

GREED 421

Chapter 421 Preparation For Demon Invasion.

It is strange that demons are attacking the Zargoth plane. Demons used to attack the plane but they've always been beaten back by the combined efforts of the gods. The order that the Celestial Supreme enforces ensured that demons stood no chance against them. So they became discouraged about attacking the Zargoth plane and left it in peace for numerous Origin cycles. So this attack seems odd.

'It shouldn't be a problem. Probably just an ignorant small-time high-rank demon who doesn't know what's good for him. The gods will beat him back immediately.' He thought to himself confidently.

The divine plane determined that the threat level is just 1A. It means that the attack is coming from a single abyss altar belonging to the fortress of a high-rank demon. The divine plane determined this because it couldn't sense the mark of sin of a demon noble or anything above that and the portal was opened by a high-rank demon.

He isn't worried about a demon invasion because while the mortal realm might be in turmoil, the divine plane is more than strong enough to beat back a measly high-rank demon. A high-rank demon is the equivalent of a Mid-God. So what's there to fear?

Still, they will prepare for the invasion. Anything can happen after all. This might just be the prelude to a greater invasion. The Celestial Supreme informed the gods immediately and the alarms went off in every divine kingdom. He left Helios and returned to the divine plane to coordinate the defenses.

The gods began to prepare after being called to defend the divine plane. The atmosphere is jovial and relaxed. No one is worried about the invasion. In fact, some gods are looking forward to it. It will give them some much-needed opportunity to fight and some entertainment. It is a good source of much-needed entertainment after the shock that they have been subjected to recently.

Time flows differently between the two planes so the gods have a lot of time to prepare for the incoming demon invasion. They mobilized their angelic troops to go to the sight of the clash between the forces of the gods and demons.

These angels are not mindless or weak. The weakest of them are transcendents the equivalent of mid-rank demons. They have a single pair of wings and are dressed in armor with the symbol of their god etched on it.

The strongest are the single pair wings Archangels equivalent to Sovereigns. They are precious and can only be made by the Celestial Supreme. They all bear the symbol of the hammer of justice and the net of order which indicates that they belong to the god of order and justice. There are ten of them which goes to show how powerful the god of order is.

A normal Celestial Supreme without any Celestials under their rule has just 3 Archangels and a Celestial Supreme with 2 Celestials in the pantheon should have 5 Archangels but Zernon has twice that amount. The next strongest of angels are the 12 winged angels the equivalent of grand gods and demon lords.

The 12-winged angels can only be made by Celestials but only those from the Celestial Supreme are present. Apparently, the other Celestials in the pantheon don't intend to send troops. Stelios and the god of faith don't seem interested in the defense of the plane. The Celestial Supreme didn't bother with them. It's not like their troops will be needed.

The angels arranged themselves into formation on the black plain that extends from the divine city into the void. The weakest of them are in the front and closest to Armageddon. It is at this location that invading demons will arrive. So the transcendent angels will be the first to clash with the enemy. The strongest are at the back and will be deployed based on the requirement. They probably won't be sent into battle since it's a measly high-rank demon that is attacking.

The gods have fielded a good number of angels. The army of the gods is several tens of million large. Angels are made with the souls of believers and the divine power of their god. So even though the birth rate of giants of order is very low, they have had many Origin cycles to Accumulate soldiers. The amount of soldiers the gods have is another reason why they are confident of the result of the coming clash.

The gods were waiting patiently in the divine council for this stupid demon to arrive. They didn't need to bring the Archangels, the 12-winged angels, or the 10-winged angels. The 8-winged angels which high-gods can make are more than enough to beat back a stupid high-rank demon but the Celestial Supreme had ordered for this to be done. It is a show of might that will scare off potential invaders if this first invasion is a probing strike.

A lot of gods are hoping it is just some high-rank demon who got lost or made a bad decision and nothing more but they suspect the worst which is that this attack is a probing strike. Bringing out their full might now ensures that they are not caught unawares. It is a contingency against any accidents happening. A lot has been going wrong recently, it is not a bad idea to get the bulk of their troops alert and ready.

The Celestial Supreme has some of his attention focused on Helios and what he is doing in the mortal realm because he has a lot of reasons to believe that Helios is connected to the attack. He would have scoffed at his paranoia in the past. Even now, it is still baseless suspicion.

It is a strange idea that a giant of Order will have any connection to a demon but the Celestial Supreme is finding it difficult to believe that it is all a coincidence that Helios is doing something strange and demons are invading the divine plane at the same time. But who will believe that the small baby that he saw being born could have anything to do with demons?

Chapter 422 Traitorous Bastard.

Helios was born and bred in the plane but it is obvious that there are a lot of strange unknown things about the son of the sun god. So as absurd as it might seem, Helios could be related in one or another to the demon invasion.

It could also be the sun god that is responsible for this invasion. That traitorous ancient bastard certainly has had a lot of time on his hands to dabble in a lot of things. He might have some contact with demons because he was alive back in the day when demons used to attack the plane. This might be his plan to distract the divine plane from his betrayal or to weaken the divine plane.

Then there is the hidden god that wants to ruin his order. That god might be the architect behind this attack too. It became more plausible the more he thought of it. The hidden god might have gotten in touch with demons to create chaos in the divine plane too in order to further its nefarious agenda.

Either one it is, he cannot take this invasion lightly. He is besieged by enemies on all sides and something is tugging on his authority. A high-rank demon is not enough to cause chaos but it is best to be prepared for the worst.

"I will skin that Stelios when I lay my hands on him and I'll enjoy cutting up his son once the troublemaker comes to the divine plane. I will crush the hidden god and everything it holds dear." He promised himself to deliver retribution to his enemies in the most agonizing way possible.

