

GREED 661

Chapter 661 Bloodline Of Soul Fire.

"Then get on with it. Just watch out for her tricks. She can take control of phantom weapons." Salvin warned him.

Salvin shook his head and spoke confidently. "She can't take control of my phantom weapons. No one can."

He began making his way toward the dreaded 1st ring. The people in the 2nd ring made way for him. They recognized him and his sister. The two of them are from the lineage of sages. Their bloodline might not be purely that of the first sage but they are powerful. They stepped back and decided to watch. Everyone wants to see if Litori has finally met her match. Salvin stopped at the edge of the 1st ring. He didn't step into Litori's domain.

His confidence in winning this battle comes from the limit of her domain. She is suppressed in body and mind just like everyone else. She can't extend her domain farther than 100 meters meanwhile his phantom weapons have a farther reach. He has a farther reach due to the collaboration between his eyes and his divine sense. His eyes and divine sense work hand in hand to create his ability. So his phantom weapons can attack up to 110 meters away from him. It is a very small difference but it is enough.

He began creating phantom weapons. Blades, arrows, knives, spears, javelins, and many more began to pop out from his eyes. They come out small and enlarge when they are outside his eyes. More of them came pouring out of his two silver eyes. He sent a sizeable amount of the grey phantom weapons to attack Litori while he continued to make more.

Litori became vigilant immediately after she saw him. She was prepared for his attack before he stepped forward to attack her. He also took a lot of time preparing to attack her. He didn't say that he was going to attack but she didn't need him to announce his intentions. She can see enough to know that she has a challenger. So she was ready for him when he finally attacked.

Some dry white ashy matter was already in her hands by the time the phantom weapons shot towards her. She calls it psionic matter. It is harvested from the spirits of people. The people that she got it from

don't need to be killed by her. She can harvest the spirit of those who die as long as they are close to her when they die.

Her bloodline awakened when she became a mana entity. At first, she could attack others with her ephemeral flame. It is a flame that burns from within her target as long as she ignites it with a spiritual attack. The attack comes out from her eyes. Her eyes became able to see spirits after she became a transcendent. Kayla was the first spirit that she harvested to create psionic matter.

The psionic matter when sprinkled on things, helps her to override the spiritual control of those things. The things that she can override can either be real weapons or phantom weapons. Anything being controlled with the divine sense is susceptible to her usurpation.

She sprinkled some psionic matter now at the approaching phantom weapons. They turned into motes of glittering dust that blew onto them. They fell on them but the phantom weapons continued towards her. They wobbled but they resisted her control and remained under the control of Salvin. She had to dodge them or risk being torn to shreds.

She ran around evading the phantom weapons and continued sprinkling more of the psionic matter on them. She would sometimes use the whip in her hand to block some. It was very tough to evade the phantom weapons due to Salvin's excellent control. She had to change her position a lot and even moved far away from the Zeroth position. She struggled to evade at first but it became easier and easier for her to protect herself from the onslaught of the phantom weapons.

Salvin feels like a hammer is hitting his mind. This particularly uncomfortable phenomenon started when Litori sprinkled that white dust on his phantom weapons. He didn't lose control of his phantom weapons but he began to lose his concentration.

The battlefield became two and both demanded his attention. One is the physical battlefield that he is winning and the other is the spiritual battlefield that he is also winning. The problem is that he shouldn't be fighting on two battlefields at the same time. There's only so much his mind can take.

He needs his mind to create phantom weapons and control them. That has been all he ever needed his mind for. A third need suddenly appeared, one that he is not especially versed in. He needs to task his mind to maintain control of his phantom weapons now. It has never happened that someone wants to wrestle his weapons away from him. This sudden, third need is uncomfortable and distracting. It is making him sloppy at performing the other two needs.

The first major impact apart from the sudden headache is the drastic reduction in the number of phantom weapons he can create. He has to fight tooth and nail to keep control of the ones he has created and Litori is still bombarding them with more psionic matter. He has a feeling that creating more phantom weapons will give her more avenues of attacks and open his mind to more stress.

His hesitation to produce more phantom weapons didn't discourage Litori from focusing on the ones he has produced though. She kept sprinkling the psionic matter on them and they began to slow down. The battlefield shifted then.

The second impact of the spiritual stress is that his control over the phantom weapons that he has already created became bad. The phantom weapons are wobbling too much now and they have slowed down in speed. They are of little threat to Litori. He is still winning the spiritual battlefield. But he is losing the physical battlefield.

Chapter 662 Spiritual Vs Physical.

Litori tried to move closer to him now that she doesn't have to worry too much about the phantom weapons which means it is his turn to run and evade. He can't let her breach the distance between them to 100 meters or she will be able to attack him.

"This is a disgrace. I am the one-man army damn it." Salvin said through gritted teeth as he ran.

He discarded his pride and chose to run. It is disgraceful but it is better than losing to her. He hasn't lost yet so anything can change. The two of them are ranged fighters with pretty lethal weapons. Litori's spiritual attacks are just as dangerous as the phantom weapons that he uses.

He has a longer reach so he should be winning but Litori's specialty has made him lose focus. He has become ineffectual at what he is capable of. Now he is running away from Litori so that she won't finish him off. It is highly unlikely but the one-man army is being chased by a single person.

