

Hero King 221

[Son of the Hero King](#)

Chapter 221: CH 196: WELCOME TO YOUR TRUE HOME (1)

"Now that I think about it, you still didn't tell me why there is a Tower of Babel in Lustburg."

"Your ancestor was a funny mortal. Like your father, he also entered the Dragon's territory after his awakening."

"Oh? Who did he form a contract with?"

Kiyohime shook her head, "Ladon[1]. One of Hydra's children."

Hydra was one of the four Dragon Kings in this territory, and back then, Ladon had been his first son and also the most talented of his children. It was honestly a surprise back then when it happened.

'Ladon...'

In his memory, Ladon was a dragon that appeared in the myth of Heracles. It was a dragon with hundred heads, and a powerful poison who had a duty to protect the golden apple.

'Well, Hydra is also from Heracles' myth.'

A nine-headed snake, or dragon with powerful poison and extremely powerful regeneration power. To the level, it was thought to be immortal - at least everyone thought so until Heracles killed it.

'Come to think of it...'

He also remembered the myth behind Kiyohime - one not particularly pretty. If it was to be summarized, Kiyohime could be said to be the Yuno Gasai of medieval Japan.

Fell in love with a guy because said guy made a joking promise of marrying together.

Chased after the guy when he began running away after realizing the girl was batshit crazy.

Transformed into a dragon-snake with god-like power and ended up killing her beloved - then killed herself.

In the end, because of some prayer from a monk, her soul, and the guy's soul went together in heaven.

In a way, Sol really wondered if Yuno wasn't inspired by Kiyohime. Unfortunately, he would never get the answer.

'Well, I really hope the Kiyohime in front of me doesn't have the extreme yandere power of the one from earth. If not, I really pray for the poor sucker that will get her attention.'

Shaking his head, he asked, "So Jupiter created the tower after coming back from here?"

"Yes. He created that Tower to show his aspiration towards godhood. In the end, he forgot himself and died after getting besieged during his last war."

Since Jupiter was the first human blessed of the new era, many people had been curious about how he would end up.

It had to be said that the results had been mitigated. It was hard to say whether he succeeded or failed. But at the very least, he didn't leave a particularly good impression in the mind of most.

“What about Ladon?”

“He died. Siegfried[1] killed him during the war against opposing humans to elves.”

Kiyohime sighed. She wondered if dragons and Lusturg had some bad destiny. But even so, she felt no sadness at Ladon's death.

Siegfried was the brother of Satella Superbia[2] and was one of the rare beings recognized as a singularity.

Back then, Ladon had gone completely crazy after Jupiter died. Siegfried had no other choice than to kill him in order to put him to rest. This was why no one really blamed him.

Furthermore, Ladon had managed to become a dragon king after killing and eating many young dragons. It was a crime worthy of thousands of deaths, and if Siegfried hadn't killed him, then she would have done so herself.

Refusing to think more about that utter piece of trash, she faced Isis and the others, "I don't know who out of you all will form a contract with Sol but I need to remind you that the first contract isn't a game. You are putting everything in line. Don't sign it if you don't have the resolve necessary."

Kiyohime was not trying to sound alarmist. She just didn't want them to enter a commitment they knew nothing about.

Silence filled the elevator because of the heavy tension behind her words.

Until...

Ding!

The door of the elevators opened, showing two men clad in full armor, standing proudly with spears in their hands.

The two men seemed shocked at the sight of Nent, and frowned a little when they felt Isis' energy, but in the end, they stayed completely silent.

"You should remember them, right? Follow them."

Kiyo did not turn around as she addressed Nent.

"Heh! I don't need any servants to guide me. I still remember where your palace is. Let's go girls."

Nent strutted out of the elevators with the others and left.

"Take care, Sol."

On her way, Isis sent a small encouragement to Sol and took Sekh with her before leaving.

After the door closed and the elevator proceeded to go higher,

“What kind of person is Tiamat?”

"Call her big sis. Haha. As for how she is, it will be for you to find out, don't you think?"

Kiyohime showed a gentle smile. It could be easily seen that she had become way more relaxed after Nent left.

Sol was really curious about their relationship. But he wasn't curious enough to poke in what was an obvious deep wound.

"It will take some time to reach the Ninth Heaven. Would it bother you if we talked a little?"

"I have nothing against this."

Like this, during the short ride, the two of them became a little closer as they shared some small stories about their childhood.

None of them talked about any deep secrets, but those small stories were enough to give insight into each other's personalities.

Kiyohime on one hand was happy about what she was seeing. After he failed to show any reaction about the story of Babel, she had been a little worried about having to work with a hard case.

But it seemed that she had jumped the gun too fast.

'I should stop trying to understand him with just pieces of information.'

She had recognized that because she was so eager to meet him, any of his mistakes were magnified greatly and she had overanalyzed his actions.

As his future teacher, this way of thinking and acting was not conducive to a good development. Thankfully, she had managed to understand this sooner rather than later.

When the elevator finally stopped, Kiyome faced Sol and gave him a nod.

"The tower will open directly to a corridor. Follow it until the end and you will reach the throne room."

"You are not going to follow me?"

"No. Mother wishes to meet you alone."

Kiyohime shrugged and moved to the side to let Sol get out. After that, she waved her hand.

"Don't worry about coming back since you don't have authorization to access the tower yet. Mother will take care of it."

"Understood. Well then, see you later."

"See you."

Now alone, Sol took a deep breath and began walking as he was instructed.

The corridor was one filled with pictures of what looked like a depiction of a war. Giant human-like figures fighting against giant monsters or human figures with wings. Fighting in the sea, in the sky, or in a volcano.

The more he advanced, the more brutal the war depicted seemed to become. At the same time, most of the winged men had vanished and were replaced by more monsters. He could also see what looked like dragons finally appearing on the battlefield.

When Sol finally stopped in front of the large black and white gate, Sol saw a picture carved that jolted his memory.

A woman with fourteen girls behind her, all of them wearing golden robes on the white side of the gate, facing them was another woman wearing a bright red robe on the black side of the gate. Every one of them had no face, giving the scene a strange, creepy atmosphere.

This was the same picture as the one in the church[3]. Though there were a few differences.

On the black side...The red robed woman was not alone.

'I can't see it.'

No matter how Sol squinted his eyes, he could not see the figures carved next to Chaos.

"Don't bother. The goddesses had not been happy when I carved this picture. It's a shame for them after all. No one aside from those who participated in the war can see those pictures."

A feminine voice full of ridicule and conceit filled his ears. Since there was only one person living here, Sol did not have to guess who it was.

'So it finally came to this.'

Taking away his eyes from the carvings, Sol finally pushed open the gate and for the first time, saw the one he had heard so much about...Tiamat.

All this time, Sol had been wondering what the Mighty Tiamat sounded like.

There were so many legends, so many tales about her power. Since she was also his grandmother, he had been wondering how their first meeting would go.

The moment Sol opened the large door and his eyes landed on the woman arrogantly sitting on the throne, all thoughts vanished from his mind. It was as if all he could see was her and her alone and the conclusion that came was simple.

'What a monster...'

Sol gulped while cold sweat covered his face.

Tiamat has long, waist-length hair as black as the darkness of space. The top of her hair was tied up with an intricate gold hairpin with a pale blue tassel hanging from one end. Her right eye was of a deep golden, while her left eye was covered by a red eyepatch. Golden dragon-shaped earrings that matched with the color of her eyes and hairpin were dangling in the air.

On her body, all she was wearing was a bright red qipao with side slits going up to her hips and the chest area cut out, showing off her deep cleavage. Many golden anchor motifs could be found scattered around her outfit, on the front of her qipao dress, forming what looked like the head of a golden dragon roaring.

Finally, her beautiful dainty legs were uncovered and unprotected as she wore no shoes.

The moment Sol entered the room, her face lit up with a dazzling but predatory smile, making his hair stand straight.

Tiamat was undoubtedly a beautiful woman.

But at this moment, her beauty was completely overshadowed by the fierce aura she was emanating.

The distance separating them was only a few meters, but Sol felt as if the distance between them seemed to stretch toward infinite.

When he finally took his first step into the room.

Bam!