Things have been getting worse for him recently but a lull will come. His chance to repay his enemies for their transgressions will come. That is the nature of the world. There will be periods of rise and fall. It will be his turn when his enemies experience their inevitable fall and he will make sure that their fall remains permanent. For now, he will try his best to defend his precious plane.

The Celestial Supreme was right to be worried. Numerous alerts started ringing before the first portal opened.

"ATTACK FROM THE ABYSS IMMINENT. THREAT LEVEL 2B."

"ATTACK FROM THE ABYSS IMMINENT. THREAT LEVEL 10B."

"ATTACK FROM THE ABYSS IMMINENT. THREAT LEVEL 20B."

It meant that demon nobles are invading the plane and their number is increasing steadily. First, there were 2 connecting to the divine plane, then 10, and 20. The number of invading demon nobles didn't stop at 20.

"So the high-rank demon is a probe to deceive me. They will find that it is them that will be deceived." The Celestial Supreme said confidently.

He found the behavior of the demons to be strange. A normal planar invasion should lead with the strongest troops but the demons chose the opposite. Still, he isn't worried. He remained calm even when the amount of invading demon nobles crossed over 100.

"ATTACK FROM THE ABYSS IMMINENT. THREAT LEVEL 1C."

This alert made him worried. A demon Lord is also joining the invasion.

"What is going on?"

He became serious not because a demon Lord is a threat to the divine plane but because the rate at which things are escalating doesn't bode well. First, it was a high-rank demon, then demon nobles, and now a demon Lord. The next thing should be a demon king. That will be bad for the divine plane.

He waited patiently for the bad news. When it came he was more shocked than he thought he would be. Helios rings activated fully. Zernon felt his Authority pulled with a jerk and involuntarily used to activate something.

"What is this scoundrel up to?" He said irritably.

Here he is trying to stop an invasion and one unruly child is disturbing him. He looked down just in time to catch the phantom of the god of order and justice appearing within the circle above his son. The phantom was holding a star. The star enlarged into a small sun. Then it collapsed on itself. It pulled the phantom into itself and the poor behemoth. The son of the Celestial Supreme was crushed as soon as he entered the collapsed star. He won't be walking away from whatever this is. The three of them fused to create a portal tinged with the white of the behemoth's blood.

A notification rang in the Celestial Supreme's mind. "PERMISSION GIVEN TO BYPASS THE DIVINE PLANE."

The portal changed with that notification. It seemed to have connected to a destination. The sight from within the portal showed an army of demons coming through.

The Celestial Supreme finally received the answer to his question about what Helios is up to. Helios used the Celestial Authority of Order and the Sun to permit a connection to the Zargoth plane that bypassed the divine plane.

He roared at the top of his divine and majestic lungs. "That fucking traitor."

It is one thing to have a hand in the invasion of demons. That is a sin worthy of death numerous times over. Still, it is manageable. Demons can't enter the mortal realm unless a channel is opened to them. Otherwise, they have to get past the gods in the divine plane. Even if they have a channel, the presence of the divine plane prevents demons from entering the mortal realm with their bodies. At most, they get to spread their influence.

Some powerful demons cannot even do that and will need a demon child to act as their vessel for them to descend into. But Helios betrayed his entire race to open a portal that bypasses the divine plane entirely for the demons to use.

It is something impossible to do without the authority of a Celestial. Only a power of that magnitude can give permission to bypass the divine plane and Helios used two. The traitorous bastard used both his Authority and the Authority of order and justice through his son.

Chapter 423 The Third Authority.

The Celestial Supreme refused to accept the backstabbing betrayal of their entire race. He pointed his hand at the swirling portal and he ordered with the full power of his Authority as the Celestial Supreme. "FREEZE."

Even if a channel is opened, it can still be closed. If a Celestial Authority opened it, another one can close it. Two Authorities were used to open the channel, he has two Authorities too. One as the god of order and another one has the Celestial Supreme, so the portal will close with his command.

His power erupted from within him and into the world. It sought to remake the world according to his will. It came with a potential for change unlike any other and slammed into the portal only for it to be rebuffed. A previously invisible plant spirit appeared beside the portal. It was the one that helped to block the interference from the Celestial Supreme. It turned to ashes leaving behind a green flame. The flames entered the portal and accelerated its opening.

Zernon's eyes shot wide open. "The hidden god is a Celestial too."

He had stated with uttermost certainty that the hidden god cannot be a Celestial because of the unchanged empowerment from the divine plane. He still can't sense the hidden god. If not for what he just saw, he will never believe such a thing. Now he can't destroy the portal. With the Authority of Life added into the mix, it has become 3 vs 2.

"It is too late." He slumped into his throne and lamented.

The only way to get another Authority is to get another Celestial to help him. It is certain that the sun god won't help him since he granted his son his Authority somehow and because just previously the Celestial Supreme wanted to kill him. It is more certain that the god of fate will not help him because of the contract of non-interference. So he has to watch as demons invade his precious mortal realm.

He thought in regret. 'I should have used that trump card to stop Helios when I had the chance.'

Helios smiled smugly when he sensed the failed attempt of the Celestial Supreme in destroying the channel. This is a plan that they hatched when the tree father finished decrypting the divine will within the Stigmata. Legion was able to fully understand the purpose of the Stigmata and they then discovered Stelios' plan for it and why he placed it on Helios's body.