The two of them ran around the 1st and 2nd zone trying and failing to kill each other. The onlookers gave them a wide berth. They retreated to the 3rd zone where it is safe. Stray spiritual and physical attacks won't reach them there. They watched on with trepidation and awe. Any one of these two fighters can take them all on but it looks like spiritual attacks trump physical attacks.

"Something has to change," Salvin muttered with determination. "There's a first time for everything."

He let go of the phantom weapons. They went under Litori's control immediately. It hurt his pride to do it but he is already running away from her so it doesn't hurt as much. It is the first time something like that has ever happened to him. He has been defeated by a single person before but this is the first time someone will steal control of his phantom weapons. His phantom weapons have been robbed from him because he gave them up.

Giving up control of his phantom weapons freed his mind from the stress of the spiritual pressure. He became able to produce more phantom weapons without any mental stress which he did as he ran for his life. He didn't attack her with them but kept them hovering around him. He waited for them to increase in number. They almost reached a thousand before he retaliated. He didn't need to turn around to set his phantom weapons to attack her. They attacked Litori from every direction.

Litori used the phantom weapons under her control to defend herself. Phantom weapons clashed with phantom weapons. The clash broke them and made them useless. The rate at which the phantom weapons broke made it obvious that defending herself so aggressively is a losing battle.

The battlefield has become solely physical. She will have to sprinkle more psionic matter to shift the battlefield but it won't be enough to quickly stop the thousand phantom weapons that are trying to cut her apart. The phantom weapons in her control are less than 50 and she can't even control them as well as Salvin. She became overwhelmed immediately. Only one thing can save her.

"Fuck," Salvin swore when he saw what she did.

Litori is running away. The range of his ability has been suppressed too. It is longer than that of Litori but he still needs her to be within his reach or his phantom weapons will fall apart before reaching her. So he gave chase.

The hunter became the hunted. He harassed her over and over again cutting her down little by little. She tried everything she could do but Salvin is the master of phantom weapons. She was using the slight delay to sprinkle psionic matter but it won't be enough. It will not be nearly enough to cause him any trouble before he kills her.

"I've got you now." He grinned in anticipation.

She is obviously on her last legs. She has been accumulating a lot of injuries and she is close to her limit. He was waiting for victory when her domain suddenly increased in size. Her domain should be shrinking not expanding. That's what should happen when a transcendent is injured and weakening.

"What ugh..." Salvin exclaimed in surprise.

He couldn't even complete his shocked question of inquiry. She was running and he was chasing her. Then all of a sudden he experienced a spike of emotions. Then those emotions erupted through his body like lava in a volcano. The description is very accurate since he is on fire because of it. He looked at the distance between them and it was 110 meters. He should be out of her attack range.

'Unless...'

He managed to put everything together but it is too late. He turned and ran. She expected it too so she followed him closely as soon as he made the decision to run. It was too late for him. Her domain is larger than he thought it was. He can't escape it quick enough to out a safe distance between them.

The only way to survive is to not have any emotions. That's something he can't do even if he can control his emotions. He has been feeling a lot of different things the latest of which is excitement. All his emotions have now turned against him. He shrieked as he died. His emotions became the fuel for the fire that killed him.

Litori didn't smile at her victory. Her face remained the same cold expression that she wears. She had pretended that her domain can only reach 100 meters like everyone else. Salvin thought he had an advantage due to his divine ability. The truth is that she also has an advantage due to her divine ability too and it is more than that of Salvin.

Her domain can extend to 120 meters. It is a secret that she kept as a trump card to use when she is really desperate. She has to sacrifice some of her spirit permanently to achieve this boost in her divine sense. Salvin pushed her to that desperation.

Chapter 663 Two Birds With One Stone.

Litori didn't smile and neither did she feel joy for her victory. But she intends to enjoy looting her dead enemy. She took one step toward the things he left behind before she had to stop. She became alert immediately because she sensed a sudden attack on her. Someone entered her domain and is gaining on her with a weapon poised for an attack.

Litori was stunned. She isn't stunned because someone is taking advantage of her weakened state after a fight. That is common and to be expected. She is stunned because it shouldn't be happening in the first place. Her domain is always up so the person ought to go up in flames. And yet, they are fine and dandy as if immune to the effect of her domain.

She didn't let her surprise distract her though. She attacked them even before they reached her. Using the phantom weapons to defend herself is too cumbersome, stressful, and slow. They will not be fast enough to intercept this person. So she used her spiritual attack. An invisible arrow came out of her eyes and shot forwards toward her assailant.

The arrow struck the person head-on. It did nothing. There was no feedback from the person. There were no emotions to ignite. There is only a cold and steely will to kill Litori. Litori's eyes widened in shock. This has only ever happened once and it means her doom. There's nothing else she can do. 120 meters is very short for transcedents and this person is already 20 meters away.

A spear entered her chest and came out the other end. Litori took a step back both because of pain and shock. She held the spear as she looked at the face of her killer. The person didn't seem happy at having killed her. Their face remained equally cold just like hers.

"Who would have thought that you can extend your divine sense? Salvin surely didn't." The person spoke without inflection. Their voice was cold, without tone or emotion. "I lied too by the way. That's obvious now. Anyway, thanks for killing my brother."

That's what Litori heard before she died. Her body had taken too much damage. Her mind couldn't hold on anymore so her brand activated to save her consciousness from damage. It was only after her body disappeared that her killer smiled. Their placid face rippled and changed as it became overcome with emotions.