‘So. Fucking. Heavy!’

The gravity in the room was completely at another level.

He couldn’t breathe. His organs felt as if they were about to burst.

He couldn’t move. He felt like the world itself was pressing down on him.

Still—he refused to kneel down and admit defeat.

The color of his eyes began to change. Going from the normal blue to deep gold and black.

Beautiful golden scales formed on his body, and his normal horns also appeared.

“Oh!?”

Tiamat opened her eyes wide in surprise.

She had not been trying to test Sol. The gravity in the room was the one she was most used to and found herself the most comfortable with.

At the same time, it was a way she used to tease her children whenever they wished to meet her.

Because of this, she had completely forgotten to lower it when Sol entered and had been ready to dispel it when he nearly caved in.

Still...

‘Hahaha~! what an interesting boy.’

She dispelled the idea the moment she saw him change form and straighten his back as walked toward her.

Watching him take one step after another, and adapting so easily to a level of gravity most adult dragons couldn’t even support, she felt a mixture of emotions - happiness, pride, and sad nostalgia.

It was as if she could remember the picture all those years ago, when her little adorable daughter, Blaze had shown her that she wasn’t just a mischievous child and that she had her own pride.

'Blaze, you really had a fine son.'

Her previous predatory smile changed into one full of warmth and care when Sol finally stopped a few steps away from her.

Standing up, she covered the small distance separating them and hugged a bewildered Sol tightly.

"Welcome back home, Sol. I am happy to finally meet you."

Son of the Hero King

Chapter 222: CH 197: WELCOME TO YOUR TRUE HOME (2)

"Welcome back home, Sol. I am happy to finally meet you."

Sol, who didn't expect such a warm welcome from someone he never met, was surprised. After all, it would have been stupid of him to think that he would be well treated just because he was related by blood.

If things were so easy, fratricide would not have been the second sin in the bible. He was even further surprised by what happened next.

"Firstly, I'd like to apologize, I didn't really try to test you earlier. Are you alright? You are not hurt, are you?"

Sol was completely bewildered and couldn't help but become suspicious.

'Is she really Tiamat?'

He knew that he shouldn't believe hearsay and rumors but, the difference between what he knew of Tiamat and what she was showing was simply too much.

'Well, everyone shows different faces to different people.'

He did not know if Tiamat was really worried or only acting but, for now, he was willing to believe in her.

"I am alright, don't worry. I guess I have let my pride get the best of me. It's just that I seem to be tested every time I meet someone new. So I misunderstood."

Sol really wondered when the day would come where he didn't have to prove anything to anyone anymore. Sadly, this day still seemed far away.

Smiling in relief, Tiamat caught him by the arm and pulled him toward the inner office hidden behind the throne.

"Now then, tell me everything that happened to you. I want to know about you as much as possible."

While Sol and Tiamat were catching up, Nent was leading up her small group while following the two guards.

Looking around, an expression of nostalgia flashed before being swiftly extinguished.

What happened between her and Kiyō was something out of her own choice. She had no right to play the victim in such a situation.

"Oh!? Nent, is that you?"

'Oh hell.'

All her contradictory emotions vanished and were replaced by a powerful headache.

"Who is he?"

She ignored the floating midget and turned to face the source of the voice.

It was a handsome scarlet-haired man seemingly in his late twenties clad in a black suit, black pants, and a white shirt.

Behind him was a younger-looking male with long black hair and an eye patch on his right eye.

Showing a stiff smile, Nent greeted the man.

"Fafnir...How have you been?"

Fafnir's eyes lit up with joy as he walked with his arms opened wide,

"Nent! I am glad to see you! Did you come to meet me!?"

Nent avoided the hug, to the surprise of Fafnir, and answered,

"Fafnir. While we were once in courtship and could have become mates. Talk about relationships stopped after I became estranged with most divine beasts so avoid excessive displays of affection."

At the end of the day, Nent was still a phoenix. No matter how she changed, she valued her virtue very deeply and since she had given herself to Sol, then he would be the only man in her life.

Though this was another source of headache. Fafnir was not a bad man and in fact, was very tolerant of a dragon. Still, no matter how calm and gentle he was, Nent could not imagine how he would react if he learned that she was now his Nephew's mate.

'How could I have forgotten about him?'

Fafnir on the other hand showed an expression of surprise at the cold rebuke of Nent.

He remembered that she had been courting him because of her plan to give birth to a powerful hybrid.

Though she stopped contacting him after a while, a few hundred years to beings with long lives as them were the equivalent of just a few months for mortals so it was no big deal.

'Weird.'

While Fafnir was bewildered, the young man's eye flashed with disgust as he looked at Isis before he addressed Fafnir.

"Grandfather, who might they be?"

"Oh. Look at me."

Shaking his head, he introduced the young man, "Nent. Here is my youngest grandson. Kaiser."

Nent, tilted her head, deep in thought before asking,

"The one with the Empress' Eye?"

Fafnir showed an expression of surprise before it was replaced by pride as he nodded.

"Indeed. He inherited a part of the power of foresight that belongs to mother."

Most dragons had no particular abilities similar to Tiamat. This was why any of them that did were particularly respected and seen as young talents that were worth nurturing.

"Heh, is that something impressive!?"

Kaiser's expression crumbled and shot a look at the Fairy that was showing a clueless expression.

"Are you mocking me?"

If it wasn't because he recognized that she should be a fairy from the territory of the World Tree, he would have become even angrier.

"Huh? Nononono! I am a huge fan of dragons, you know!? It's just... I mean... Hum... Sol is a dimensional mage and a chaos Dragon...Right? Isn't that wayyy more awesome?"

Looking at the expression on both Kaiser and Fafnir's faces, Nent and Isis realized that sometimes, innocence was the greatest weapon.

Fafnir and Kaiser were not the only ones that received a huge surprise.

Tiamat was listening to Sol and could only stop him hurriedly when he mentioned his awakening,

"So you mean to say that you awakened as a Dimensional Mage and a Chaos Dragon, albeit a downgraded one?"

"That's right."

Sol had absolutely no intention to hide his power from Tiamat. For one, he needed her permission to open his dimension in her territory. Furthermore, who would be better than the strongest dimensional mage below the level of goddesses to teach him how to use his own dimension.

Hearing him confirm it, Tiamat did not show the expected happiness but rather frowned deeply while muttering,

"I guess they weren't just playing around with those tests."

"...What do you mean?"

Even though she did not speak loudly, it was impossible for him to miss her mutter and she had no reason to hide it from him.

"You should already know that there are many rules in this world. One of those rules is one of equivalent exchange. Well, it isn't exactly equivalent, but you cannot win without paying a price. That rule is absolute.

If the goddesses had given you everything without having paid a price, it would have been the equivalent of you taking a big debt with a high-interest rate from a loan shark called Fate. Of course, you can guess that your end would be miserable.”

Tiamat gave a simple explanation and shrugged, “Fate is a bitch. We divine beasts are born with great power but in exchange, the limit of our power is already fixed. This is the price we have to pay. Blessed are born with heaven-defying luck, but their fate will always be an early death. That’s the price you have to pay.”

She shook her head at this sad truth and at the same time couldn’t help but think of Satella.

The poor girl was stuck at the level of King, even though she had the potential to become a demi-god.

At the same time, this was the reason why she was still alive even after so long. By not becoming a demi-god she had broken the control Fate had on her in a certain way. One could even say that she was a pseudo-singularity.

But Sol?

She gnawed her lips in frustration.

‘So this is why I feel the shadow of death on him.’

Sol was talented. Excessively so. This made the situation all the more worrisome. She could not see what would happen to him exactly, but whatever it was, it was impossible for him to survive it at his current level.

“Sol, tell me, are you a Duke now?”

“No, why?”

A sharp glint flashed through her eyes before she began to laugh as if she had gone crazy.

‘Ah~! Fate is truly unfathomable. Were those goddesses even able to predict this?’

No, she did not think so. But what did it matter? In the end, all she could do was thank this loathsome Fate for having given her a chance.

But...Should I observe him more?

From what she had just seen, Sol was truthfully a fine young man. Though he lacked some worldly experience. Still, this was not enough to have an opinion on his personality.