They all had a good laugh about that plan. It was going to fail because Stelios didn't truly know what he was getting into. He was a rabbit trying to take ownership of a cave from a bear simply because the bear took ownership of the cave from someone else. Innovative as the plan to steal Helios's body is, it lacked the weight of feasibility because Stelios was ignorant of who he was trying to steal the body from. They decided to use his folly to their advantage.

Helios had previously discovered several things from experimenting with Tyke's body. One of which is how to forcefully use someone else's divine power through their runes. So they planned to push Stelios into ascending, take his Authority, and combine it with the Authority of the Celestial Supreme through his son.

They found out about the reclusive child of the Celestial Supreme from a diary written by the poor behemoth's mother. One of the numerous plant spirits roaming the plane found the diary during an investigation into the divine weapon that the tree father heard about from the demigod they kidnapped.

They put two and two together to hatch and execute this plan but it wasn't easy. They could have failed if just one thing didn't work out. His struggle during his breakthrough was not for Celestial divine power. It was for Celestial Authority and to get it, Stelios had to make the decision to ascend.

Stelios couldn't be forced to ascend or he would realize that they needed something from him. He was gently nudged in that direction with the threat of eternal servitude. His knowledge of runes helped to inform him of how bleak his future will be if captured and he chose ascension because he is ambitious.

A lot could have happened to ruin the plan. If he had chosen to fall or accept his fate, then this plan would have failed. If the Celestial Supreme had killed his child at birth or hadn't forced the half-celestial to fight Helios then they would be lacking one more Authority required to resist the Celestial Supreme's attempt at closing the channel.

Of course, there are contingency plans. The channel can still be open with one Celestial Authority. If the Celestial Supreme is preoccupied with something else, he will not be able to close the channel in

time. Legion would have succeeded in bringing Aeternus here anyway. All it needs is enough strength which Helios can acquire in time.

If there is one thing that Legion regrets about this plan, it is the death of the son of the Celestial Supreme. If he is still alive then they will be able to use the Celestial Authority of Order for other things. Unfortunately, he had to die. His death cemented the involvement of the Celestial Authority of Order with the opening of the portal.

If the Behemoth were alive, he could have changed his mind and revoked the Authority when he finds out what it is being used for. It will make the channel collapse under the assault of the Celestial Supreme. The cowardly behemoth might just man up and decide to sacrifice himself to secure the mortal realm from demons. People can behave in surprising ways when it really matters. His death removed the uncertainties and the element of surprise in the outcome but it is still a shame since they don't have any more access to the Authority of Order anymore.

He shrugged and said, "You can't have your cake and eat it."

The Celestial Supreme will probably burst a divine aneurysm in his head if he heard what Helios said. He doesn't have any cake to eat while Helios is mourning the loss of a cake he can't eat forever.

Chapter 424 The Offer.

Helios tried his best. There is no way to permanently get control of the Authority of Order that he knows of without becoming a half-celestial of Order. He is already the half-celestial of the sun and the Celestial Supreme is not looking to possess him. Not that it is possible for a Celestial to possess someone, even if that someone is a perfect vessel for possession like Helios is.

He raised his hands to the sky and proclaimed theatrically. "I have opened the gates of hell. I have ushered in an era of chaos and war. I promised and I delivered. I hope Zargoth plane will play its part in this dance."

Then he snickered and thought to himself. 'It's not like they have any choice.'

Legion remembers every slight and fully intends to pay back those who offend him with the same coin. There's the dragon vendetta but that is still in the works. There's also the time he was made into a source of entertainment for mortals and gods alike. They robbed him of his pleasure and he promised to give them pain. He has delivered on that promise today.

Call him petty but it can not be denied that he is reliable. Besides, what he has just done gives him pleasure and advances Legion's agenda. So what's not to like? The inhabitants of the Zargoth plane might not like it so it is unfortunate for them that they can't do anything to stop him. It's too late now.

He was reveling in the pleasure that comes with dooming a civilization to death and destruction at the hands of demons when the plane itself responded. A previously dormant Will or consciousness woke up and focused on him. The weight of the gaze felt heavy and powerful. It froze Helios where he stood.

He mumbled inwardly. 'Me and my big mouth.'

He began to regret enjoying the Calamity that he has caused. He just couldn't revel in it quietly and to himself. He had to announce his deeds to the world and draw this entity's attention to himself. He doesn't know what's going on but rarely does something unexpected become a good thing. No clone of Legion has experienced such a thing so he didn't know what to do. He tried to move but it failed. He could only think and even then his thoughts were slow.

The consciousness examined him and judged him worthy in what felt like an eternity but only took a second. It broke its hold on Helios. Then it brushed its nascent mind against his.

It said quietly "Worthy warrior. Make child. Defend the plane."

It communicated with more intents and emotions than words so Helios understood what it was saying and who it was.

"Hahahaha."

Helios began to laugh. He fell to the ground and continued to laugh. He held his stomach and laughed harder than he has ever laughed before. He rolled on the ground just laughing. The nascent consciousness waited patiently for his answer.

He didn't reply until he had gotten the last of his amusement out of him.

"No, thank you." He said.

The disappointment radiating from the nascent consciousness was palpable. It was like a sulking child but he didn't care. There's nothing to be gained by becoming the child of the plane of Zargoth plane. Zargoth is no Virut plane. It is weak and it is dying.

Legion intends to take control of the plane and overhaul it at the end of the day. They plan to use it as another staging point as an alternative to Soverick's identity but there's no way that they are willing to tie themselves together with the plane.

There's no origin energy. Not a tiny bit much less infinite. Mana is even lacking too and yet the joint consciousness of all life on Zargoth plane wants him to defend it. What is there to even defend? The entire plane is a barren desert. Someone even tried to split it in half. Zargoth plane is already lucky that Legion's actions are benefiting it. It shouldn't ask for more when it doesn't have anything to give.

