing one of the walls of the fortress didn't register as out of place. Things got more chaotic when dark flames began to spread and burn. Demons howled and cried as they burned.

He was attacked by a high-rank demon with enough confidence in herself to face a mid-rank demon sauntering about like he owns the place. It could be the anger she was feeling or the longing she felt for

his uniqueness. Either way, she died quickly but painfully. She had underestimated him, so she attacked openly and brazenly.

Her fists empowered by anger, sin energy, and mana were poised to pummel him. She thought she would encounter some resistance in her brawl. She thought wrong. He dodged her punch by elegantly sidestepping as if he had eyes at the back of his head, then he cut off her arm when his blade went through her left shoulder.

"What? How?" She shouted.

She was more confused than in pain. Then the pain hit her and her confusion became about why the flames couldn't be put out. She is ignorant of a lot of things. First, he was sauntering through the fortress because he owns it. Second, he has a divine sense, so he can see what's behind him. She was still screaming in pain when his blade covered in flames impaled her stomach.

He moved on while she screamed behind him. She was being corroded from the inside out. It didn't help that she didn't die until her head was turned to ashes so she got to experience the whole sensation. She would have been lucky if her mind broke first but a high-rank demon's mind won't break that easily in such a short amount of time.

No one disturbed him after that. He went into the castle, searched for the stash, looted it, and left the fortress. He made sure to absorb the fire he started on his way out. The fortress was left largely intact after that. It wasn't looking good with all the erosion and all but it is certainly in a better state than Danazel's fortress.

The next fortress he visited was beginning to gain order. The two high-rank demons that used to be the vice commanders decided to join hands and take control of the fortress.

"Foolish." He said as he looked at the soldiers at the wall.

The fortress had been on high alert and had chosen to resist as soon as they noticed an enemy. They warned him but when he refused to answer they started attacking. Their defeat was swift. The new army commanders wisely chose to run away when they saw the ease at which he brought down the fortress.

Chapter 263 Demon Tattletale.

Aeternus chose to ignore them after they ran away. He didn't care if they survived his flames or not. They had placed all the inhabitants in a neat formation for him to kill all at once. That's good enough for him. He looted the fortress and went on his way.

There was no resistance in the next fortress. The high-rank demons had disappeared or maybe there were none in the first place. He waltzed in causing destruction and wrecking havoc. He was like an angel of death and destruction, the representation of gloom and darkness.

The next fortress he reached belonged to the disgusting worm fly. It was the one that created the explosion that destabilise his pillar of flaming darkness. It wasn't a selfless act. The worm had a clone back at its fortress or a life-saving method. Aeternus was sure of it when the soul of the worm tried to escape even before the explosion occurred.

Well, it tried to escape. It turns out that chaos energy is highly potent against the soul. Even when that soul has a spiritual barrier around it. The barrier didn't protect it. It was like tin foil against a knife. So it was burned up. But the soul wasn't complete. That's how he knew that worm definitely survived. The rest of the soul had to be somewhere

The fortress belonging to the worm was disappointing. It was calm and orderly since no one sensed that their army commander died. Technically, their army commander died once but is still alive. So they went about their business. It was a shock to them when Aeternus came knocking for his dues.

There was no resistance of any kind from the soldiers. It's all good too because resistance of any kind would have been useless. But the High-rank demon that is the army commander didn't know that. He valiantly chose to fight Aeternus. The ignorant demon shouted to him.

"Stop right there you insolent demon." He shouted in anger before casting spells.

"Use your head sometimes," Aeternus said before going on to kill the demon.

The demon was faithful in doing his job as a vice commander. He expected the army commander to show up any moment and make things right but the worm seemed to be otherwise engaged. Aeternus searched the castle and did not find the worm or most of the useful things in the stash after killing that loyal and ignorant demon.

The disgusting worm had revived with only a fragment of its soul left within a small worm in a safe place within the castle. It had no recollection of events that happened since he tore out a fragment of its soul to create the clone but a quick sensation of the amount of the members of the alliance still alive revealed to it the full picture of its current situation.

"Something bad has happened. Something very bad. There are only 3 of us alive. I can't stay here" The tiny worm screamed.

It knew for a fact that it had died. He didn't know why, but whoever killed it made a flaw appear in the revival method. That means that person had to be very strong. Then there were the dead alliance mates. The least of the worm's problems right now is the lack of support since it is weakened. Demons would rather kill it and feast on it rather than help. The biggest problem is for the person that killed it to still be after his life.

It sped up its growth by eating a lot of flesh it had stockpiled. Then he stuck his most valuable properties into the pouch it had within his body. He ran away from the fortress without telling anyone. It didn't even tell the blade demoness and the serpentine demon that he could sense were still alive. Anyone could be compromised and a weak recently revived demon is a situation worse than showing a sign of weakness.