‘Let’s prepare everything first.’

“Tiamat?”

“Call me big sis.”

“...”

“...”

“Okay~Sigh. Big sis....”

“Umu. You want to ask why I am laughing?”

“Yes.”

“I am just laughing at how helpless we are when we can't help but act like moths drawn toward a flame.”

“...”

“It doesn't matter now. It's still too soon to speak about it. I will tell you everything once I have straightened everything in my mind. Meanwhile, I will have to arrange your stay.”

She closed her eyes and thought for a while before finally facing Sol,

“Before everything, there is something I want to make clear. Sol...Do you really wish to become strong?”

“...Why the sudden question?”

“Because you do not need to. I am sure that all your life, you had to live under the expectation of others. Some wanted you to be strong. Some wanted you to be wise. Many should have wished for you to become like your father.”

“...”

“Even now, from what I understand, you act mainly to protect your family. You entered the astral world in order to save someone dear to you.”

“...”

“There's nothing wrong about wishing to fight for your loved ones. Many people managed to reach great heights with such convictions and I am sure that this will be the same for you. But...Is it really alright?”

She shook her head, “To become strong is not just a question of power but also of mindset. You cannot become strong just because someone wants you to. You should not become strong because you think others need you to.

Only by wishing to become strong out of your own volition, for your own very interest can you become truly strong and face all adversities.”

“Like this, if you ever fail and fall down. You cannot blame anyone for it, nor can you rely on anyone to help you stand up. You will have to grit your teeth and bear everything. Because the road of the strong is always filled with thorns.”

Standing up, she ruffled Sol's hair and gave a gentle smile, “I talked so much but in the end what I want to say is simple.”

“Sol...You do not have to become strong. You do not have to bear everything on your shoulder nor do you need to walk a thorn-filled path.”

Sol looked deeply at Tiamat, her words resounding deep in his heart as he asked with a hoarse voice.

“Why?”

“Why? Simple. Because you are my grandson and—”

Her warm smile was replaced by a lofty one full of undisputed pride,

“ —I am the strongest.”

Son of the Hero King

Chapter 223: CH 198: BITTER FEELINGS

"I have decided to open the Blood Pool and the Summoning Room for Sol."

At Tiamat's words, an uproar sounded in the room, even Kiyohime could not hide the shock on her face.

It had already been a few hours since Tiamat's discussion with Sol.

After saying everything she had to say, Tiamat had not allowed him to answer just yet. She did not want to listen to a hurried response, but rather one that was carefully thought of.

Of course, she knew what choice he would make in the end but this simple act was necessary as a way for him to reaffirm his beliefs.

Since the conclusion was already set in stone, Tiamat had decided to prepare everything on her side and called the Highest Assembly, which was composed of her eight remaining children and the twenty most powerful dragons aside from her direct children.

“Empress...please! Isn't this a little too much!?”

In the end, one of the elders couldn't help but shout. Even though his reaction seemed a little exaggerated, no one stopped him.

As the name said, the Blood Pool was a pool filled with blood - but not just any blood. It was the blood of all the dragons who fell in the war, mixed with Tiamat's own blood.

This pool was used to baptize the body of dragons who had made enough contributions for the race, and some of them could even obtain rare skills that belonged to those who died.

Of course, those inheritances were normally limited and incomplete. The best example was Kaiser who 'only' obtained partial foresight.

As for the summoning room, it was a room that recorded all dragons that had reached the Duke level or more.

When activated, the room allowed the one who entered to face the ones that were recorded. The summon worked like an AI that had the personality and habits of their original counterpart.

This room was one of the reasons dragons were so strong since they could repeatedly face their predecessors and learn how to maximize their talents.

The problem was that the room used an astronomical amount of faith coins, so much that even the rich dragons could only open it a few times every decade.

In the end, it was decided that the room would be used jointly for all young dragons in one go, as long as they made the cut after a high number of strident tests.

Now though, Tiamat was saying that she would use those resources for Sol, despite the fact that he just came here.

After one of them complained, the others slowly followed, but the eight main children still stayed silent.

It wasn't because they had no complaints. It was just because they knew how useless complaining was.

As they thought this, an overwhelming pressure filled the room as Tiamat's cold voice resonated in their ears,

"It seems like there's some deep misunderstanding about the current situation — When did I ever ask for anyone's approval?"

It was like a cold winter wind swept through the room.

All the elders shuddered as they awakened from their stupid disillusion.

This wasn't a democratic state.

Their inputs held no weight.

The only reason Tiamat even created this council was for them to deal with most of the administration she found bothersome.

In the end, the absolute power of decision was and would always be in her hands.

As if to drive it in their minds, the atmosphere became even more suffocating while her eyes shone with an eerie light as she looked at all of them.

"It seems like my nearly twenty years of absence made you forget the reality."

She smiled,

"Listen well. Discussion and compromise only happen between equals. You are not my equal. Therefore—shut up and obey. If you aren't happy, then fight me and win. Simple, right?"

Someone gulped.

Yes.

How could they have forgotten?

This was the Dragon Empress.

The one and only who could stand above all of them with absolute pride and absolute power.

Her whims were the rules and her words were the laws.

Looking at the depressed face of everyone, Kiyohime sighed and gave a bitter smile.

'I feel like Blaze is back.'

This wasn't the first time such a situation happened. When Blaze was alive, the number of resources at her disposal was completely out of the chart.

When she made trouble wherever she went, Tiamat would always shield and protect her. It was really a wonder how Blaze didn't become an arrogant and stupid child.

If she had to be honest, she did not care whether or not Sol got those precious resources. But, she couldn't just stay silent,

"Mother. I understand your position. But please, do not place your anger on them. They only wish the best for the dragon race as a whole."

"Heh, are you implying that, unlike them, I do not care for our race?"

Kiyohime shook her head, "We exist because of you. Our everything is yours to do as you fit. But...We are not puppets. We also have feelings and none of us would feel happy seeing Sol get so much without doing anything in exchange."

Tiamat leaned down on her throne and looked at Kiyohime with interest.

'You have really grown up well.'

"What do you propose?"

"As you said, compromise only exists between equals. We cannot and will not stop you from giving those resources to Sol. But...What if even after all that he shows no results?"

"Such as?"

"The fight for the title of prince. If after getting those resources he is still unable to become a prince, then I suggest that the winner get the same resources Sol obtained."

"Ohoh..."

This was a very interesting proposal. In short, whether he succeeded or failed did not really matter since Sol would have already obtained all those resources.

This way, Tiamat was happy, and Sol was happy.

If he won, it would prove his worth and the elders would be happy.

If he lost, someone worthy would get the resources and the elders would still be happy.

In short, everyone would be happy.

Tiamat mulled a little. She had absolutely no obligation to accept this proposal.

But Kiyohime was her daughter and the one who ruled the dragons in her stead. She had no desire to affect her dignity.

But, more importantly, she knew that the chances of Sol losing were close to none.

That child was simply a monster of talent. Once he received the perfect resources and the correct training, his potential would explode spectacularly.

If despite all that he still lost to some brat in the Duke class, then he should just commit suicide out of shame.

The heavy atmosphere vanished when Tiamat nodded, "Very well, I accept your proposal. Now, everyone, leave. I wish to be alone."

"Good job, big sis!"

After coming out of the room, Fafnir laughed loudly and took the small Kiyohime in his arms.

"How many times did I tell you to not treat me like a child!?"

"Ugh!"

Fafnir groaned and let go of Kiyohime before slowly slumping on the ground while holding his crotch.

"Haha. Be careful, you know his only redeeming value is his virility."

A stunning woman wearing only bandages as clothes smiled, looking down at Fafnir.

"Welsh, you have been strangely silent during the reunion."

Welsh, the fire dragon, one of the four dragon Kings, shrugged her shoulders in response.

"You know very well that you are the only one who can speak to mother when she is angry."

Welsh was brash and also one of the most prideful dragons, but not even she dared to raise her head when Tiamat was angry.

After all, Tiamat was never above administering an epic beating to anyone who stood up to her.

Kiyohime sighed and looked at Fafnir, "Stop playing. I know I didn't hurt you that much."

"Hahaha" Giving a sheepish smile, Fafnir stood up.