The nascent consciousness didn't give up. Weak as it is, it recognizes Helios's worth so it tried to be reasonable.

"Make Better. Give Power. Quit Anytime."

Helios considered the deal with other clones. He tries to make the better. In exchange, the plane gives him support and he can quit being the child of the plane anytime. All the power in their relationship will be with him and he has nothing to lose.

It is a good deal, one that the will of all living beings had to make. It is weak and dying. This may be its last chance to change its fate. Giants of order have bled it over the years while he provided it something really important. By opening the portal to the abyss directly into the plane, he allowed mana to pour in.

The plane needs mana. It doesn't care where it gets it from right now. It is willing to make a deal with a demon to get mana. Helios did it once before, he can surely manage it again and make it even more permanent. The will of the plane doesn't care about the demons that will accompany the mana. It only cares about survival.

"Alright, I'll do it. You owe me big time." Helios accepted the offer.

Becoming a child of the plane is mythical because there is hardly anything a single person can do to affect the course of the fate of a plane. It is also rare that the plane finds someone truly worthy to be its defender. But in this situation, it is the plane begging him to take the job. It is like he has been offered to be paid for his hobby. He can do it anytime and quit anytime. It is a dream come through.

"Thank you." The nascent consciousness said to him. Then it began the process of making him the child of the plane.

Chapter 425 The Job.

The will of the plane thanked him. Then it broke apart and fused with him. The tiny motes of consciousness that make it up became connected directly to him. He became the child of the plane just like that. There was no light effect or anything. He didn't even feel any different except for the connection to the plane.

The connection will empower him if it had any power to give. That's still a long time to come. Then there's the feeling that he will share in the fate of the plane good or bad. He can break it off anytime so he has nothing to worry about.

He shook his head in pity. "This plane is too weak."

He didn't know how malnourished the plane was before but now he knows. It is normal for life to die every moment but there's a problem when the death rate is higher than the birth. Zargoth plane has gone beyond that point where there is a problem. It is doomed.

New life is not being created while death saturates the plane. The Celestial Supreme's recent tantrum dealt a great deal of damage to the plane. If not for the sudden influx of mana through the connection then the consciousness would never have woken up ever again. Only something drastic can change the fate of the plane as it is.

There are three things that can change its fate right now. One of them is for him to pump Origin energy and mana into the plane through Soverick. He is not going to do that. The effects are unknown and it might compromise Soverick. There's no need to risk the Virut plane for the Zargoth plane.

The second thing is opening the gate of the plane and allowing mana to enter from the ancient battlefield. That will give access to the plane to outsiders and disrupt Legion's plan for it so he is not doing that. The third and most promising option is to create a permanent channel to the abyss. That is very feasible and within Legion's plan so they will do that.

The contractor responsible for doing it has also arrived. Aeternus entered the Zargoth plane. He nodded to Helios and Helios nodded back. Then Helios flew towards the next target. There's more to be done.

The two of them don't need to talk. They know what's there to know because their minds are linked. They don't need to exchange pleasantries either. The nod that they gave each other is because even though they are joined together in their minds, they have an individual sense of identity. They are simply acknowledging that individualism with a nod.

Aeternus waited for his army to get into formation. It is going to take a while before 495 million troops will get through the portal even with a portal empowered with three Authorities. The width of the portal has increased so it shouldn't take much time.

His dukes entered after him and surrounded him for instructions while they waited. Terrifying beings of power towering above a small demon that no one will believe is their lord, yet they are all kneeling to this short demon. Their current situation made the dukes realize how far above them their lord really is.

Baal looked around confused, "Where are we? This is not the Armageddon of the plane. Did we get lost, lord Khaos?"

The portal had switched during its activation so he feared that they had gotten lost.

"No, we didn't. We simply bypassed the divine plane and entered the main plane." Aeternus answered stoically.

Baal was stunned. He wasn't the only one to be shocked. The other dukes were also all shocked. Baal opened his mouth several times but ultimately kept quiet. He believes what Aeternus said. He just cannot fathom how it happened. He has a lot of questions but he felt it inappropriate to ask them so he decided to keep quiet.

Aeternus understood their confusion. So he said to them. "A traitor opened the door for us."

"You mean a Celestial had a hand to do with this, lord Khaos? I am in awe of your abilities, my lord." Xander praised.

Xander is the one in charge of infiltration and espionage so she knows what it means to tempt others to betray their society. She thought she knew almost everything that can be known about Aeternus but she didn't expect that her lord can secretly tempt a Celestial to open a backdoor into the plane for them. A Celestial is a being on par with a demon king and yet, one deigns to make deals with a high-rank demon.

Aeternus nodded. "The gods of this plane are very strong and they have a very strong leader. But this leader wantonly kills Celestials to consolidate his power. A Celestial betrayed the plane so that we can come and cause chaos. Our job is to destroy every church in the mortal realm."

They understood how they got access. A Celestial made a deal with Aeternus. The Celestial will grant them access and in exchange, they will undermine the religions in the plane. There may be more to the deal but the dukes didn't ask further. It is not their position to question but to execute the will of their lord and that's what they will do.

Infernox asked hopefully. "Can we burn and pillage as much as we want?"

That's the most important thing to a demon. It is doubly important to a demon of wrath that just lost a fight. Nothing fixes that bad mood like good old-fashioned carnage and destruction. He knows that they are on a job but he will like to enjoy doing his job too.

"You can burn and pillage as much as you want."