The worm is weak and at its lowest point as a high-rank demon. The good news is that it will be able to stay in the domain of mid-rank demons for a while until it grows stronger. Dying and reviving can cause you a lot of loss in terms of sin energy. The concentration of ambient sin energy isn't really a priority right now.

So Aeternus got almost nothing from the disgusting worm's fortress. He had to be content with the weapons and armor. He killed the middle-rank soldiers before moving on. His mood didn't improve when the next fortress didn't provide him with a good haul.

The serpentine demon had packed a lot of his goodies and sent them with the high-rank demons that were its subordinates. He chose to wait after he had secured most of his wealth to see if it was being paranoid. It was not being paranoid. Aeternus did come for him. The serpentine demon ran in fright after spotting that ominous blotch of darkness in the distance.

Aeternus tsked when he finally reached the fortress. "He even dares to spoil my fun."

The serpentine demon didn't just run, he told everyone to jump ship with him. It wasn't being considerate. It just wanted to use the hysteria and mass desertion to cover its own tracks so that Aeternus won't be able to find him if he had a method of tracking. Aeternus didn't have a method of tracking but the Serpentine didn't know that because he never asked. It should have asked or not been so paranoid. Now Aeternus doesn't have a fortress to loot. He doesn't even have any interest in torching the place.

The fortress was mostly empty by then. When your army commander says "Run for your lives. We faced the Ominous Reaper and he has come to seek revenge. Save yourselves." Then scales the fortress and runs.

You don't question if this is a joke or a drill. There's nothing funny about it and there are no drills for proper desertion protocols. So you can't mistake this for a drill. You pick a direction and you run for it.

Chapter 264 Serpentine Nuisance.

They all ran away and left the fortress empty due to the spirited encouragement of their army commander.

Only the stubborn ones and the ones looting remained behind. They figured that Aeternus wouldn't care about them. They were right. He left the fortress untouched and resumed his journey.

He hadn't seen the end of the serpentine demon.

"What guts," Aeternus exclaimed when he saw the state of the next fortress.

The fortress was also deserted. The snake demon had come here straight from its fortress. It figured that since Aeternus was at its place, he couldn't be here. It initially came to see one of the other two demons in the alliance that was still alive so that they can plan and figure out their situation. He also wanted to know how the fight went.

The blade demoness didn't die fully in their fight with Aeternus. She had also set up a clone that was meant to revive her. The black blade placed in a huge drum of blood hidden within her fortress was supposed to grow after her death but things didn't go well with her.

She revived but the cause of her death wasn't so simple so it affected her revival. The attack that killed her wasn't some explosion, it was a chaotic version of a divine attack with both physical and spiritual components. It also had a lock-on property. The attack had followed the coordinates of the fraction of her soul to this point and attacked her newly revived body.

The blade demoness got a second to live before a dark beam pierced her soul. She didn't die because the attack was only a spent spiritual remnant. Most of the power of the attack had gone after the several clones that the beholder had in place. The beholder was the main target so the beam went after it first before digressing to deal with pests. It had weakened immensely and lost its physical components after the long journey. But a newly revived clone couldn't protect itself against it. The clone of the blade demoness became brain-dead.

She revived but she was brain-dead. So when the serpentine demon came visiting there was no one to receive it. He snooped around and figured she had gone into hiding.

"She must have been in a hurry for her to leave her things behind. That fight must have traumatized her." The serpentine demon shuddered at the recollection of Aeternus' figure.

It didn't want to meet Aeternus at all. So much was his fear of Aeternus that he was determined to leave the plane. But that didn't stop it from looting the fortress in the blade demoness' absence.

Then he shouted to the soldiers, "Run for your lives. We fought a calamity that is the ominous reaper and he killed almost everyone in our alliance. Your commander has run away now. You better save yourself."

It went to great effort to convince the soldiers of the fortress. So Aeternus came to a thoroughly empty fortress. There wasn't even any leftover because the soldiers had time to loot and the vice commanders had the opportunity to take what was left after the serpentine demon had had his pick. He didn't know that the blade demoness was still alive somewhere beneath the castle because he didn't bother to search. So he left angry and very disappointed.

He came upon a free-for-all when he reached the next fortress. Word of his actions was spreading among high-rank demons. The top dogs in charge of fortresses choose to watch. It was the opportunity seekers that were riled up. The availability of fortresses without owners meant a chance for high-rank demons without one.

The distance between each fortress is large, so there's time for different things to occur. It certainly is enough time for a free-for-all to occur when a certain serpentine demon is intent on spreading the news of their defeat to anyone that would listen.