"I am just very happy. After all, you just gave a great opportunity to Kaiser."

"*Snort* You think that little pup, Kaiser, is the one who will win?"

A slim man with a mask on his face snorted as he gently punched Fafnir on the shoulder.

"Hydra, you want to bet?"

Hydra, the poison dragon, and the fourth King gave a mysterious smile, "You seem to forget Nidhogg. I sent her to the territory of Yggdrasil for her training. But I will call her back."

Fafnir scowled. Nidhogg was a very talented child. She neither inherited the powerful body nor the powerful magic of the dragons.

What she inherited was a poison so powerful and dreadful that Hydra found calling himself the poison dragon shameful.

Because of how deadly she was, she was generally forbidden from participating in any competitions. But the one for the title of prince was obviously different, exempted from such a regulation.

The other four princes entered the discussion while everyone boasted about their children or grandchildren with passion.

In the end, though, it was Fafnir who poured cold water on everyone's enthusiasm.

"Kiyohime, I heard that Sol inherited a dimensional magic and chaos body. Is it true?"

Kiyohime did not know how to answer as she was equally shocked.

"From whom did you hear that?"

The others stayed silent as they were too shocked by the revelation Fafnir threw.

"Nent, or more precisely, a little fairy that was with her."

Kiyohime furrowed her before sighing,

"If Nent did not refuse the statement of that fairy, then it's most likely true."

They all looked at each other and showed thoughtful and bitter expressions, "I guess even in the afterlife, Blaze is surpassing us."

It was the bitter truth.

Blaze was the first dragon after Tiamat to ever be born with a Chaos Body. This was one of the reasons Tiamat loved her so much.

As if it wasn't enough, her first and only child also inherited the Chaos Body and even went further by becoming a Dimensional Mage.

None of them hated Blaze, but that didn't mean that the truth hurt less.

In the end, Fafnir shrugged, "I could never win against Blaze. As such, I will do my best so that Kaiser wins against her son."

He expressed the feelings of everyone as he walked away.

Now, it wasn't just a matter of profit — but of pride.

[Son of the Hero King](#)

Chapter 224: CH 199: BITTER FEELINGS (2)

In the room where the meeting took place, Tiamat, now alone, fixed her gaze on the corner of the room and asked,

"What did you think?"

The air shimmered and the space warped as Sol seemed to slowly walk out of a rippling portal.

"You are really going all out. What if I decided to not become someone strong and just relied on you?"

Tiamat simply shrugged, "Then I would happily take care of you. I have hundreds of grandsons and great-grandsons. For me, taking care of one more wouldn't matter."

Sol looked deeply at Tiamat. He wasn't the best at reading emotions and he doubted he could crack the facade of a ten thousand years old being.

His instincts were telling him to believe in her, that she was honest.

“Well, forget about this. What I am really curious about is your Dimension. It’s more powerful than I thought.”

Standing up, Tiamat appeared next to him and began to walk in circles around him, observing him closely.

Earlier, she had opened the dimensional wall in this room to allow Sol to access his dimension. She initially thought that it was just a minor dimension, but it was clear that she had been wrong.

“What did it look like on the other side? Did it look like the mortal realm or this place?”

“This place.”

“Ohoh...”

‘The mirror dimension, was it?’

It seemed that his dimension was a reflection of whatever place he was in.

‘Then, does he have the ability to create a reflection of whatever place he is in or...does he only have access to a small part of his dimension depending on the place he is in?’

This was a very important question. If it turned out to be the former, it would be a powerful ability — a very powerful one.

But the latter?

It would be downright scary.

It would mean that Sol’s dimension was essentially the reflection of the whole universe. Even if he could only access a limited part initially, the more he grew the larger that part would be.

Once he became a demi-god, he could easily become the strongest ever.

‘No...why stop at simply being a demigod?’

She understood that the goddesses had always wished to create a true god. They had tried with the divine beasts, but it was impossible.

Becoming a god meant embracing a concept and fusing with it. In essence, there could be only one god for whatever concept.

Then what about divine beasts?

From the get to go, they were born with a fixed concept. Tiamat, as the Beast of Pride, already had the concept of Pride and her only path to godhood was to become the Goddess of Pride, which was impossible as long as Superbia was alive.

The problem lies here though — gods could not die.

‘What a shame.’

[Tiamat!]

Ignoring the cry of outrage in her head, Tiamat focused on Sol again.

“Sol, do you know what you are now?”

“What?”

“A rough jewel.”

“...”

“No. Simply calling you a rough jewel is an insult to your talent. You are like an entire mine full of the most precious metal in the world. But—That’s all you are.”

Tiamat said as she looked straight into his eyes.

“Thankfully, from the way you walk and the flow of your energy, I can tell you have encountered skilled people who were able to excavate some of your talents. Sadly this isn’t enough. Not enough at all. You should be much more powerful than you are now if you could use your talents to their fullest.”

The look in her eyes grew harder, “Sol, I can accept many things. But what I hate the most are people who take back their words. If you choose to stand back behind me, I promise to protect you with all my strength. No matter how many rules I have to break or how many enemies I have to face, I will keep you safe. This is my vow to you.

But, if you want to stand on your own. If you want to truly become strong. Then, I will invest my knowledge and resources into shaping you as the strongest there is — even stronger than me.”

“...”

“Then Sol, let me ask you. Do you wish to become strong?”

Sol smiled. In the first place, there had never been another choice. If he only wished to be taken care of, he would have just stayed in the mortal realm.

“I wish to become strong.”

“Even though it will hurt? Even though you might face death multiple times?”

“Yes.”

“I see...” Tiamat closed her eyes. It was hard to tell whether she was sad or happy at his choice. But one thing was clear...

“Then, I will realize your wish.”

When she opened her eyes again, all coldness vanished and was replaced by infinite warmth.

“Go down to the 8th Heaven and rest. For the remainder of your time here, Kiyohime will take care of you and train you back on the basics until I judge that you have reached a satisfactory level. Then, it will be my turn to take care of you. Remember—No quitting.”

For some reason, Sol couldn’t help but shiver at the slight sadistic smile Tiamat was showing.

...

...

...

Now alone in her room, Tiamat walked back to her throne and sat with a pensive expression. In her hand was a beautiful and small pearl that Sol had shown her before leaving.

“So...This is all that is left of my daughter.”

Tiamat showed a bitter smile as she looked at the pearl that was seemingly created from the core and horns of her daughter. Closing her eyes, and gripping the pearl tightly, she could feel a violent but warm flow of energy in the pearl, making her remember the strong-headed violent girl.

Thinking about how much a headache Blaze had been, Tiamat couldn't help but let out a chuckle.

She gave another glance at the pearl and shook her head.

‘No. This isn't her legacy.’

Her daughter's legacy was something much more — Her son, Sol.

“The blaze went out and left the Sun.”

‘It was oh so poetic and oh so ironic.’

She had given her last daughter an ordinary name because she had hoped that she would be free from the constraints of Fate. But did she in fact doom her?

She didn't know and she would most likely never do.

But that did not matter.

She had been helpless in protecting her beloved daughter. Had she been awake during those events she would have entered the mortal world, rules be damned. Sadly she had been in hibernation and only awoke way after everything had settled down.

If it was possible, since he was her last legacy, she would have wanted for nothing more than keeping Sol under her wings and away from all harm.

But it was obviously impossible and the boy was clearly unwilling.

This was why she was going to make him stronger, stronger than anyone so that he never had to fear or bow to anyone in this world.

Closing her eyes, the world around her shimmered as she entered a world filled with stars.

Looking in the direction of Sol's star, Tiamat focused, and even as blood began to drip from her eyes, she did not stop.

Her perspective shifted and suddenly it was like she was standing in one road that advanced in front of her before branching into two possibilities.

Two became four.

Four became sixteen.

Again and again, until there were more close to a hundred different possibilities branching in front of her.

'This is going to hurt.'

Her foresight generally only allowed her to observe the most likely future of dragons. The one with the highest probability of happening.

What she was doing now though was different. She was openly observing the different possible paths available.

Even though it was only hundreds out of a nearly infinite amount of possibilities, it was something that should not be possible for someone who wasn't a god.