Aeternus's answer relieved them. All of them perked up with anticipation. The plane wouldn't know what hit. The civilization of the giants of order will crumble. It may hurt the plane in the short run to have the bulk of life in it massacred but it will benefit it in the long run. Giants of order are parasites and pests while the invading demons are the much needed pesticide.

Chapter 426 Problems Of Invasion.

Aeternus was talking to his demon dukes.

"This is a competition. There will be rewards for your efforts. Enough Divinity to help you reach the half-divine rank is up for grabs. I will distribute them according to your contribution to the mission. All you have to do is to take your legions and destroy churches on the plane. The more churches and clergymen you destroy, the more divinity you get."

They become even more perked up. Divinity is very important to demon dukes. It is the only way for them to grow and reach the half-divine rank the same as the demon lord. They don't need the encouragement to destroy, but the competition has turned their hobby into a paying job. There's nothing better than that. That makes two people who have just gotten their dream jobs. Helios and the demons.

His next words sobered them up. "I'll advise you to take this competition seriously because there's going to be another one after and it is going to cost you your life if you are not strong enough. Enjoy yourself and use this opportunity to strengthen yourself or it may be your last."

What he said has not changed the situation. It is still a hobby that they get paid for but now they have to take it seriously or it will be the last time they ever indulge.

Baal looked at the wide grin on Infernox's face and shook his head. "This plane is already close to becoming uninhabitable. It doesn't have mana or much vitality. It can hardly support us and we are demons. Our destruction might just push it over the edge."

Baal could feel the deprivation of life on the plane. It is like a suction force all around in the air trying to get into them to remove the vitality within them. There's no mana or Origin energy. That means that they won't be able to regenerate the energy that they use in combat. Only boneheads that rely on their bodies like giants of Order and Infernox won't feel out of place. That's why Infernox is still grinning. He knows he has an advantage here compared to those that fight with spells.

"That doesn't concern us. We are here to do our job. The state of the plane will make doing it more difficult, but we will do it." Infernox declared with determination.

'Easy for you to say. You're just glad that the situation is in your favor.' Baal grumbled to himself.

"There's no need to worry too much. I'll help you with energy. I'll refill your energy storage once a day." Aeternus told them.

Baal and the other dukes bowed. "Thank you, Lord Khaos."

A refill of energy once a day is nowhere near enough for them. They have large energy pools but it can be used up in about 30 minutes of fighting. They will have to ration their energy strictly and even then it won't be enough. Still, it is already a boon that Aeternus is helping them. They have to show gratitude for what they have and they can't ask for anymore.

Baal turned to Infernox and grinned. Infernox's face twitched at the naked provocation. He felt like slugging the grinning fool but he held himself back.

Xander asked Aeternus, "Lord Khaos, what about the demon lord? I know that she is planning to ambush us. Did she come here too or went to another plane?"

Aeternus chuckled before replying, "Don't worry. She will find herself too busy to bother with us."

They continued to discuss their plans as they wait. Their mission seems very easy despite the two major problems of defenders of the mortal plane and the environment itself. Demon dukes can be compared to the weakest grand gods and titans of law. Their accumulation makes them equal to the strongest grand gods and titans of law.

The mortal realm doesn't have any of that but they have the vessels of gods. They don't have to worry about the vessel of the Celestials because Aeternus told them that their employer has taken care of most of them. The scant few vessels belonging to the Celestial Supreme won't leave the headquarters of the church of order.

Apart from that, their employer has also reduced the fighting force of the gods in the mortal realm. Apparently, they killed each other in some war. The remaining vessels belonging to grand gods will not stand a chance against the dukes. A vessel cannot stand against the real thing.

The problem of the defenders of the plane can be solved easily since they are not a threat. The mortal realm has been compromised for the taking. Even the barren environment is not too much of a problem

for them either. Demons can survive in any world and cannot be suppressed in the divine or main plane because of their sin energy.

Sin energy is unique just like blood energy and dragon force. It isn't like generic energy that is easily suppressed. But the lack of mana and Origin energy means they can't regenerate their sin energy. Even their Chaos energy cannot be replenished in this dying world.

Fortunately, Aeternus can feed his dukes energy through their link so the environment is more of a nuisance than a problem. The high-rank demons in the army will just have to manage the usage of their energy until Aeternus finishes building a stronghold in the plane. With a stronghold here, they will all be able to freely regenerate their energy again.

The stronghold will also form a stable and permanent channel between the plane and the abyss. It will help the plane since mana will enter the plane together with sin energy. The plane will benefit from it and so will the demons. It is killing two birds with one stone.

Aeternus stayed behind with Xander to build the stronghold while the others took their legions and scattered into the plane. Getting the demon dukes to reach the half-divine rank is good for him but he is not going to give them the divinity straight up. He is going to make them work for it.

Chapter 427 Divide And Conquer.

The stronger his subordinates are, the better for him. But according to Helios's information about the gods of the plane, the available divinity from killing all the gods won't be enough for all of the demon dukes to reach the half-divine rank. Rarely is any resource enough. That's why there is a need for competition and the survival of the fittest. So only the best will get divinity.

The mortal plane is the demon duke's playground for now. They will return to their appropriate battlefield when they are done here. He will test them thoroughly there and those that he finds wanting will pay with their lives to boost their betters.

Elsewhere All Around The Plane. Immediately Aeternus Entered The Plane.

The plant spirits guarding mana entities transforming into demigods all received the same order from the tree father. They are to kill their charges and move on.

The plant spirits executed the order immediately. Each one of them killed the mana entities that they are guarding and took back the crystal fruit containing divinity that they are trying to digest but had been failing to do. Then they left the place.