Salvini grinned to herself. "Killing two birds with one stone is great. The only thing better is killing three birds with one stone."

She pretended to be weak to Litori. It is part truth and part deception. She is indeed weak to spiritual attacks and the flames of an ephemeral flame wielder. It is just that Litori's attack has a weak spiritual component. What makes her attacks deadly is that it uses emotions as fuel. The weak spiritual attack ignites emotions to create a lethal effect. The spiritual attack itself does almost no damage to its target.

The obvious solution is to eliminate your emotions. Then the spiritual attack won't get a hold on you. Salvini can eliminate her emotions. It is not easy to do especially when you are in a dire situation. Her fight with Litori was dangerous. She could have died if she had stayed around. There was so much going on then that it made it difficult for her to eliminate her emotions. But she survived and had time to meditate and eliminate her emotions.

Her pure bloodline of the first sage grants the control of her emotions. It is very important to be able to keep your mind tranquil when you look into the future. It will prevent you from going mad and fracturing your mind. A cold mind is also good for scheming. It helps to control the fate of people according to your whims without a shred of mercy or pity.

So she is capable of eliminating her emotions and returning for a second round against Litori but she didn't do so. An enemy that you can defeat is not a threat anymore. Instead of going after immediate benefits, she looked to the future for long term gains. She began planning for people that are real threats to her. Some of those people that she can't defeat or overcome are her brothers.

Salvini is the weakest of the three of them. It is a fact that has been tried and tested several times. Salvos can roast her with one move regardless of her ability to see it before it happens. His attacks are undodgeable and unblockable. Salvin can defeat her with his multitudes of phantom weapons. They will attack her from every direction and angle. It doesn't matter if she can see them coming or not. His attacks are blockable but undodgeable in large enough numbers.

Salvini knows that she can't defeat her two brothers. At least, not by herself. That's where Litori comes in. Her spiritual attacks are dodgeable but not blockable. Salvini knows that Litori is lying about the length of her domain. That makes her the right tool to kill Salvin. All she had to do is bring Salvin over to come and fight her. He would certainly do it. To not do it is to admit that he is afraid of Litori.

He certainly won't admit that he is afraid not when Litori has already succeeded in defeating Salvini. Admitting defeat before the battle is to admit that Litori alone is enough to defeat the two of them. How is he to defeat Soverick, his rival, if Soverick's sister is already enough to put him in his place? Pride won't let him give up without a fight.

Even if he is pragmatic enough to admit to his fears it won't happen because of the little things that Salvini said to him. She told him that Litori's limit is 100 meters. He saw and confirmed it with his own two eyes too. Seeing is believing. So he has no reason to doubt it. After all, everyone is limited to 100 meters. Salvin thought that he was special to have a larger domain than everyone else. He had a huge surprise in store for him.

Chapter 664 A Concoction Of Violence.

To be fair, pride isn't what made Salvin fall. He would have surely chosen to retreat if he knew he didn't have a chance against Litori. He would have escaped for his life. Then return with a larger amount of phantom weapons. But he didn't know about Litori's trump card. It is ignorance that doomed him. Ignorance is not a thing that Salvini struggles with. It is a tool to bring about her expected end.

He knew that if her domain were larger then he might lose. That misinformation gave him the confidence of victory since he can't control his emotions. Then there's her saying that he should be careful of her taking control of his phantom weapons.

Suggesting that he be careful of such a thing is an affront to him. He had to fight her there and then to prove that it has never been possible for him to lose control of his phantom weapons and it will never be possible. He fought her and died to her. Then Litori died to her. She used one stone to kill two birds and got half of both their feats.

She didn't turn Litori on Salvos because she knows better than that. Salvos will destroy her with one move. Fortunately for her, Salvos doesn't seem to be in this arena. If he were, his presence will be known by now. People will be hit by his stray attacks all over the place. Fire will be everywhere. Salvos ushers in hell wherever he goes to. Since Salvos isn't here, that leaves these people around her as the next obstacles to achieving her aim in this challenge.

A lot of people have accumulated around the 2nd ring. They came to win the challenge or to watch the fight. They were all blocked from gaining access to the 1st ring but they waited. Their patience was rewarded with the sight of two specialists duking it out. Spiritual attacks went against physical attacks and won. The Salvini jumped in after the fight to end Litori. Litori's reign of terror has ended. The Zeroth ring is now available for the next candidate of the last man standing.

They didn't wait for Salvini to start the fight. Everyone started fighting amongst themselves immediately. Chaos descended in the 2nd and 1st rings. It became a free for all. The 1st and 2nd rings became the

area for fighting for the kings in this arena. The only time they stopped fighting amongst themselves is to gang up on any intruders.

It is like they have an unspoken agreement among themselves. They are not going to allow some random person to take advantage of their fighting and become the last man standing. If anyone is to become the last man standing, it has to be a King.

It will be a disgrace for a normal person to win no matter how talented they are. Kings fought kings and monopolized access to the second ring. They are very strong so they managed to do it easily. Those that aren't kings had to resort to the use of numbers to fight back.

The various armies that tried to use the strength of numbers to overwhelm these best of the best failed terribly. Kings were not chosen lightly by the first sage. But the thing about having numbers on your side is that you don't give up easily. So the armies converged on the kings in a bid to remove them from the challenge.