His eyes lit up at the sight of 50 high-rank demons. He thought to himself, "What's not to like?"

In fact, free-for-alls have started in all the fortresses Aeternus had looted. Usually, the top dogs remain in control of their fortress until they become noble demons and have to move deeper into the plane but he had caused a shift in the hierarchy. There are a few openings now due to his actions. These openings will lead to competition and the reshuffling of power among high-rank demons. But that's not why he is happy.

"This is genius. I should have thought about this earlier. Bait is always needed if you need to catch a lot of prey. They will come to you."

The prospect of battle is why he is happy. These demons came here for his property. Courtesy demands that they don't leave here at all. It's basic demon conduct.

He didn't mind that they had set fire to the place and probably looted the place. He doesn't care about the things he is looting anyway. The things he has looted are of little use to him. He is just stockpiling them for when he creates his own army or noble family.

It is rare for high-rank demons to possess divinity of any kind, so what he has gotten can only improve his stats not his mark of sin. What he looted is almost useless to him. He prefers to kill high-rank demons because their highly developed mark of sin will nourish him better.

He would accept the trade of a fortress for so many high-rank demons any time. And yet here they are, more than 50 of them, fighting over something that isn't theirs. They are like a gift of water to a parched demon. If they are willing to die for something that isn't theirs, then they should be open to receiving aid from him in pushing them to their deaths.

His eyes observed them like a predator observes prey. He analysed the situation and determined that he has to do something different if he intends to grab all these prey.

Chapter 265 How To Goad Demons.

The high-rank demons were fighting all over the place. For someone to control the abyss altar, they need to bind with it. The bonding is very quick if the abyss altar is ownerless. But there will be resistance that will prolong the bonding process if the previous owner hasn't given up control and is still alive.

The resistance can increase the bonding time to a matter of days but it depends on the difference in the spiritual strength of the previous owner and the aspiring owner. That's why anyone that is the current owner will be the target of all attacks. But the fight is more delicate than that.

The fight is all over the place as the owner tries to hide and protect himself. He or she could run away and hide in any part of the domain of high-rank demons but nowhere else. Whoever is bonded with the altar has to be within a certain distance of the altar or they will lose their bond with it. Even with the wide space, the owner can't run away or someone else will try to bind with the abyss altar while he is away. It might take a long time but it is possible.

So that means the current owner must be close to the abyss altar to prevent someone else from taking his right to it. He or she has to weather the attack of others because of this. So he or she must have supporters and allies to protect them and also prevent others from starting the bonding process.

That's why even though the fight is all over the place, it is within the fortress. There may be individual and group fights scattered all over the place but he knows what can get everyone's attention. Few people paid attention to the ominous reaper as he entered but the ones that did scatter like rats before a cat.

"Look it's the ominous reaper."

They began warning each other and soon everyone knew that he was around. They stopped fighting and gathered around to see the freak called the Ominous Reaper. They feared him to be honest. For a demon to fight an alliance and kill the majority of them is a legendary performance. The best that any one of them could do is tie with any one of the demons that he killed. They also have it from a very good source, an eyewitness report, that Aeternus is an abomination. That's way cooler than a legend. But their feelings of fear and respect began to change when they saw where he was heading to.

"Does he want to bind the abyss altar?" Some of them asked each other.

First, there was confusion, followed by indignation, then anger. A mid-rank demon dares to waltz so fearlessly among high-rank demons. Fine, he deserves it. He is strong after all. But to claim the abyss altar right in front of them. That's just insulting. Still, they can stomach it. He is a mid-rank demon and he is already this strong. They could imagine how terrifying he would be when he evolves.

There's a saying in the demon world that the best things in life belong to the strongest. Even with all the logic stacked on Aeternus's side, they felt dejected at the loss, and the thought of leaving filled their minds. There are other available fortresses out there. They would be late to the competition and might be disadvantaged but they wouldn't have to face this terrifying figure.

In short, nothing was worth antagonizing Aeternus. That was before they heard what Aeternus said.

"Yeah, you all better run. You spineless demons. You cowardly dogs should run with your tail between your legs."

"Courting death." One of them shouted indignantly having been angered by what Aeternus said.

Most of them had already begun to turn their backs when they heard what he said. Are they going to leave after he just insulted them? What a story it will be. They can already see it. "The Ominous Reaper strikes again. He claims abyss altar from over 50 high-rank demons and they ran away from his domineering presence after they were scared shitless." it is one thing to hear stories of his feats but it is an awful feeling to be part of his feats especially when they are his opponents.

Some ideas began to creep into their minds. Yes, Aeternus is strong and will likely become terrifying when he evolves. But that "when" is actually "if" or they can make it into "if". There are 51 of them here. Some of them would die in the endeavor but it is more than enough to convert that "when" into "if".