Of course, the price for such a thing could never be low. She would be somewhat weakened for a time.

But it didn't matter. She wasn't lying when she said that she was ready to pay the price necessary.

"Welcome back. I hope your discussion with mother was fruitful."

When the elevator opened on the eighth Heaven, the one who welcomed him was none other than Kiyohime.

"Thanks and well... It's hard to describe."

"Haha. She always has that effect on people she meets."

Kiyohime gave a slight smile before walking away,

"Follow me. You will live in my palace for a while."

Leaving the tower, Sol looked at large islands that were floating all around the tower.

"Nine Island."

"Indeed. Each island belongs to one of the Nine Children."

Sol looked at them curiously, and couldn't help but ask.

"Could I visit the one belonging to my mother?"

Kiyohime stopped and looked at one island in particular. Even though it was quite far, the island was by far the largest and was even floating a little higher than the rest.

Looking at it, Sol couldn't help but feel a little awkward. He had already remarked on it, but Tiamat had been favoring Blaze a great deal.

"Don't you have any resentments?"

He blurted out but immediately regretted doing so. He had just met Kiyohime today and they weren't remotely close enough to share such worries.

"I am sorry."

"Haha. I don't mind. As for your previous question...I was envious of her, from the bottom of my heart."

Her back as she uttered those words seemed awfully lonely.

In the end, Sol never received the answer about visiting his mother's palace.

Son of the Hero King

Chapter 225: CH 200: LUX~LUX~LUXURIA

In a landscape completely filled with snow and ice, a man possessing striking features walked with a leisurely gait, humming lightly.

If anyone were to see him, they would wonder if his head was alright. After all, in a place where the temperature was so low that even boiling water would freeze, the man only wore a pair of shorts, sandals on his feet, and a shirt with floral patterns that was unbuttoned.

The man looked to be middle-aged, with blonde and frizzy hair, golden irises in his eyes, and a goatee adorning his face.

No matter how one observed him, be it his attire or his appearance, he looked like nothing but a surfer that regularly visited the beach.

Unbothered by the snowstorm, the man continued to walk with a smile on his face until he reached the summit of the mountain.

He put away the frivolous smile on his face and kneeled down on one knee with respect.

"Dear Mistress, to what I owe the pleasure of your visit in my humble territory?"

Standing at the summit of the mountain was a woman wearing a rather revealing white robe that was also unbecoming of such cold weather.

"It has been a while since we saw each other...Asmodeus."

Her face, hidden by a veil, made it impossible to see her expression. Even so, her voice was light and gentle.

As for the man kneeling in the snow, he was Asmodeus, the Divine Beast of Lust as well as the first and oldest divine beast.

"Yes. Thanks to the authority you have bestowed upon me, I have been able to interact with the Dreamscape and send human souls from alternative dimensions to that place[1]."

"Hum...It's surprising that this experiment worked. Then again it doesn't matter now. I have too much riding on the current bet. If I fail..."

Asmodeus looked at the woman who created him and couldn't help but worry.

"Is it really worth it, my lady?"

"...What do you mean?"

“I have observed the boy, and I admit that he is rather talented, but it isn’t like he did anything incredible with the said talent.”

Asmodeus was not lying or acting out of spite against Sol. He had lived for so long he could not even remember how old he was. But over his long and seemingly endless life, he had seen countless so-called matchless geniuses that were secretly fostered by the goddesses.

Even so, all of them fell short of the expected results, and now, only his mistress was still trying to create someone who could become a god.

“You also believe that only mother can create a god?”

Though there were no fluctuations in her voice, Asmodeus could feel the disappointment in it. He didn’t know what to say.

“*Sigh* It’s fine. After all, it’s indeed true that what I am doing is more of a gamble than anything else.”

The start of her plan went as far as the creation of the Lustburg. She observed the flow of Fate and altered the future, all this to enter the streams of time that had the highest possibility for her plan to succeed.

Furthermore, she did not hesitate to introduce a great number of variables to give herself more opening. But by doing so, she also enlarged the streams, thereby increasing the chances of failure.

Of course, not everything was perfect. In her initial plan, Sol should have awakened as a Duke during the attack on Lustburg by the Wings of Freedom. This would have resulted in increasing his chances during the fight to become a Dragon Prince.

Unfortunately, because of Nihil’s intervention, the fight in Lustburg had come to an end faster than it should have.

Although she had to admit that the result she got, in the end, wasn’t bad. After all...

‘He shouldn’t have awakened the War Form before becoming a King.’

She couldn’t help but feel giddy and worried.

Giddy because Sol was already way more powerful than what she initially anticipated and this would continue to snowball, and worried because he was slowly leaving her grasp. It was becoming harder to affect his future. If she forced impossible things to happen, the backlash from Fate would be too much.

“I apologize for doubting you. But...There is one little problem...”

“What is it?”

All those thoughts had flashed in her head in less than an instant, and as such, she was not distracted when she heard his words. Still, a twinge of unease flashed in her mind. A premonition of sorts.

“It’s about my daughter. She...”

Luxuria frowned, Asmodeus only had two children and out of them, only one was a woman.

The premonition of Luxuria was verified at the end of his word.

"I cannot feel her future anymore."

"Impossible..."

She murmured before immediately diving into the vast flow of time.

Her perspective shifted and suddenly it was like she was standing in one road that advanced in front of her before branching into two possibilities.

Two became four.

Four became sixteen.

Again and again, until there were so many possibilities that it was normally impossible to even discern them anymore.

In that nigh-infinite amount of possibilities, Luxuria searched again and again, but no matter what she did, she could not directly look at the future of Asmodeus' daughter.

In the end, she opened her eyes and they flashed with a cold light.

This phenomenon was not foreign to Luxuria. This was what happened when one became something that could not be understood by the system. A bug of sorts, or as they called them, Singularities.

Even so, it was impossible for one to suddenly become a singularity. This could only mean that something else happened.

At this thought, one name directly flashed in her mind and she looked down at the kneeling Asmodeus.

"It seems like your mate is creating problems for me once again."

All Asmodeus could do was give a bitter smile.

[Son of the Hero King](#)

Chapter 226: CH 201: SURPRISE MORNING*

"Mother! The servants have finished preparing the west wing and have guided the guests there."

A blue-haired young girl wearing a short blue skirt smiled at Kiyohime while giving her report.

Kiyohime, hearing that everything was alright, nodded and went back to reading her documents in her hand.

The dragon's territory was divided into Nine Heavens, and each of those heavens were the equivalent of a kingdom.

In short, as the Dragon's Queen, Kiyohime had to deal with the equivalent of nine kingdoms.

It went from mundane problems like taking care of women who were impregnated by dragons to recuperating the taxes from different heavens to settling disputes between dragons or others who lived in this world.

"Good job, Aqua. By the way, what did you think of your cousin?"

After coming back home with Sol, Kiyohime had introduced her daughter to Sol for a short instant then asked her to take care of him and his accommodations.

"Hum... Aside from the fact that he is hot as hell?"

Kiyohime chuckled, after he met with Tiamat, Sol did not hide his draconic features.

For Kiyohime, this was a very welcome change since the appearance that made her think of Mars had diminished greatly.

"Aside from him being hot."

"If it's so then...not much?"

"Are you sure?"

"I mean. I can feel his power. He seems to be very talented and from what I have heard after the council, he should be a true monster full of talent. But...That's all."

"Hum..."

Kiyohime tapped her finger on the table slowly.

"What do you think he lacks?"

"Experience mainly, I guess. His killing intent also seems pretty weak."

Kiyohime took a look before nodding to herself before scribbling in what looked like a notebook.

'Mental and physical training.'

Generally, when training dragons, what Kiyohime had to do first and foremost was assess their personalities and talents.

Not all forms of training were suitable for everyone.

Some people answered better to stressful situations while others needed to be coddled.

Some were the kind who needed to see results fast while others could accept steady improvement.

For Sol, her understanding of him was shallow, but she still had a preliminary understanding of sorts. At least enough to know that standard training wouldn't suit him.

Sol had no pride to destroy, for he didn't seem particularly prideful in the first place.

Kiyohime did not understand how it was possible for someone with so much to be so humble.