Mana entities are not supposed to be able to absorb divinity because they don't have the right existence to fight the divine will within the divinity. The bodies, minds, and souls of mana entities are divided so they can't fight against an intangible force like the will of a god. The divine Will in the divinity will resist any changes to it and can only be absorbed by mana entities if the divine will within the divinity has been suppressed. As long as there's no resistance, even mana entities can absorb divinity.

The crystal fruits belong to the Tree father so the divine will contained within it belongs to him. The tree father allowed the ant queen to digest it for a purpose. The tree father didn't let these mana entities absorb it for the same purpose. He just made it seem like they are absorbing the divinity.

The ant queen needed to draw the attention of the gods and give Helios the opportunity to get away from the constant supervision of the sun god. The sun god wouldn't let him leave the sun city without a heroic quest issued by the Celestial Supreme. Meanwhile, all these mana entities are meant to draw attention and fool the Celestial Supreme into believing that they will become demigods. It was easy to do because it has happened once before and because SWIFTESCAPE the plant dragon did a good job of making it seem like so.

Since it has happened once with the ant queen and it had disastrous consequences, the Celestial Supreme would do everything to prevent it from happening again such as scattering his forces all over the plane to eliminate them. These mana entities have performed their purpose now that the Celestial Supreme has divided his forces throughout the plane and his strongest vessel has been sacrificed for the good of the plane by Helios.

The plant spirits absorbed the crystal fruits and embarked on their second mission. They have been instructed by the tree father to attack the separated transcendents of the church of order. They can kill them if possible but their major aim is to delay them and stop them from regrouping. It will not be a good thing to have the strongest force in the mortal realm, the zealots of order, regroup and join the fight against the demons.

It is because of that order that SWIFTESCAPE killed the giant mother boreworm, took the divinity, and left the tunnels in the ground. His form dispersed into vines that slithered onto the surface where they combined into the green plant dragon. He roared and took to the air.

SWIFTESCAPE found the team that has been sent to kill him quickly. They are two Behemoths and some ancient giants all clad in Stigmata armor. They were rushing back to the church headquarters when they sensed him gaining on them.

"What do we do?" One of them asked the other.

His partner, a female replied. "We fight and we win. Then we return to base. We must not fall here. The mortal realm needs us."

The male slammed his fist on his armored chest and said, "May Order be with you."

She responded with the same gesture, "And may it cut down all Chaos that stands with you."

The two of them resolved their will and informed their team of ancient giants. They prepared to face their prey and kill it. It was, after all, their previous mission. If they can't kill it then they are in trouble. They formed up ranks with the behemoths in front and ancient giants flanking the annihilator in the middle. Said annihilator is currently charging.

SWIFTESCAPE closed in on them like a force of nature on the horizon. He flapped his giant vine wings while his eyes eyed them below him with contempt. They are but land-cursed beings while he is a creature of air superiority. What chance do they have against him?

He noticed the annihilator but he doesn't care about it. It is not that he is ignorant of its purpose. He may lack knowledge of the way of the world but the Tree father has taught him what he needs to know for him to achieve his mission. So he knows what an annihilator is.

He ignored the annihilator because he finds it difficult to take transcendents and mana entities that can't fly seriously. If they cannot counter his aerial superiority then they are doomed. He will pick them off one by one and toy with them as a cat on a full stomach will toy with a rat.

The white missile was shot out from the annihilator and went straight toward him. He swerved and tried to evade it but the white orb of light followed his movements as if locked on him. The giant that fired it is controlling it to keep up with him with his vision.

Chapter 428 Life Dragon Fire.

SWIFTESCAPE growled, "Very well then."

He tried to evade the annihilator but its targeter made it trail him in the air so he gave up on escaping the missile and dove straight for his prey. The white missile closed in on him only to suddenly go off course when it entered the range of SWIFTESCAPE's domain. He used his solidified divine sense to slap the missile aside as one would swat at a fly.

The zealots of Order were not discouraged by the outcome. They didn't expect an annihilator to work against a transcendent anyway. It was originally planned for the mana entity. Setting off an annihilator within the tunnels at the bore worm while the plant spirit is preoccupied with two Behemoths will surely eliminate the bore worm. They just have to play their real cards.

SWIFTESCAPE didn't wait for them to do whatever they plan to do. He gave them a dragon welcome. His eyes lit up with green flames and he opened his mouth wide. His prey could see the green flame within his gullet despite the glare of light that the annihilator produced after being detonated.

The annihilator exploded into a giant white dome. It created a lot of shockwaves, light, heat, wind, and sounds. The effect of that explosion hadn't ended when SWIFTESCAPE finished his present for them. The white mushroom formed by the rising air formed the background as a green lance of fire shot toward the zealots of order.

The female Behemoth's eyes turned white and black as she pulled into the power of the Celestial Supreme. She is also a vessel and the trump card of this expedition. If the plant dragon can use the power of a god, then only someone that can use such a similar power can withstand it.

"Shield of order."

She urged the divine power flowing within her to create a giant shield in front of their group. The Celestial Supreme has learned his lesson already and he knows that the hidden god is a Celestial. So this shield can block everything as long as they do not use a Celestial Authority.

The green lance of flame made its way straight to them. The zealots expected a flash of an explosion due to the collision but there was no clash. The lance passed straight through the shield as if it isn't there and continued on to the zealots. It did not break the shield or penetrate it. It seems to have phased through it like water slips through the earth and then it struck the zealots.

None of their defensive divine spells or Stigmata worked to protect them. The green fire phased through it all and sunk into their flesh. They all caught on fire burning with green flames. It was then that they received their second surprise. They were first surprised by the failure of the divine shield but now they are shocked that they do not feel any pain despite being on fire.