And if they succeed, the story will change to "The Ominous Reaper's reign of terror has finally ended. He bit more than he could chew when he went up against 51 high-rank demons. They put him down after an epic battle and ended his myth of greatness. He wasn't the Ominous Reaper after all, but the Mad Reaper."

There's death and there's glory, high risks, and high rewards. They could feel the promise of greatness coming from their mark of sin. That promise says that if they kill Aeternus and absorb his mark of sin, then they will be great too. But what ultimately pushed them to make the decision is that Wrath is a sin.

They had a demon of wrath among them and this angry demoness whispered to them with her divine sense, "He is courting death. There's 51 of us and 1 of him. If we attack him altogether and at once, we will do him in."

Impeccable logic too. If she had said something stupid it would have made them change their minds. Who would follow the lead of someone with clouded judgment? No one. But she said something that they are all thinking about. Either she isn't being blinded by anger or they are all being blinded by anger. What are the odds of all of them being blinded by anger? "Highly Unlikely."

Chapter 266 Another Feat.

Surely there has to be one reasonable demon among them that will be the voice of reason. Since no one spoke against the well-thought-out plan to attack the Ominous Reaper, they all attacked.

Every High-rank demon knows a spell or two. They may not specialize in it but since the soul always evolves during each rank-up, their minds have become powerful enough that spells aren't difficult anymore. And spells are the go-to method for quick and ranged retribution against pompous mid-rank demons or any demon of any kind.

Spells flew from all directions toward Aeternus. They hoped to overwhelm him with the sheer amount of them.

Aeternus tsked, "What's with demons and fire spells? It is as if it's the only spell they know."

He clearly isn't being overwhelmed. He had time to complain about how demons only use fire mana. He knew the answer to the question. It's the same reason why the law of fire worked in combination with the law of chaos and why most of the planes of the abyss are volcanic. There are some demons capable of using darkness and spirit but when it comes to bringing out magical firepower, fire is the element that demons are most familiar with.

He has succeeded in goading them into attacking him. It would have been difficult to catch all of them if they had chosen to run away. But they didn't. Instead they came within spell range of him. If their spells can reach him, then the improved version should be more than capable of reaching them.

The coat of darkness that he always wears, morphed and formed various spells that shot out from him. The spells were copies of the ones sent to him, except they were stronger and of a corrosive nature. The spells clashed all around him and created a cloud of chaos.

He poured more chaos into his environment and expanded the cloud.

He chuckled evilly to himself, "Let the hunt begin."

The high-rank demons were still a distance from the point where spells clashed. So when they saw that expanding darkness, they had time to rethink their plan and run. It is public knowledge that you mustn't let the darkness around the Ominous Reaper touch you or you will never see the dim light of the abyss again. But turning your back on a very dangerous enemy is a bad thing to do.

A second volley shot out from the cloud behind them. They hadn't seen it coming at them for most of the way because they were obscured by the cloud. Anything that happens in the cloud stays unknown because of the lack of perception. This time, the demons didn't have a volley of their own prepared. They were trying to outrun their allies now turned to competitors.

If they had prepared their own spells and retaliated, the chaos spells would have been stopped by something, or at least be slowed down which will give them time for better response, like dodging. So the chaos spell fell on them. They weren't so weak as to be one-shotted but most were knocked to the ground while very few evaded the attack. But things didn't end there.

The spreading cloud had become closer to them. They could still make it, but a third volley shot out from it. It was the straw that broke the camel's back. The cloud covered them while they were tussling with the third attack and the rest is easy.

They were right about a lot of things. He isn't a high-rank demon yet and as such as not become terrifying. Anything can still happen to him to prevent him from making that change. They were also right about the cloud of darkness as a trademark skill of the ominous reaper. If you get covered by it, there's no going back.

What they were wrong about is the number of high-rank demons that can turn his "When he becomes a high-rank demon" into an "If he becomes a high-rank demon." 50 average high-rank demons are not enough to make that conversion a possibility.

Four demons survived this encounter with Aeternus. One was very lucky to be at the very back. He had a lot of demons to shield him as he ran. Another one didn't join the crowd in attacking, so Aeternus was a spell short to copy. Chaos energy is unwieldy even for his powerful soul, but it becomes easily malleable when his mark of sin joins in the manipulation through his sin ability. He would be able to create great works with chaos energy then, but outside of it, he is stuck with generic spell structures like chaos bolts and shields. Chaos bolts have the power but not the structural complexity needed to take advantage of that power, so Aeternus let the demon go.

"Trading a fortress for 49 high-rank demons was worth it."