Of course, if she knew that Sol had lived all his life around monstrously powerful women, she would understand that Sol would have needed to be extremely narcissistic to feel exaggerated pride in himself.

'Either way, there's nothing wrong in developing his killing intent.'

Since he was a Blessed and a future King, war was something Sol could not escape. As such, it was upto her to make him used to death.

Fortunately, it was clear that he wasn't innocent to the point of never killing anyone, but the number should be rather limited.

If possible, she wanted to develop his killing intent to a level close to that of a Zone.

'Should I give soldiers to him?'

Since the blood of dragons was strong in him, then he should be able to emit dragon fear.

This was another point worth grooming.

Kiyohime was showing her talent as a trainer as she drew a training map for Sol's mental and skill development.

Of course, this wasn't enough. It was necessary for him to have fighting skills fitting for a dragon.

From the way he walked, she could deduce that he had been trained in the way of the sword, which was ridiculous.

Most dragons did not use weapons, for their bodies themselves were the greatest weapons.

But out of those who did, they favored weapons like long weapons like spears or sticks, blunt weapons like hammers, or long-range weapons like bows.

Basically all kinds of weapons that could only show their worth in the hand of someone physically strong.

'Blaze was a pretty skilled spear user.'

Since Blaze was a Chaos Dragon, she had no fear of magic and could rush into the battlefield without any fear.

Of course, just because the mother was skilled in spears didn't mean that the son should follow. But it would be a waste for a Chaos Dragon like Sol to not be specialized in close combat.

This would mean that his only weakness would be physical attacks.

She noted that and decided to prepare a way for him to increase his endurance as well as his defense and natural regeneration.

It would hurt like hell, but the results would be there.

Putting down her pen, Kiyohime sighed while relaxing her shoulders.

"Aqua, I will be absent for a while from tomorrow onwards. Can you take over for me during my absence?"

Aqua gulped.

"I..."

She was positively frightened. Once, thirty years ago, when she was still young and naive, she had begged her mother to let her at the helm of the realm.

Normally, Kiyohime would always refuse, but that day—she accepted.

At first, Aqua had been elated. She had finally reached her dreams. Unfortunately, it only took three days for the dream to shatter and be replaced by the cold reality that was paperwork and politics.

This was a lesson she had never forgotten.

Even so, she couldn't exactly refuse since Kiyohime was taking a leave to train Sol as per Tiamat's wishes.

In the end, all Aqua could do was submit herself to her fate.

"I will do it."

"Good girl. Don't worry. You can call me if things get too crazy. Furthermore, I will come to visit every week."

Those words sounded like the grace of god in Aqua's ears.

"Thank you! Though, where are you going with Sol? There should be enough facilities in the palace."

Kiyohime smiled.

"I will let him witness one of our most important secrets."

"How was your meeting with Tiamat?"

Mounting Sol, with her top naked but her robe covering the place of their union, Nent gently gasped while moving slowly.

Sol meanwhile, lying down tranquilly, was looking up as her heavy breasts continued to shake in an erotic way.

The day had been rather stressful and he had to admit that this was a beautiful way to wind down.

Raising his hands, Sol was about to massage her breasts, but

"No, you don't have to do anything. Just rest and let me do all the work."

Chuckling, Nent pushed his hand aside and tightened herself down there, bringing more pleasure to Sol.

"Ugh... Well, it went rather well."

'Man, how soothing.'

It was as if he was lying down in the sea while riding the wave—Though he was the one being ridden currently.

The interior of Nent felt like a furnace and the contrast between the heat on his neither part and the cold air caressing his chest was heavenly.

Nent chuckled a little at the sight of the speechless Sol. While she liked submitting to him, it was nice to be in control from time to time.

Furthermore, she wanted to pamper him.

She could see that something was weighing down on him, and while she couldn't do much for him, she could at least help him relax.

"Now that I think about it. You should be careful with Fafnir."

"Fafnir?"

Nent did not answer directly as she slowly began to increase the movement of her hips.

"He is your uncle. He was also one of my suitors and might have become my mate. So yeah, if you want we can hide our relationship to avoid problems."

Sol did not even bother giving it the slightest thought, "No way. Why should I hide?"

It wasn't as if any of them were cheating or whatever. If his uncle was jealous then it was his problem to deal with.

"Fufufu~! Good answer."

Nent had nothing to reproach herself and she would have been saddened if Sol asked that they act like criminals.

Her pupils seemingly took the shape of hearts while the amount of juice flowing down from her garden increased.

"I guess it's time to increase your reward."

Forming a string with Mana, she tied her hair into a ponytail and licked her lips hungrily.

Leaning forward, she licked his right nipples while gently pinching his left one. The movement of her hips increased greatly as she went up and down.

In the end, the two of them hugged and kissed each other while fucking like rabbits all night.

On the next day, Kiyohime who was walking down the hall towards Sol's room stopped once she reached her destination.

"I hope he is already awake."

Without thinking, she opened the door wide, and entered the room but immediately froze at the sight of the two entangled and naked bodies.

Even though Kiyohime had no direct experience herself, you didn't need to be some genius to understand what kind of acts had taken place in this room.

'This...What the hell?'

All Kiyohime could do was stare in surprise and bewilderment.

[Son of the Hero King](#)

Chapter 227: CH 202: TARTARUS

"Tell me, what do you think is the most important for a dragon?"

In the morning, though it was still dark outside, something that really disoriented Sol, Kiyohime was beginning her lecture.

They were currently in what looked like a vast training field and were the only ones present on the scene.

"It's endurance."

Kiyohime did not wait for Sol to answer as she answered the question herself.

"For a pure dragon, or in fact for any divine beast, the most important thing is endurance. Thanks to our bodies, we possess incredible strength, speed, and defense. Some of us are immune to a particular element while others can become outright intangible.

But the most important thing is, we all have a core. We have nearly unlimited mana at our disposal since we can simply use it from the surroundings."

Kiyohime waved her hand, forming a ball of water on it.

Sol was immediately intrigued.

When Sol used mana, he would draw the mana from within his body then project it out of his body.

The same happened when using his core. He would first absorb mana in his body before using it as his own.

However, Kiyohime had directly affected the mana around her.

The results of their actions were the same, but Sol had to take three additional steps to reach the same results.

He shared this observation with Kiyohime who nodded in appreciation.

"Good. The way you use your core is basic and requires additional steps but it isn't bad. In fact, you should continue to do so until you become a King."

Kiyohime explained that the constant absorption and emanation of a large quantity of Mana was the ideal way to increase the area of mana veins and toughen them.

"You may wonder what is the use of toughening your veins when you won't even need to use them in the future, but what do you think would happen if you fought against another divine beast?"

Sol was immediately enlightened.

"I can see that you understood. Fights between divine beasts are extremely harmful to nature. It isn't weird that for a very short period, an entire zone will be devoid of Mana. When that happens, all you can do is rely on your body and your natural reserve."

She shook her head. This was a lesson she always tried to teach many young dragons, but most of them never listened.

In the first place, creating a dead zone wasn't so easy.

Kiyohime was basically talking about large-scale battlefields where hundreds of divine beasts and titans would fight at the same time.

In those moments where all energy was sucked dry in just a moment, you would feel alone and helpless as all you could do was carefully use your mana and mainly rely on the strength of your body.

Kiyohime stayed silent for a short while as she reminisced about the horror of the war she went through.

Pressing back those thoughts in the deepest part of her mind, she continued.

"You should know that while utilizing mana as I do is less taxing on the body, it affects the mind more. So either way, endurance is the way to go."

Kiyohime was someone who believed in the basics more than anything.

Fancy techniques, super transformations, powerful spells, domains, or whatever, all of this relied on the ability to effectively use and maintain them.

What was the use of pulling a powerful transformation if you could only use it for a limited amount of time? Why learn a technique that you could only use one time?

Of course, Kiyohime knew she was a little biased. There was nothing wrong in having that one super killer move.

"Sol, I won't lie. My training will not be what you expect. You will learn nothing new with me and in fact, will only train in the basics. It will be boring.

It will be tiring and it will be excruciating. You will curse me and will most likely hate me. But I will not stop. If you want to give up, do so now because once we begin, I will allow no such thing."