Their surroundings did not catch fire as they did. The flame lance did not even disturb the soil. It passed through it as it passed through the shield. There was no explosion or destruction. If fleet like they were showered with a cool liquid, and not dragon flames.

It is strange and perplexing. They are giant bonfires of green flame and yet, they as fuel, do not feel any pain or discomfort. Their skin and hair are unharmed and seemed no different. It didn't long before they noticed what the flame is doing to them. It started quickly and escalated into something else.

They began to reduce in body mass and their skin began to wrinkle. Their muscles shrunk to the bone. Their skin dried up, lost its elasticity, and began to crack. They became lean and their hair began to fall off.

It was a painless if horrific sight. They fell to the ground unable to stand anymore. Their legs became too thin and weak to support them so they fell. Even then they kept burning. They kept burning until all the life force in their body was fully burned all the while they felt no pain.

They died when their system finally gave up. By then, they have become dry mummies that crack with a touch. And they did crack when the only survivor tried to help them. The female Behemoth was the only one that survived and the only one that cried in pain as she watched the rest die with bewildered looks on their face.

She turned to the dragon and roared a promise of vengeance.

"I will kill you."

Her loud voice, though impressive, did not faze SWIFTESCAPE. He stood above her and laughed in derision. His grating voice bore through her like the worst sound ever. She leaped up with conjured weapons and the two of them clashed. The two vessels of two Celestials traded blow after blow in a Deathmatch. Only one of them will walk away from this fight.

These kinds of fights occurred throughout the plane. Priests have special Stigmata that make them stronger when there are a lot of them together. The force domain of the strike team is one of them. There are special stigmata that improve attack power, defensive power or simply heal better the more a type of priest there are in proximity.

Zealots of order have a particularly nasty one that makes them almost invulnerable to damage if they are in large enough numbers but they couldn't take advantage of numbers because they have been separated. They easily fell prey to the plant spirits. Only the vessels could resist the plant spirits but their fates have been sealed.

The tree father sent out a lot of orders which lead to a lot of events with heavy consequences for the Zargoth plane. Another order he sent out is to his cult. He instructed them to come out into the open and officially transform from a cult into a church. The cult of life with its hidden sanctuaries and priestess came forward boldly to announce the faith of the church of life.

Chapter 429 Betrayal Betrayal Betrayal.

The entrance of the faith of the hidden god into open society didn't come with the normal unpleasant reaction expected towards a new church. The world war and the Celestial Supreme's lax attitude to the chaos in the mortal realm allowed the cult of life to fester within the society of giants of order. His hands-off approach these past few years let the cult grow stronger under his nose without him realizing it.

A lot of giants of Order bear grudges and resentment against gods. The gods have been using them for their games and entertainment for ages. The numerous divine wars have led to a lot of bloodshed. The recent world war did a lot of damage to the prestige of gods just as it damaged the resources of the mortal realm.

Normally, the giants of Order will have to suck it up since there's nothing they can do about it but now they have an alternative that is promising peace and safety. So the Cult of the tree father was able to prosper under the nose of the gods. Now that the church of order has been weakened and its forces scattered all over the plane, they have nothing to fear about coming out anymore.

It is the church of order that wipes out any unorthodox churches or cults in the mortal realm, but they can't do that now. The other churches are too weak from the years of war to bother with them when they came out. Besides, there is the issue of demons attacking their churches to deal with. No one can stop the rise of the church of life now.

Back in the Divine Plane

No matter how shocked, regretful, angry, or how bitter the Celestial Supreme is, it doesn't change the fact that his son is no more and the demons are still invading. What's worse is that he was betrayed by someone who he thought to be very close to his heart.

"How could you do this to me?" He wailed in his divine plane. "How I loved you and showered you with my love, attention, and protection. And yet, you break my heart so mercilessly."

He is distraught beyond compare. He sat on his throne without care. Despair radiated out of him in waves upon waves. He knew to expect a betrayal, he didn't expect it to be so painful. His heart is all but shattered into pieces.

"Why would you need another protector? Tell me, why?" He asked out loud but he received no answer.

It is okay anyway. He already knows why the plane decided to get a protector. He thought he was enough and that he was all that the Zargoth plane needed but he was wrong. He felt it when the will of all life woke up from its sleep. He doesn't know what it talked with Helios about but he knows what Helios has become after the conversation.

He held his head in his hands and lamented. "I have been betrayed. Does that mean I will fall soon?"

He felt betrayed because he truly cares for the plane in the way someone would care for something they own. He believed that the Zargoth plane is his and he guarded it jealously. He has been doing everything to protect it only for the will of the plane to desert his love and attention for some mana. Imagine that, for some mana.

The prophecy from the god of fate is that he will fall due to a betrayal. He thought the betrayal will come from the gods. It seems he was wrong. A lot of betrayals have been going on recently so he better watches his back. Helios betrayed his race and the plane while the will of the plane betrayed him.

Here he is trying to defend the plane while the will of the plane is cozying up with the one that granted demons access to the mortal plane. And he has to defend the plane while making sure that he doesn't fall. It is almost too much for a god to take. Unfortunately for him, that is not the end of his word.

Things didn't end with the high-rank demon that entered the mortal realm. The demon nobles entered the divine plane with the demon lord and a large army too. They came with numbers that indicate their intense preparation for this invasion.

He watched large portals opening up in Armageddon and spewing forth horde upon horde of demons with bitterness.

"I will show them hell." He promised his enemies.