He said as the cloak of darkness receded into his body leaving behind nothing but the eroded ground with groves cut into it in several places by his blades of flaming chaos.

The last two that survived didn't get the memo that the ominous reaper was in town. They were still fighting in a corner unbothered by the trappings of the world. The commotion from the clash finally drew their attention, so they witnessed the demise of 49 demons when they fought the ominous reaper. Word of this feat spread soon after.

When Aeternus reached the next fortress, they were still fighting over the control of the abyss altar, but they scattered and ran as fast as their legs could take them or their flight spells could allow. It didn't matter that they were more than 100 of them, double the amount of what Aeternus killed last time. Could he take on 100 high-rank demons and still come out on top? They didn't want to know and especially didn't want to be part of the experiment to find out.

"There's nothing left for me here anymore, I should move on." He said as he turned towards the direction of another fortress from another alliance.

Chapter 267 Altruistic Or Opportunistic Demon Lord.

He didn't bother to search through this fortress or the rest because of all the commotion going on. Whatever is good in them will have been looted already. The ones fighting for the right to the abyss altar weren't encouraging him either with their cowardice. They don't want to die and without demons willing to fight him, he wouldn't be able to kill them. He is fast but not fast enough to catch up to them.

This leaves the really strong high rank demons who have something to lose if they run away. Those won't be able to run away from him.

Suddenly the divine sense that had been stalking him became active. It grabbed ambient sin energy in the air and pulled them together to form something. Aeternus ignored the change and continued to walk. He had places to be and things to do. He would have hummed a carefree tune if he had a throat and lungs for them.

Behind him, the sin energy was forcefully held together to form the grey outline of a three-dimensional figure. It was a petite demoness about 1 meter in height with small wings. By the time the image was fully formed, Aeternus had moved more than 200 meters away. The image watched him and shook its head. Then it took a step forward and appeared beside Aeternus.

"Why didn't you wait for me? I have something to tell you." She asked him.

"Hmm. Why should I have waited? If you had something to tell me, it means you would have come to me. Here you are now so I was right not to wait." Aeternus answered without turning.

He continued walking towards his destination.

The petite demoness warned him. "It concerns your safety. You're in danger."

"Is that so?" Aeternus asked, seemingly unbothered.

"I have information that will be very helpful to you." The figure said

Aeternus nodded. "Somehow, that doesn't shock me. Let me guess, I have to give you something in exchange."

"Yes, you will just owe me a tiny favor."

Aeternus pretended to think about it before saying, "I'll pass."

The figure remained calm. "This is really serious. You should reconsider. What I want won't be too much for you to do."

"Let me ask you this. Can I avoid the danger right now?"

The figure was silent for a while before answering. "No."

"But you will only tell me after I have made a deal with you. I will have owed you for information that wouldn't help me."

"It is a start. Something can be done when you have the information."

"You're right about that. It's a start. But you didn't tell me when I could have avoided the danger. No, you withheld the information and waited until I can't avoid it. Then you offer the information to me. I'm guessing I won't be able to face the danger on my own either. Then you will offer to help me. Of course, I have to pay more for your help."

The figure smiled. "Not bad."

"I wasn't born less than 6 months ago. Oh, wait, I was. I must be a genius or something." He said sarcastically as he began running back towards the border between the domain of the mid-rank and high-rank demons. He can find sanctuary in the domain of mid-rank demons.

Her plan was obvious. She has been stalking him for quite a while now. Suddenly she came to offer information about his safety. Either she is an altruistic demon that has a stalking hobby or the more plausible alternative, she is an opportunistic demon. She may even be the one that cooked up his danger.

"You can't run away or avoid this. You have to ask for my help." The figure said with pity as if she was concerned for him.

Aeternus said calmly. "I don't have to do that. I could just let myself die."

She shook her head. "You wouldn't do that. You want to live."

"True. I'm sure you want me to live too. If you didn't want me to live, you wouldn't have appeared to warn me. But your desperation made you slip up. If you want to convince someone into doing something they wouldn't normally do, you have to wait for when they are at their absolute lowest. Then they'll accept your offer, no matter the cost, because, at that point, your offer will be life-saving and precious."

As he is right now, he sees no reason to take her up on her offer. He isn't desperate enough to be fooled into taking her offer.

She agreed with him, "Maybe I screwed up. But it doesn't change the fact that you're screwed too and I am powerful. I can help you."

Aeternus nodded. "Yes, you're powerful. I saw the show with the sin energy. No one can manipulate the sin energy of a plane so well enough to create an avatar with it. Only one demon in the plane with those capabilities comes to mind. You didn't need to perform the show. You could have spoken to me with your divine sense, but you wanted to prove a point. To shock and awe. I'm not shocked or awed, but I know for a fact that you're powerful."