Even people that aren't part of any army joined in to fight the kings. After all, the kings are the best contenders for the title of the last man standing. They know that is highly unlikely for untalented people like them to win. But they aren't going to make it easy for the kings either.

The only powerful person exempted from the rat race is Soverick. He continued to search for barrier armor. He is very fast so single-target attacks will be easy for him to dodge. He wants assurance against area-of-effect attacks. He wants to be prepared for the combined might of the other kings in the arena. He took his time in searching for protection. There's no rush anyways. It is the last man standing that wins not the person that kills the highest.

It is only the third day of the challenge. There are four more days to go so there's no reason for him to rush. He would rather prepare for whatever he might meet there. The other kings might think he is not in this arena if he doesn't show up early. They will let down their guard and fight amongst themselves. He can then swoop in on the last day to take the win. So he took his time to prepare.

He reached the 1st ring on the last day of the challenge and found only one person waiting for him. This person managed to survive the grand fight fest that took place for more than 3 days to claim the Zeroth ring. He looked around the place and analyzed the mana stream for the events that occurred recently. He was impressed by what he saw.

He is so impressed that he had to clap. He saw the concoction of violence that took place here for what it truly is. His eyes captured the information in the environment and his mind went to work on it. He managed to put together the strings of events. Scenes flashed in his mind according to the order that they occurred. So he isn't fooled at all. He knows she cooked up this outcome.

His clap rang out in the shrunken arena. The two of them are the last ones alive in the arena. All around them are the broken pieces of weapons, armor, and other tools for battle.

"Well done. Indeed, well done. I am impressed."

She smiled at him. "I'm glad you like it Soverick."

He spread his arms wide gesturing to their surroundings, "Nice going."

She bowed and curtsied. "I might have a hand in it. It is nice of you to notice."

Chapter 665 Causality Vs Fate.

Soverick saw it all. A grand free for all took place here and it continued for more than a day. It was a bout of savage bloodthirsty killing. There was a generous use of explosive consumables. Salvini might have had a hand in it. A few words here and there, when she went looking for Salvin, might have riled up some people. Those people might have sworn to try their best to stop her from becoming the last man standing.

It will be payback for how she hunted them in the previous challenge. These people, having learned that they are not enough to kill her because of their failure to do so in the previous challenge, might have recruited the help of a lot of people. They are after Salvini and only her. But the other kings don't know that. All they know is that they won't let some normal person take the title from them so they will fight everyone else that isn't a king.

The kings were ignorant and so they were used as tools in her scheme. But not him. He on the other hand knows that she caused everything. He can't see the future like the sages. But the past is his domain. He can see the flow of events and now everything culminated into this outcome. Causality gives him knowledge. And knowledge gives him power.

He also thinks it will be an understatement to think she had a small hand in it. She successfully muddled the water. Then she swam in it like some aquatic creature. The others are land creatures. They are out of their depth and in a hostile environment while she is right at home. No one noticed until it was too late. Now they are all dead.

"So what next?" He asked her. "Do we fight until the death of one of us?"

Salvini shook her head and answered. "I am afraid that I will lose. I can't see the future whenever you're around or when you're involved."

He nodded in understanding while caressing his blade. "Is that so? Then fuck off."

She obeyed and stepped away from the zeroth ring. "I did all of this for you and I am offering the title to you. I only ask for one thing. I want you to use the power of the child of the plane to kill me. I want my death to be of the highest honor."

Soverick attacked immediately. He used WRAITH OF DEATH: DANCE OF THE SPECTRAL WIND. He swung his blade haphazardly. Arcs of destructive energy were produced by his blade but they didn't travel in the world of manifestation. They traveled through the law matrix and appeared beside Salvini like intangible spectra. They surrounded her from every direction and enveloped her. She died quickly as they tore into her.

He watched her get ripped apart and eliminated but he didn't let his guard down. He watched his surroundings for a trap and made sure that she is really dead before he started walking toward the zeroth ring. Even then he was careful. He inspected his surroundings thoroughly most especially where he is stepping on. His caution is warranted considering who he is up against. He has already gotten half of her feats and he could feel the arena making the changes that are to happen when someone is the last man standing but he didn't let down his guard.

Pride goes before a fall. If he doesn't want to fall, he has to be vigilant and humble enough to admit that he is not invulnerable or all-powerful. There's one word that accurately describes Salvini and that word is snake. She is a snake and she is a very good one too. She is patient and has restraint. She always looks out for long-term goals instead of short-term benefits.

The best time to get him will be when he thinks he has won. She might have set a trap to kill him and rob him of his victory even after her death. It seems far-fetched but he isn't willing to underestimate her. To underestimate someone of the bloodline of the sages is utter foolishness. It is a suicidal move to do that when he knows that Salvini can be more of a psychopath than Litori.

Nothing happened as he waited for the challenge to end. Still, he remained vigilant and will continue to remain so until the challenge ends officially. This entire situation smells of a scheme to him. He was expecting to find a worthy opposition waiting for him here in the 1st ring. Instead, he found a single person.

That isn't odd. It is certainly possible for only one person to survive. That's the aim of the entire competition. But the chances that someone will survive the messy and chaotic fight that took place here are very low. Luck is the most important factor in determining that outcome. But Salvini removed luck from the equation.

She managed to get everyone else killed directly through her fighting skills or indirectly through her guile. She did all of that only for her to seemingly give up the title to him without a fight. It is not a wonder that he will be highly suspicious or think that he might be in an illusion.