"I do not plan to give up. But I just have one condition."

"Hum... tell me. I will see what I will do."

"Then... Could you at least face me when doing your lecture ?"

Sol chuckled bitterly while the ears of Kiyohime became completely red.

Since the start of the training, she had been showing her back to him.

All of this was because of what happened a few hours earlier

When Kiyohime had come to wake him up, she had witnessed the scene of him and Nent having a quick romp.

She had been on the first row to witness the sight of Nent being taken from behind and begging for more.

Despite her lack of direct experience, Kiyohime was still an old dragon. It wasn't the first time she witnessed sexual scenes so it wasn't the problem.

The problem was that Nent was somewhat her equal and had once been her friend. Even before she changed, Nent had always been a woman with a strong personality and self-respect.

Witnessing her acting like this had been more than a little shocking for Kiyohime.

During all the lectures, she couldn't stop herself from thinking about that scene whenever she looked at Sol's face. She also couldn't help but wonder just how good it must have felt for someone like Nent to lose all control.

Since she couldn't look properly at his face, she had decided to just not look at him.

...Though it seemed that Sol didn't want to leave the situation as it was.

"Does it bother you that Nent is my partner?"

Kiyohime, sighing, finally turned to face him and forced her mind not to enter the gutter.

Once it was done, she began to ponder his question and shook her head.

"I have no say about who you are in relationships with. In fact, now that I think about it, I am not surprised that Nent chose you as her mate. You are the very crystallization of her new ideal.

Once you reach the King level or even better, the Demigod level, then should a child born between the two of you...it would be a true monster."

Sol frowned a little. Not because of how coldly she assessed Nent's objective.

This was something Nent had never tried to hide. The relationship between the two of them wasn't one of love, but rather one of lust and mutual assistance.

Rather, what intrigued him was the mention of becoming a demigod.

"Why would becoming a demigod affect my child?"

He, of course, had some good guesses, but wouldn't it be better to get accurate information?

"Well, it's not a secret so, it wouldn't hurt to tell you. You should know about the different steps necessary to reach a higher level. A zone for Dukes, an avatar for Kings, and a territory for Demigod."

Seeing Sol nod, she continued,

"Each level isn't just about an increase in power. It's also a sublimation of life. From the moment you become a Duke, you step into a new domain. By the time you become a demigod, you essentially become a new race.

A demigod is a being that sheds its mortal shell. A demigod is essentially a new race on its own or more precisely, an optimized version of an individual's original race.

By becoming a demigod, you are essentially changing yourself to become a better, and stronger version of yourself."

All divine beasts were precursors of their own races in the same way that all Titans were descendants of Ymir.

Thinking about this, Sol suddenly thought about something.

Why did the goddesses create humans?

In the past, during the war, Goddesses created divine beasts to help them fight the war. They also created other races at the same time from what Genesis said.

But then, what would be the use of a human?

Humans could only grow up after more than 15 years of careful grooming.

Furthermore, 90% of humans didn't have the talent necessary to awaken a capacity high enough for a contract.

If it was just for Canon fodder, beast-men have a higher reproduction rate and become stronger way faster. They could be battle-ready in just a few years.

For high-end power, divine beasts were more than enough.

In fact, aside from Ambrosia, there were no humans at the level of a demigod and Ambrosia couldn't even be said to be really human.

Even worse, there was only one true human at the king level currently and that was Camelia. Lilith didn't count since she was not really human either.

In short, humans were trash—Why then were they created?

'I should stop trying to uncover all those secrets.'

His main goal was to become stronger. He would naturally have access to more answers once he officially became King.

Rather than focusing on things he couldn't affect like Fate or the truth of the world, it would be much more intelligent of him to focus on what he could do.

"Anyways, like I said, who you mate with is your problem. You don't have to worry about Fafnir either. He might whine and complain, but his pride would never allow him to attack a young dragon just because of petty jealousy."

Fafnir was a dragon full of pride, but one who could accept defeat gracefully. Though, in her opinion, it wouldn't be wrong to call Fafnir a pushover.

Siegfried had taken a powerful sword from him.

Sun Wukong had obtained a huge amount of divine gold and faith coins from him.

Blaze had bullied him all his life and now even her son had more or less stolen a woman from him.

'I wonder if I should comfort him?'

It was her duty to take care of the mental state of her brothers. She knew how much Fafnir loved wine.

She still had some wine from Hathor that she could use to appease him but...

'...Ugh. I need to talk with Nent to have a new shipment.'

She groaned a little before deciding.

'Well, I am sure he can deal with it without my help.'

She resolutely and ruthlessly discarded her brother.

"I just have one piece of advice. Never fully put your trust in her. You might be stabbed in the back in the worst way possible."

Kiyohime spoke somberly, clearly reminiscing some unpleasant memories.

"Well, enough chit chat. It's time for practice. Follow me."

The two of them began to walk until they reached a hangar.

Anchored in the sky was a large ship with a white flag and a golden dragon.

"What are we going to do here?"

Sol admired the ship as he spoke. Comparing this ship to the pirate ship that attacked them when they reached the territory would have been an insult to this ship.

"This is White Pearl. It's my beloved ship."

"I see. So, where are we going?"

"Heh. I guess you can say that we are going to the most important part of this world—Tartarus."

She was sure that at the end of this training, Sol would be completely different.

[Son of the Hero King](#)

Chapter 228: CH 203: THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS EVOLUTION

A few hours later, after floating down from the eighth heaven to the first, Sol stood on a ship that apparently floated aimlessly on the sea.

The crew on the ship was entirely composed of puppets. He had asked Kiyohime, and she said that those puppets were created by one of the four current princesses. Though she didn't explain any more.

During all the trips, what really intrigued Sol had been the name of their destination.

Tartarus.

He had an inkling about what it was, since the name was pretty easy to recognize even for people who had little knowledge on myth. But, he wanted to be sure.

"Kiyō—"

"Are you curious about our destination?"

Sol closed his mouth before nodding.

"Well, it's a little complicated to explain, but in one word, it's a prison, or a dungeon if you will."

'As I thought...'

"What kind of people are imprisoned in Tartarus?"

He really wondered what kind of crime one had to commit to be imprisoned in a prison with such a secret location.

As if she didn't hear him, Kiyō continued.

"Most of the territories of divine beasts have a Tartarus in their core. The same goes for some powerful demi-god territories who aren't divine beasts such as Anubis. As for what kind of criminals are imprisoned in Tartarus? There are only four types"

She scoffed, the light in her eyes turning cold.

"Titans, Giants, Chaos spawn and finally—Traitors."

After her words, the two of them fell into silence, deep in their own thoughts, no one speaking a word.

The ship finally stopped after flying for a while more on the sea. It was a place without anything particular and Sol couldn't help but wonder where the entrance was.

There, Kiyōhime walked out of the ship and stood in the air before taking out a pendant.

"Open the gate."

The pendant shone with crimson light as the roar of a dragon sounded in the air.

Rumble *Rumble*

The sea quaked and space trembled. A gate that looked like the maws of a beast opened in front of Sol.

"Let's go, Sol."

Sol did not hesitate in following her. From the outside, it looked as though the two of them were devoured.

—

The moment Sol opened his eyes, he couldn't help but groan in pain.

His eyes stung and his lungs could barely fill themselves with air. Each time he took a breath, it was as if someone was tearing away at him from within.

The ambient mana in the surroundings felt dirty and disgusting.

Sol had fought in a desert scorched by three suns, but compared to the grounds here, that desert looked like heaven.

He felt like he was completely being rejected by the environment itself as if he was the enemy of the world itself.

This wasn't an environment suitable for living. Normal humans would have died just from standing here for one minute.

“Where is this?”

He couldn't help but ask in bewilderment, but immediately regretted opening his mouth to speak.

‘Ugh! I feel like retching.’

“This is the first circle of hell.”

As she spoke, blue light emanated from her body before covering Sol.

Huff *Huff* *Huff*

Immediately, Sol felt like breathing became far easier. He couldn't help but inhale deeply and greedily.