"I'm guessing that is not enough for you."

"No, it is not enough. I do not accept the fact that I am screwed. I might've been in a pinch, but I don't think I'm screwed. It's your fault for it too. You should have waited until the problem arrived and when I say, "Damn, I'm screwed," before you swoop in like a hero. For all I know, you might even be lying about me being in danger."

She smiled at him. "We'll see then. Remember I'll be waiting if you need me."

"What can you even do for me?"

"That's up to me." The figure answered before it began to break apart.

The divine sense of the demon lord of the plane let go of its control of sin energy. The figure broke apart but her divine sense didn't leave. It was hovering around, content with watching like some stalker.

Chapter 268 To Gamble Or Not To Gamble.

Aeternus isn't actually feeling carefree. He is alarmed, very alarmed. He is proud but he is not foolish. Danger has to be taken seriously, especially unknown danger.

What he said earlier was all true. The demon lord had tried to con him into making a deal he wouldn't have considered. He might be in danger but making a deal with the demon lord is walking into another dangerous situation willingly. He would take an unknown danger over the known danger that is the demon lord anytime. After all, what could be more dangerous than the demon lord in the abyss plane?

A demon king is more dangerous than a demon Lord but that's another situation entirely, he doesn't stand a chance in that situation. Not even if he gets the help of a demon Lord unless the two of them are pranking him. So now that he has eliminated the obvious, this leaves the high-rank demons or the demon nobles as the enemies that could threaten him.

He has offended two demon nobles last he was aware of, maybe more that he isn't aware of. Then there's the chaos he started in the domain of high-rank demons. Change is either pleasant or unpleasant. It usually isn't pleasant for those that were benefiting from the former situation before the change. There must be some demons that his activities have rubbed the wrong way.

Try as he might, he couldn't figure out who would be after him. This is the abyss, anyone can be ought to get you. There doesn't need for there to be grievances for two demons to try and kill each other. Demons have been known to join a free-for-all without knowing what caused the fight in the first place.

The only two things he could ascertain is that the threat has to be highly dangerous and capable of taking his life. Or the demon lord could be lying. Any one of them is highly likely because he could tell that the demon lord doesn't want him to die. Her desire to see him alive is not because she is kind, she obviously has an ulterior motive.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that a demon offering aid and assistance has an ulterior motive. Her motive is highly obvious to him too, so he can be sure that she doesn't want him to die, yet. He continued rushing to the border as his mind went through various likely scenarios. Only one thing is certain, he will be safe when he reaches the domain of mid ranks.

In the domain of Demon Nobles. In The Throne room of Salazar. Before The Demon Lord Approached Aeternus To Warn Him.

Salazar the Balde of destruction, was calm as information about Aeternus was read to him. Aeternus killed Alkazhi, then he killed 14 high-rank demons. He went on to bring down a fortress on his own. It is an unheard-of feat but the Ominous Reaper succeeded in doing it all alone.

The owner of the fortress failed in escaping and died to him. His 8 allies that came to take advantage of the situation got their ass handed to them. Aeternus began his reign of terror as he brought down fortress after fortress and he killed 50 high-rank demons. Now high rank demons are always running scared when they see the Ominous Reaper.

The more Salazar heard, the calmer he got and the chillier the air got. The air was practically frigid by the time the 10th high-rank commander was done. No one breathed or moved. They had their heads bowed while Salazar simmered and brooded. Then Salazar exhaled and the tension in the air relaxed. He had made his decision.

"So Alkazhi is dead. He died a worthy death in the service of his lord and he will be avenged. But not now. Retribution will come, we only have to wait. No one that insults me, kills my messenger, and even kills my commander will get away with it."

The high-rank demons nodded. His words were law so they agreed. There was only one person who could question Salazar.

"Why don't you send me, father?" A normal-looking demon asked.

He looked mostly humanoid and handsome too. If not for the horns, the sharp ear, the obsidian skin, and the red eyes, he would look like a handsome member of another race. He had the charisma and beauty of a demon of lust.

Salazar shook his head. "There's no need for that for now, Bael. Sending you is overkill and too risky. My enemies might try to ambush you if you leave my presence. It is much safer for this demon to come to us, then he will be killed easily."

Bael, the first commander nodded and went back to meditating. "If you say so, father."

"We will wait for him to become a demon noble. Then I'll have my revenge." Salazar said calmly.

Salazar had heard enough about Aeternus to form an idea that he couldn't be killed easily. So he would wait for the time when he can fully wield the full power of his house against Aeternus. There are a lot of reasons to kill Aeternus. That weapon of his alone is more than enough for Salazar to wage war on Aeternus but it is most likely going to fail. He would rather wait for the opportunity to bring his full power to bear so that he can surely nab the Ominous Reaper.