The ability to see the future is great. It is the main ability of the first sage. Manipulating the present to get an expected future is what made the sage great. It was not because of his ability that the sage is so revered or why his enemies began calling every member of his race battle sage monkeys. It is the ability to gain power from that ability that made them fearsome.

The ability to see the future gives you knowledge. But knowledge is not power. The correct application of that knowledge gives you wisdom. Wisdom is also a synonym for cunning. Cunning when applied to their every action gives them power. It is not like his use of causality. He doesn't need to be cunning to use the information he has. That is both a strength and a weakness.

Chapter 666 Ignorance Is A Weakness.

The past can't be changed but the future is variable and full of possibilities. He can only use the information he got from causality to make decisions in the present. He is informed about the past but largely ignorant of the future. As for those who use fate, they know the implications of their actions despite being ignorant of the past. But have to anticipate every outcome and prepare for them. Some of their actions don't make sense in the present. But they will become obvious in the future.

The first sage is cunning and so are those with his bloodline. They can't be trusted one bit and you can always be sure of one scheme or more from them. Whatever they do has to have an underlying meaning. Giving up her position and asking for him to kill her with the boost from his title don't make sense to him. But it must have some meaning that he doesn't know about.

'What is her aim?' he asked himself as he walked to the zeroth ring.

He doesn't know what she wants. He is not foolish to think that she did all of this to woo him. To think that is to believe that Salvini is stupidly in love with him and she is anything but stupid. She may really be in love with him or she is faking it, but she is in no way stupid. She must have something she aims to achieve with this.

The only clue that he has is that she planned for the two of them to be the last two. It can be for whatever reason that only she knows about. Then she asked him to use his boost from the plane to kill her. He would be damned if he does that.

It might be that she expected him to do that and wanted him to do it. But that doesn't make sense. It also doesn't matter anyway. He would have killed her no matter what. He doesn't trust whatever she says just like he doesn't trust the first sage. He is doing the Sage's bidding because he is getting something out of it.

One thing is to be expected though. Whatever Salvini does must benefit her one way or the other. The repercussions of her actions might not be immediate but they will certainly come. His ignorance wouldn't change that at all.

'Legion must fix this weakness of ours if it is to become perfect. It is not enough to see the past. Both the present and future must be accounted for. It is my mission to fix this issue. If there is a perfect eye, then I will achieve it.' He promised himself.

Legion aims for perfection and perfection can not be achieved when ignorance of any type remains a weakness. That has to be rectified or any perfection achieved will be meaningless. Fortunately, nothing untoward happened now. The competition ended as soon as he killed Salvini. It took a while for the arena to be changed but it happened. It also happened after he reached the Zeroth ring.

He noticed something as he stood there. There is something written on the blank ground of the zeroth ring. It is written in mana so it will be invisible to others but not to him. Someone left a message for him. That person must have been here in the Zeroth ring and that person must also know that he can see the past.

'This is another reason for me to acquire a way to know everything,' he said to himself.

No one should know what his abilities are. He certainly didn't tell anyone. He even remained hidden ever since he became a transcendent. But the sage found out about it regardless of his secrecy. This message is not from the sage. Which means another person has learned about what his eyes can do. He has some idea about who it is but he is not certain. He needs to be certain about everything. Or he will become a tool to be used by those that are certain.

The cores of the arena finished their synchronization and began to end the challenge. The arena resonated with his brand and a key appeared within it. The key is proof that he won this challenge. It is not the only thing that was given to him. The feats of others that were killed by the arena when they didn't leave the rings quickly enough were given to him too.

It should be easy enough to leave a ring that is to be destroyed before it is destroyed. It is easy in practice but reality shows differently. Most of those killed by the arena were pushed to die that way. Enemies waylaid them and gave them no choice. They can't go forward or backward anymore. It is either that they die to the arena or go forward and die at the hands of their ambushers.

Very few died to the arena through negligence and incompetence. They are all at least transcents so they are smart enough to escape a doomed ring before its destruction. But quite a few chose that method of death voluntarily. They decided not to leave a ring and get killed as it is destroyed. Dying to others will result in a loss of half your feats. They figured that dying to the arena is a loophole that they can exploit. They were wrong. All deaths in the arena will lead to a loss of half of their feats.

All those feats came to him. In addition to the prodigious amount he got from Salvini and the ones he killed himself, he has a total of 321 feats. The feats stayed with him but the key has to leave. He allowed the key to go and trailed behind it with his consciousness. He guided the key to making contact with the small gap in the core of the arena. He didn't do this because of his boundless generosity.

Chapter 667 Problems For The First Sage.

The core of the arena sensed the key and had to accept it. It needs the key before it can join the full network of arenas. So it opened itself despite knowing that he is there waiting for this exact chance to pounce.

Soverick pounced at the vulnerability that appeared. He dug in and tried to break the defense in one fell swoop. His efforts were not enough. The other arena spirits helped in resisting him. He only got halfway through. His progress was delayed by their defense so the key left him behind. Then the vulnerability closed up faster than he could take full advantage of it.

He sighed and said to himself. "This will have to do for now. One more and I'll get my price."

One more victory and he will finally get through the core of an arena and get the knowledge he craves. He is patient enough to wait for it. The arena spirits won't be able to keep him away for long. The law of order within the core will be his when their defense fails the next time he comes calling.