A giant ball of squirming flesh scanned the array of demons looking for her target totally unaware of the enemy that she has created even before entering the divine plane. Aeternus should be at Armageddon already waiting for her to nab him since he came first. She will use her troops to hold back the gods while she focuses on capturing him.

That's her plan in a nutshell. She has no delusion that she can successfully invade this plane. She might come back after she gets the lord of chaos and becomes a demon king. But for now, her mission is a simple snatch and run.

"Where is that bastard?"

But no amount of searching on her part can locate Aeternus. She has the demon nobles searching for her too but no one can find him. A short demon with a dark cloud perpetually hanging around it should be very obvious on the battlefield. If they can't find him then she can execute the first step of her plan. How is she to snatch something she can't find?

"Didn't he come to this plane? I was sure he came here."

She doesn't think that Aeternus returned to the abyss immediately after coming here. The only way to return is to activate the return function of the abyss altar and open a return portal but it is going to be more difficult to do since he isn't in the demon realm anymore. It is going to take time.

No matter how powerful Aeternus is, it should take a full day of constant effort to open a return portal back to the abyss. Even her needs that much. That means Aeternus is not in the plane at all. He must have fooled her about which plane he is going to.

Chapter 430 Where Is The Lord Of Khaos?

There's no sight of Aeternus and the legions of the house of Khaos no matter how she and everyone looked. The disappearance of Aeternus is one thing. It might be that he somehow made himself invisible but an entire army of millions of demons can't just up and disappear.

The hilarious possibility that Aeternus bypassed the divine plane didn't come across the demon lord's mind because it is ridiculous and hilarious. Anyone that tries to make her believe that a channel large enough for Aeternus and his army was opened for him will fail in the endeavor to convince her. She is not a fool so how can she believe such a ridiculous tale?

She won't even believe it if someone tells her that a channel was opened for Aeternus alone. A channel for a single demon may have a higher chance of succeeding but it is still far-fetched because it will mean Aeternus had connections within this plane. It is highly unlikely considering that he has never left the 541st plane of the abyss.

Those connections also have to be very high too. Aeternus must know a Celestial to achieve that but what will a Celestial be doing with him a high-rank demon when there's a demon Lord in the plane and several demon kings in the abyss? Even then, his entering into the plane must not be opposed by other Celestials. In fact, the only way it is certainly feasible for a channel to be opened for Aeternus is that the majority of the Celestials are for giving him access directly or indirectly. Any Celestial can open a channel and any Celestial can close it. Its success becomes a matter of majority support. So no, she will not believe that Aeternus bypassed the divine plane.

The only possibility, even though it is extremely difficult is that Aeternus managed to fool her about his destination. It is a more likely explanation despite the fact that it pains her to admit it. It is disappointing and shameful to admit that Aeternus was able to pull a fast one on her despite her carefulness and the anticipation that it could happen. But it is more plausible than anything else and she is not so prideful as to blind herself to the truth of the situation.

So she informed the demon nobles, "It is a bust. The lord of the house of Khaos isn't here. It seems that I underestimated him once again and he fooled me. We should try and return to the abyss when we can."

Their operation is officially a failure. Their prey escaped from them and it is not a pleasant experience especially since they have committed a lot of resources to this. But they have to leave as quickly as possible or they might be forced to stay here forever.

Beelta began the return protocol even before she told the demon nobles to retreat. She cares about herself more than she cares about others. It is a good decision too because the angels are already attacking.

It doesn't matter to the gods that the demon lord made a mistake. All that matters is that she is an invader and must be vanquished. She might try her luck by explaining to the gods that they didn't invade to attack the plane. That is unlikely to work since demons are known to be liars and gods generally hate them.

No one will believe her if she tries to explain. The demons rampaging in the mortal realm have sealed the god's mind to any other alternative explanation and their Celestial Supreme is just looking forward to getting a bite out of them. No matter how good Beelta is as a liar, no one will believe an explanation that is as implausible as invading a plane with billions of demons and doing it by mistake.

Beelta didn't try to pally. She knows that this fight is inevitable. She ordered her soldiers to engage the defenders while she stayed at the back of the army in peace. So millions of angels clashed with millions of demons and the battle of Armageddon began. It looks like an epic battle for the fate of the plane except that the demons are being sacrificed to buy time. All the leaders of the demon army are trying to return to the abyss. In about a day when the leaders start disappearing, this farce will be undone and revealed for what it truly is.

CELESTIAL SUPREME POV

The battle in the divine plane is of little significance to the Celestial Supreme. It is something that he can win easily but he held back his most powerful troops. The Archangels were stopped from participating in the battle for fear of demon trickery.

Common sense dictates that a demon king is needed to beat the gods but there is no demon king in sight. This demon lord is not a threat so maybe all of this is a plan to make him overconfident of victory and make a mistake. He doesn't want to send out the Archangels into the midst of enemies only for demon kings to appear and corner them.

The fight might take longer but the remaining angelic troops are more than enough for the invaders to be destroyed. Besides, battles like this are not fought within a day and these demons aren't going anywhere. He is more concerned about what the contingent of demons that entered the plane will be doing especially since the mortal realm is vulnerable right now.

He was right to be mindful. The demons that entered the mortal realm show just how conniving and treacherous demons are. An army that is supposed to have only high-rank demons as the strongest combatants turned out to be false. The divine plane failed to sense demon nobles and demon dukes in that army.

Somehow, the demons fooled the detection mechanism of the divine plane and were able to smuggle in powerful demons. It is like the sensitivity of detection mechanism of the plane was scrambled by a weird energy used in opening the portal. It is the first clue that the Celestial Supreme got that there is something peculiar about the demon invasion.