The reason why Bael could question Salazar isn't because of the bond of family. If it were so, Bael's numerous siblings won't have been pushed to their death by Salazar. It is because Bael is special and strong.

It is because Bael is strong is why he is even alive. He is useful to his father, so he lived. He is also too useful to be sent to kill Aeternus. He is sure to kill Aeternus but Salazar doesn't want to risk it. When you gamble and lose, you feel the compulsion to continue gambling to recoup your loss. Salazar has lost Alkazhi, he is weakened by that loss and is feeling compelled to recoup his loss. But he isn't going to risk one of his trump cards for becoming the next demon lord without full certainty of success.

Chapter 269 ACCUMULATION

A high-rank demon can not defeat a demon noble, and neither can a new demon noble defeat an old one. This is because of a certain unique ability that noble demons have called ACCUMULATION. It is the ability to store some of your power away, a little at a time, for future use.

It is this ability that makes Salazar certain that he would be able to beat the ominous reaper no matter how special he is. A demon noble gets stronger the longer they have been a demon noble. The little power that they save everyday easily becomes a ridiculous amount when the years go by. The Ominous Reaper is a baby and will never be able to stand up to his ten thousand years of Accumulation as a demon noble.

A low-rank demon acquires the mark of sin and gets access to sin energy. A mid-rank demon evolves the mark of sin and gets an active sin ability. A high-rank demon gets another sin ability but a passive one this time around. But when noble demons evolve due to successfully fusing mana and sin energy, their active and passive abilities fuse to create a passive accumulation of power that can be actively used. This is the norm.

But there are some special demons that break the norm. They were able to acquire a divine rank sin ability when they became mid-rank demons and their comprehensive prowess is high enough to fuse mana and sin energy as mid-rank demons instead of as high-rank demons. When those demons evolve to the high-rank stage, they get the opportunity to choose two sin abilities instead of one or they can pick ACCUMULATION.

Bael is one such demon. To achieve this unique ability, a lot of resources are needed but not only that. They also have to be geniuses. To create such an entity, Salazar had a lot of kids, fed them, and pit them against each other in regular battles to death. The winner will eat the loser and grow stronger so that all the resources that went into raising the loser won't go to waste.

Salazar also limited their diet to each other since they have his genes. He didn't want them to be contaminated with another demon's genes too much even through their food. If Bael wasn't strong, he wouldn't have survived his childhood.

A demon noble can provide enough resources to allow numerous low-rank demons to evolve into the mid-rank with a divine sin ability but the genius and ingenuity needed to fuse sin energy and mana at such a level needs conflict, danger, and of course genius. Normal low-rank demons are still brawling on the plane while mid-rank demons are fighting over demonic beasts and territories. Something like spell casting is impossible for most mid-rank demons much less mastering sin energy and mana. That just shows how difficult the endeavor is.

Succeeding in it might not be a matter of resources but Salazar sunk a fortune into the endeavor and of course, a lot of his children. It might be controversial but it is normal in the demon society. Demons kill and eat each other every time, why can't a demon father force his kids to kill and eat each other? In fact, he doesn't need to, it happens every time too. Demon siblings kill and eat each other.

No matter how controversial or frowned upon it is, Salazar succeeded in creating Bael. It is rare, but his genes were that good. Bael is unrivaled amongst high-rank demons because of his centuries of accumulating power. He can even kill newly evolved demon nobles and some weak demon nobles. Imagine how strong he will be when he becomes a demon noble.

It is why Bael is confident in himself and is unfazed about Aeternus's might. It is also why Salazar will not risk Bael. As a demon noble, Salazar understood more than anyone else that "when" can become "if." Bael isn't a demon noble yet, anything can change to make that future disappear with his hopes and dreams of becoming the next demon lord.

Back to Aeternus.

He had been running for days and yet, nothing happened. No one attacked him and everything was calm. But he wasn't feeling at ease. He could tell that something bad was about to happen the more time passed by. It was like he was being chased and the distance between him and danger was increasing rapidly. He picked up speed but the sensation continued to increase. He could tell for a fact that he was in danger and the demon lord wasn't lying.

"Just have to cross the border. Everything will be okay then."

That's what he kept telling himself as the days went by. He ran for five days straight with that constant feeling of dread creeping up on him. His non-existent heart was already in his throat by the time he reached the border. The danger was close to him now, very close. But he couldn't see the danger.

"It doesn't matter. It's too late for them now. I'm almost there." He said to calm himself down.