He turned his attention to his environment. He is in a white world even bigger than the arena for the 2nd challenge. All of the arenas are to join with the others for the 3rd challenge. Only the best 3,000,000 of this challenge will be able to move on to the last challenge. He is not the only one in the arena. There are a few others too. They are the last man standing in their own 2nd challenge. The number of people in the arena will increase when the competition starts.

He chose to sit and meditate. He can't go far or interact with others for now so he decided to focus on the core and get as much advantage as he can.

POV OF The First Sage.

He looked at the third challenge. It is the final challenge for the battle sage monkeys before the two races are joined in battle. Battle sage monkeys think it is the 3rd challenge of the competition. They are wrong. This is the last challenge and where the simple competition ends. The fourth challenge is where the major stakes for the two administrators lie. Everything has gone well up to this point. It is here that problems will start to crop up.

The sage watched all the eliminated competitors in stasis. They will be removed from stasis and transported to the combined arena when the third challenge begins. For now, they are above the arena in their various white worlds.

35 arenas passed the first challenge.

The others who failed to kill the rank 10 monster in their arena were sent to keep Salvos company. They missed the opportunity to increase their feats with the second challenge. So none of them can become the last man standing. Their failure to defeat the rank 10 monster in their arena destined them to be fodder for the second and third challenges. It has made it unlikely that they will be able to fight for the side of the battle sage monkeys in the fourth challenge.

For the ones that defeated the rank 10 monsters, they combined with some arenas for the 2nd challenge. Once every group has acquired a last man, then the third challenge will start. All of the arenas of the battle sage monkeys will be combined for the third challenge. That means all 4.5 million battle sage monkeys will compete now in the same arena.

This combination will bring a lot of problems. The first and major problems are caused by Salvos. He has been kept away from the general populace for now. He was alone in the first challenge so he could go all out and he wouldn't disrupt anything important. Then the failures of the first challenge were sent to keep him company for the second challenge. Theirs is not an enviable experience.

Salvo's arena is the largest in the second challenge with the largest number of competitors. 5 arenas were joined together to form a group for the second challenge which makes a total of 7 arenas and 7 people that became the last man standing since only 35 arenas killed the rank 10 monsters. That left the remaining 10 arenas to be combined with Salvo's arena.

His arena is at least double the size of normal ones. He was up against a million other competitors including 10 other kings. Their numbers, opposition, and schemes of any kind were all for naught. He became the last man standing easily enough. Now he will be in the combined arena for the third challenge and everyone will be forced to suffer his existence.

The first problem will be an increase in the amount of collateral damage because of Salvos. Salvos is indiscriminate with his attacks. All the competitors will be at risk of untimely death. That will ruin the balance of the competition.

The second problem here is that Salvos is too strong for his own good. Apart from his existence being unfair to others, a clash between him and Soverick will surely kill one of them. Those two are too dangerous to be taken lightly or to hold back for during a fight. They will attempt to kill each other swiftly and expediently.

It is a pity because the first sage would like to keep them both. Unfortunately, only one person can have the divine crown. Funny enough, it was his idea to make each race choose a divine crown. It was supposed to strengthen one side while weakening the others considerably.

It was an attempt to reduce the prowess of 8 out of the 9 paragons of the Vipers in exchange for strengthening one of them. It mattered because he had to create a champion to lead the battle sage monkeys. Without a champion, then they will surely lose. In a way, the first sage placed all his eggs in one basket with the divine crown and now it has come to bite him in the ass.

Chapter 668 Scheming Is Tricky.

This is all because the sage didn't expect Soverick to be so impressive. Salvos was to be the undisputed leader. But Soverick has risen to the task. It is unfortunate that there can not be two tigers on one mountain. The divine crown that the first sage sought to use to strengthen one battle sage monkey will cause conflict between Salvos and Soverick.

The third problem is the progress that Soverick is making in breaking into the core. It is ahead of time, far ahead of time. The sage expected something like this to happen. He didn't foresee the situation exactly but he knew that it could happen. He expected that something will happen to help Soverick and expedite his gaining access to the core. He is the child of the plane after all.

There's more to being the child of the plane than gaining access to infinite energy. Very few know what else it entails since it is a rarity to encounter. The best person to know what it fully means to be a child of the plane is him the first sage himself since he was also the first child of the Virut plane.

The first sage knows it means to be connected to the fate of the plane in more than energy. The plane will protect him and help him. Two of such help are scrambling the scrying on the child of the plane and the other is supplementary luck.

Soverick won't suddenly become lucky but certain events will take place that will assist him whenever he is doing something that will help the plane. He may not know it himself but the hands of fate do.

An example is having a person that is daring and can project their consciousness out of their body, appear in the same arena as Soverick. This person is perfect to be used as a tool to break the defense of

the arena core. And they came to Soverick themselves to volunteer for the job. One thing or another, would have happened to help Soverick in getting into the core because he is the child of the plane. It is good in a way and also a problem in another way.

It is good in that Soverick will gain knowledge before the fourth challenge. Knowledge is power after all. This will help Soverick in the fourth challenge. The problem is that he won't be able to control Soverick anymore. After all, the knowledge within the core is the only thing that Soverick cares about. The first sage will have to find another bait or reward to encourage Soverick.

'It was not enough after all. I expected it and I have done all I can do. I just hope that all of this is worth it.' The sage sighed and said to himself.

He had to find a way to motivate Soverick without telling him of the real purpose of the challenge. That is one of the clauses the two administrators must adhere to in this competition. They can't tell anyone about the true nature of the competition and its stakes. The competitors must think it is a simple affair. It will prevent them from being of one mind working together.

It was the serpentine world god that made that rule. Vipers don't have problems of division and it wouldn't matter if they do. Their paragons are all that they need. Battle sage monkeys on the other hand have issues with cooperation. They always compete amongst themselves and won't cooperate until they are forced to. That means they will be divided throughout the competition and might eliminate each other.

The first sage would have loved to make acquiring the information in the core easy but he needed something to motivate Soverick and it also couldn't be easy so that the paragons of the Vipers won't be able to do it too. The cores in the arenas of battle sage monkeys are the same as in the arenas of the Vipers. The difficulty had to be set just right so that it is possible to be broken into but it has to be that only Soverick would be able to do it. The first sage did all of this so that his side could win.

Both administrators want to win. To make things fair, the conditions of the two sides are kept the same. That means the Vipers went through everything the battle sage monkeys went through. Unfortunately for the battle sage monkeys, that didn't mean they have the same chances as the Vipers. It is not a matter of skill. The battle sage monkeys have one child of the plane while the Vipers might as well have

Almost nothing can breach that gap. The first sage tried his best with what he has but everything will come crumbling down if Soverick kills Salvos and then refuses to win the competition once he has gotten his knowledge from the core. The first sage would have lost both his first and second choice

without recourse to fall back on. As has been stated before, the first sage placed all his eggs in one basket. It is the recipe for disaster.

The Clash between Salvos and Soverick is inevitable. Salvos is not Salvini. Salvini won't fight a losing battle. She won't even start it at all if she knows she will lose. Salvos can't see the future but he will still fight even if he did. He is one of those stubborn people that will face all opposition. He is like Ghaster except Salvos has always won every fight.

There's no way someone that has only tasted defeat once in his lifetime will back down from competing for the divine crown. Fortunately, the sage has planned for everything. It is just that it might not work. That's why the sage is wary. If it doesn't work, then the battle sage monkeys will surely lose the fourth challenge and he too will lose the bet and what he aims to achieve by winning the bet.

Chapter 669 Who Will Bear The Crown?

The 3rd Challenge.

All the groups finished their 2nd challenge and crowned their last man standing so all the arenas combined to form the largest white world. The people in stasis were woken up and teleported to the arena. Soverick noticed that his black obsidian crown disappeared. Several world spirits appeared and spoke to them. They were saying the same thing in the same voice and at the same time so their voices combined too.

"The 2nd challenge has ended. It is time for the 3rd challenge. The 3rd challenge is titled 'Who bears the crown?' Those of you with crowns will have noticed the disappearance of your crowns. Don't worry, you can get another one. Anyone here has the chance to get a crown and anyone can get any crown."

"There are 5 types of crowns and they represent 5 ranks of designation. From the lowest to the highest, it is bronze, silver, gold, obsidian, and divine crystal crowns. They represent the ranks of commander, general, king, emperor, and divinity."

"The crowns will be scattered throughout the arena and their locations will be highlighted with a beacon so they can not be hidden. You can take any crown. You just have to keep it till the end of the challenge for it to become yours. The challenge will last 1 day."

"The crowns are important for the last challenge. If you can't get a crown, make sure to get a lieutenant slot. They will determine the assistance you receive from the world and what your designation in the army will be. So strive hard and strive well to get a good crown. You have gotten a taste of the assistance of the world in the 1st challenge. You didn't get it in the 2nd challenge but you will get it in this challenge and the next."

"For the 3rd challenge, the amount of world assistance you get is based on the number of feats that you have. The greater the number of feats you have, the more chances you have to secure a crown for yourself. As for the 4th challenge, the crown that you manage to get in this challenge will determine how much power you get from the world."

"This 3rd challenge will eliminate some of you. As it has been stated, only 3 million out of the 4.5 million of you will be allowed to move on to the next challenge. You will be eliminated permanently from the competition if you don't make the 3 million. So try your best to earn higher scores. If you are eliminated, you will be sent back to the plane."

They finished the introduction of the challenge with a question. "We ask you this, WHO WILL BEAR THE CROWN?"

Their voice amplified each other's and echoed through the white world. The world responded to the reverberation and began to change. The ground became hard and rocky. It turned into the surface of a mountain and the sky appeared. Clouds formed in the sky and wind blew across the ground.

Soverick found himself in a large plain between two pyramids. The plain is flat, rocky, and smooth. There is a gold crown on the pyramid to his left and a silver crown on the pyramid to his right. There are also crowns on top of the pyramid in front of him and behind him. These pyramids are very tall and also very far away from him.

Soverick shook his head in wonder. "The arena must be very large."

The arena has become one large rocky plain dotted with pyramids. On each pyramid is a crown indicated by the pillars of light on top of the pyramid. The pillars have the same color as the crowns and they reach the sky so they can be seen from afar. These pillars of light are how he can tell which crown is on the pyramids because the crowns are too small and too far away to see.

The pyramids are small when compared with the size of the arena despite them reaching a thousand meters tall. They are like tiny outcrops on the larger landscape that formed the arena. It is an arena formed out of all of the previous 46 arenas and it contains 4.5 million battle sage monkeys so it is very large.