That's when it all happened. A force as heavy as a hammer struck his head and went through it. The force targeted his soul in a piercing manner as if it would destroy it once they made contact. They made contact and the force shattered harmlessly against his soul. He didn't even feel a twinge but he knew he was under attack and the attacks weren't over.

"Could they have finally caught up to me?" He thought as more powerful soul attacks struck him.

Then he looked up when he sensed the new threat. Some boulders had somehow made their way into the air above him and were falling down now. A demon appeared amongst them and began to light them on fire. The boulders became flaming boulders. It was then that everything came into view.

Aeternus realized immediately. "They were waiting for me."

Occasionally missing content, please report errors in time.

Chapter 270 The Ambush.

He had instructed Xander to watch the borders five days ago when he started making his way here but the snake had seen no one and no activity. Either this ambush had been set up before he decided to run

here or whoever did it was powerful enough to hide the levitation of boulders 3 meters across from Xander.

He is sure it is the first option and also has a very good idea about who is behind it, but it isn't time to point fingers just yet. He had to resolve these attacks for now.

He brought out his claymore and began to focus on it. Chaos flames concentrated on it at a rapid pace but he simply waited. He jumped up when the 3m diameter rocks had reached 20m away from the ground. He swung his claymore at the rock above him as he rose and released the blade of chaos flames he was brewing. The blade sliced through the rock cleanly and he flew through the gap created between the dissected rock.

The rocks struck the ground and created an explosion of earth and fire. He concentrated hard as he shot down a pillar of chaotic flames toward the ground. The pillar met the ground and pushed against it, which pushed him as he fell and slowed his descent. He sustained some damage from shrapnel but he escaped most of the damage and would be safe. He couldn't relax though.

The demon in the sky was releasing more rocks and this time they were not few and were not dropping down all at once. Aeternus looked at the sky and considered his options.

"There must be hundreds of them up there."

He realized that his ambushers must have prepared very well for him and he might not come out of this alive. He could see at least 100 such boulders floating in the sky. If they keep dropping them, odds are one of them will actually flatten him. The damage that it will do to him will be worse than some chipped ribs because of shrapnel. So he used one of his trump cards.

His body glowed an ominous dark light, almost purple. Then a beam of chaotic flames shot into the sky. It couldn't be dodged, so it destroyed the demon controlling the rocks and all the boulders in the sky in a glorious explosion. The attack was so powerful that the rocks were falling down as molten lava instead of rock fragments. That wasn't his concern anymore, he had already switched his attention to the group of high-rank demons flying toward him from all directions.

A force began to act on his body which slowed him down. The effect was small at first, barely noticeable, but it was increasing. Unlike the spirit attacks that had been going on since the attacks started, this

wasn't useless. It would become a big problem when soon enough time has passed and it isn't a problem one should have during a fight.

They were all wearing the same cloak that covered their features but he could see their stats and name. Their identity didn't matter to him anyway, at least not now, he was more concerned about their abilities. They all had one boost under an ability named the Oath of the lord. It was a boost of gluttony. It took a little power from the foes that they kill and keeps it in store for future use.

It was enough information for him to know that they were working for the same boss and it has to be a very powerful boss too for them to have such a powerful boost. This boss is also the demon lord since there is only one demon in the plane with the ability to grant a boost through the oath of the lord.

'I was right about the demon lord having it out for me but I might have been wrong about the extent she was willing to go. I didn't think she would want me dead.

The recent developments have made him rethink his idea that the demon wouldn't want to let others kill him. He was sure she wanted to kill him herself. But he may be wrong about that. She may have decided to get rid of him so that others won't get him or she wants another demon to take his uniqueness.

He decided not to linger too long on the possibility. Her intention, motive, or aim doesn't matter in whether he tries to save himself or not.

He continued his search and spotted the one responsible for slowing down his body. It was a sleeping demon of sloth being carried by another demon of cowardice but he would have to go through the entire group if he intends to get to the demon of sloth.

That would be very difficult to do, to say the least. The demon of cowardice was lagging behind at the very back of the group and stopped 50 meters away from him. Plus the demon of cowardice had boosts that buffed only the agility stat. He would not be able to catch it if the demon is determined to stay away from him. The distance is also too far for his cloud of darkness to catch the demon unaware. It is already public knowledge to stay away from his cloud of darkness.

The bulky demon at the front of the group flew down with an axe which it swung down on him. Aeternus would have groaned if he could. He could tell that this was a demon of wrath and it was using a buff of increased resistance. The resistance increases the more damage the demon suffers.

The others in the group surrounded them and brought out bows. They began shooting arrows at them. They don't care about their comrades since he can shrug off the damage easily due to the increase in magical and physical resistance. With the situation of things, he won't be able to get past the demon of wrath while the others run interference.