He checked his brand for his personal information and for information about the third challenge. His brand has been updated with the guidelines of the third challenge so it is important for him to update himself on the rules and regulations. He checked his progress too.

His brand flashed with his updated information.

NAME: Soverick Ghastorix.

POWER: 0.

DESIGNATION: NONE

SCORE: 145,893,731

RANK: 9

FEATS: 321

His score has increased by about 90 million but he has been demoted from being number 1 out of all 4.5 million of them. It is because he didn't kill a lot of competitors during the second challenge. He was a picky killer then. He only killed those with feats. He didn't kill as much as Salvin, Salvini, and Salvos. If not for the fact that those with feats have high scores then he won't be in the top 10 at all. Salvos himself nearly killed a million competitors so he is number 1.

He was interrupted from inspecting his brand by a strange event. A portion of the Arena turned completely red as if saturated with fire. This portion happened a great distance from his location but he can see it. It is a very visible event. The sky and everything between it and the ground turned into a burning hell. No one can miss that.

His gaze hardened. He muttered grimly, "Salvos."

What he just saw can only be caused by one person according to his knowledge. Only Salvos can output so much power and damage everything with reckless abandon. Anyone, anywhere, can get attacked without notice. Salvos will be a great threat to him and everyone else in this challenge.

Chapter 670 Nowhere To Hide.

He returned his attention to his brand after the fire died down. He noticed that his crown and the designation that comes with it had been removed. He will have to work to acquire one in this challenge. It will be easy to do since he has 321 feats. There are at most 7 other people with around the number of feats that he has. They are the ones that can match him in the amount of assistance he gains from the world in this challenge. They will be his competitors for the divine crown.

"What do I do now?" He asked himself after looking through his brand.

There is only one divine crown. It is the most important crown and it is unique. As for the rest, there are 2 emperor crowns, 5 king crowns, 10 general crowns, and 100 commander crowns. All of them have keys but with varying strengths. The divine crown has the largest key and most powerful key. It will have the highest benefit for his pursuit of knowledge.

The key of the divine crown will be able to create the biggest vulnerability within the defense of the core. It should be clear what he should do and what he should aim for. He would have done it without a question had he not seen Salvini's message that she left for his eyes only. She was the one that wrote the message within mana that he found in the Zeroth ring of the previous challenge.

"I'll try my best. The rest is up to him. I will not give up my chances for nothing." He said and started running in the direction of the rainbow pillar.

The rainbow pillar is the beacon of the divine crown. Unlike other crowns, this beacon is calling out to others. It might have something to do with the mesmerizing colors of the pillar and the way they dance. It has a luring effect on the competitors.

The effect is not powerful. It wouldn't suddenly make someone who has common sense to try and claim the divine crown when common sense states that they should run away from it. The luring effect will only work on those who are undecided about pursuing the divine crown. They don't have common sense so it will tip the scale for them to do something stupid like trying to get the divine crown.

The divine crown is meant for the best. Which in Soverick's opinion, should be him. There are other people who believe that they should be the ones to get it and there are others who think they can get it if they are lucky enough. The fools who believe in luck will be the most affected by the calling of the rainbow and they will make up about 97% of the competitors for the divine crown.

He can't fly so he has to run. He ran in the direction of the divine crown while he contemplated his current situation and the obstacles he might face.

The assistance of the world during this challenge didn't make him stronger. It didn't remove the suppression of his power or remove the bans on levitation. Feats mean more chances to fight for a crown after death.

His 321 feats mean that he has 9 extra lives. He will be respawned every time he dies and he will lose half of his feats for each death. His feats will reduce from 321-161-80-40-20-10-5-3-1-0 which each death. 9 extra lives mean that he has 10 chances to get a crown. That's the advantage that feats are granting him. Those without feats will die once and be taken away by their brand.

He won't be eliminated easily in this challenge. It gives him a high chance of getting the divine crown. Things seem pretty good for him but he is not so sure about it.

He shook his head and muttered, "This cannot be easy."

It all seems very easy to him. The last person standing in the previous challenge gets two major advantages in this competition. They are the only ones that get to keep their weapons and whatever they had on them by the end of the challenge. The rest don't get anything. Then there's the number of feats that the last man standing gets. It gives them a lot of chances.

Those advantages are rewards for proving that they are the best in their Arena or at least, the luckiest. But why would people who are supposed to be the best need several chances? The feats they got didn't give them power. It gave them the opportunity to make mistakes.

If someone managed to become the last man standing, the odds are that person is very skilled. He, for example, is very skilled and he doesn't need many chances to respawn. He has never died in this competition and he also has the advantage of a high-quality weapon which makes his death even more unlikely. So why will he need the opportunity to return after death?

Either this challenge is not as simple as it looks to him or the chance to respawn indicates the importance of those with feats as compared to those without feats. It could also be both. There might be some hidden difficulty he is unaware of.

There are some obvious points of difficulty in the challenge. The first problem is decision-making and sticking with it. You have to choose an aim and try for it. The aims of this competition are the crowns. If you're unlucky and you are too late to get a particular crown that you are aiming for, then you have to be chasing after it.

There won't be only one person chasing after a crown. There is a limited number of crowns compared to the 4.5 million amount of people. That is the second problem. If you're the first one to get the crown, you have to keep it till the end of the challenge. The beacon on the crown will ensure that your position will be constantly known and people will chase you from every direction. You will have nowhere to hide as long as you carry a crown.