All this while, Kiyohime looked at him with a nod of approval. Generally, when young dragons entered this place the first time, they would be already on the ground, retching and bawling their eyes out.

This had nothing to do with power. This was nearly the same as a fish suddenly being thrown out of the water.

Sol was doing far better than she thought he would.

“Wha-What was that?”

Calming down, Sol's chest continued to heave as he slowly got his breathing into order.

“This is Tartarus. The first floor of Tartarus, also known as the first circle of hell. There are a total of seven hells and each hell is harsher than the previous one because of the concentration of Chaotic mana.”

Sol managed to understand what Kiyohime was saying. But her next words made him pale a bit.

“Also....This—Will be your home for one month or two...I did say that you would curse and hate me, right?”

A bright smile filled her face as she opened her arms wide.

“Welcome, Sol...to your new home — To hell!”

[9th Heaven.]

Sitting on her throne, Tiamat opened her eyes wide as she wondered if she should intervene or not.

“I did tell her to make him stronger but this...”

For the first time in her life, Tiamat thought that she was not as ruthless as her daughter.

‘This was a future with a very low probability.’

Tartarus wasn't just a prison made for the heck of it.

Why would Tiamat or any other demi-god keep dangerous prisoners alive when they were more useful dead?

The problem came from the difference between Chaos and Order.

The difference between the two mother goddesses stemmed from a difference in ideologies toward evolution.

Tiamat did not know why this problem came to be in the first place but basically, Order believed in systematic and careful growth.

She believed that everything in this world had a place and should stay there. Ants should stay ants, gods should stay gods. The weak would always be weak and the strong would always be strong. Even if people could grow, there was a clear limit that they could never surpass. It would be a perfect Eden.

She wished for an eternal kingdom where nothing would change.

Chaos saw things a little differently. For her, life was a struggle. The ants should grow to become a god by biting and eating everything on their path. For her, the existence of a limit placed on growth was a sin in itself.

Unfortunately, unlimited growth meant unlimited destruction. The world that Chaos envisioned was a world that could be sacrificed for the apparition of one ultimate being if it was necessary.

Because of this nature, once a place was tainted by Chaos, it was incredibly hard, if not impossible, to erase that stain.

In the stained place, chaos spawns would be regularly born, they were the equivalent of elemental spirits and would grow by devouring each other and growing constantly. It was simply too easy for a King ranked to appear in such a condition.

This was one of the reasons the goddesses created the fourteen divine beasts. After all, the forces of Chaos were too numerous.

At the end of the war, all the places that were stained were sealed into prisons called Tartarus.

‘Is she thinking of making him go down on all the hell until the end?’

The Tartarus in Tiamat territory was pretty special at the very last level. On the bottom of the 7th level were the remnants of someone special—Lucifer.

Tiamat tapped the arms of her throne. Even though she had looked at more than hundreds of different futures of Sol, very few of them had Sol entering the tower.

Generally, Kiyohime would choose to send him to hunt down pirates and gain more experience in the process.

‘In none of those futures did he manage to find Lucifer Inheritance.’

Tiamat frowned, ‘Should I help him?’

Even though Tiamat was created as a demigod, the Zone she had currently was not the one she was born with.

Be it her Zone or her Avatar, all of them had been changed after she found Lucifer’s inheritance and learned from it.

If Sol managed to get the approval, he would become far more powerful than if she simply trained him. After all, while Lucifer wasn't necessarily more powerful than the current her, his mean and understanding of the world were something no divine beast could match.

Kiyohime of course did not know about this. It was merely a coincidence.

“*Sigh* So this time the torch-bearer, the ‘Morning Star’ has a chance to let the ‘Sun’ inherit.”

Tiamat closed her eyes and fell deep in thought, before opening her eyes again.

“I will not help.”

Even though Lucifer was long dead, his will was not totally eradicated. If she helped Sol, he would get nothing.

Normally speaking, Sol had no Fate with Lucifer. His Fate should have been to learn from her only.

So what would happen if Sol managed to succeed?

It would mean that he had used his original Fate to create a stronger Fate and grow stronger. It would also mean that he was well on his way to becoming a complete irregular.

‘Haha~I want to see the faces of those goddesses when it happens. So, please...Show me you have what it takes.’

She was already frustrated about seeing hundreds of futures she had prepared for vanish. How would Luxuria feel after witnessing a near-infinite amount of futures carefully thought of for millennia vanish under her powerless eyes?

It would be so hilarious.

The world was like a chessboard and people were nothing more than a chess piece moving under the whim of superior power.

In the shitty game that was the world, the only ones who could flip the table were the irregulars called Singularities.

She hoped that Sol would become one of the few people that could give the middle finger to the goddesses.

[Son of the Hero King](#)

Chapter 229: CH 204: 3RD CIRCLE OF HELL

[3rd Circle of Hell]

BOOM *BOOM*

In a large stretch of land filled with cracked ground and molten lava, one young man was facing a large number of insects like monsters that continuously swarmed towards him.

His body was filled with wounds and his veins had a green tint, showing traces of poisoning. Some of those wounds were squirming as they tried to close but would continue to bleed as if something stopped the regeneration.

Enemies were surging all around him. There appeared to be no end to their numbers. When he killed one, ten more would follow. He was bitten, scratched, and poisoned again and again until there was nearly no part of his body that wasn't in pain.

His face was gaunt, showing how tired he currently was. Each of his movements seemed to be extremely painful and he would grunt lightly whenever he received another attack.

The fight lasted for a few more minutes before all the monsters in the surroundings were finally dealt with.

Huff *Huff* *Huff*

Rough breathing, sweat covered brows, bloodied and battered body, shaking vision, and gradually weakening limbs...

There was nothing that he wished for more than sleeping and recuperation. However, he knew it wasn't possible. He had to always keep his guard up. He had learned this lesson the hard way on the second day when nearly lost his arms.

Swoosh!!

'Got you!'

His wariness was rewarded when what looked like a 3 meters long snake jumped out of nowhere toward his back with its maw wide open at sonic speed.

Sidestepping on instinct, Sol twirled and caught the snake with his hand before infusing mana in all his muscles.

"Arghh!!"

He tore the monster in two in the most brutal way possible. Once he was done, he threw aside the corpses of the monsters and continued to wait for a short while before releasing a sigh.

Blisters formed on his hands because of the acidic bloods and secretions that covered the body of those monsters, but he didn't care.

'Well, I think I should be done with this floor tonight.'

Looking at his surroundings, he immediately crouched down and began to crawl in the cracks and the shadows. He completely erased his aura and seemingly vanished.

This was another point he learned the hard way. It seemed that he was kind of a delicacy for those monsters and they would swarm him if he didn't control his power well.

It was only after he finally reached a carved smartly hidden just below a cliff that he allowed himself to rest. After all, this was a safe zone.

"Fuck!"

He cursed immediately once he was in the cave and completely out of danger. In fact, all he wanted to do was collapse and sleep.

"You shouldn't swear, Sol."

The young boy, Sol, looked up at Kiyohime who had been resting in the cavern and feasting.

His mouth watered at the sight of the well-cooked meat and immediately rushed towards the grilled meat but all he received was a small smack on his hands.

"Wash your hands first. Don't contaminate the food."

She waved to him and a ball of water covered his hands before twirling at high speed. After it evaporated in the air, his hands were spotless clean.

This time, Kiyohime didn't stop him when he rushed again for food.

"This is the meat of a cosmic cow. It is extremely good for reinforcing your vitality. Digest it fast and sleep after wiping away the blood. Let your body naturally expel all the poison and heal your wounds."

Sol was too far deep in to understand what she was saying. All he could focus on was chewing the delicious meat.

The seven circles could be divided into three great prisons. The 1st to 3rd circle only imprisoned the most ordinary.

When Sol had heard that he wouldn't have to fight Duke class there, he had been overjoyed. What could a bunch of fodder do against him?

He wished he could go back in time and smack his foolish past self. What they lacked in quality, they made up more than enough to hit in quantity.

On the first day of his fight, he discovered how wrong he was.

For one, the chaos spawn had very powerful bodies, making it hard to kill them.

As if it wasn't enough, there were hundreds, if not thousands of them. Every time he killed one, the other would attack him crazily.

Once he finished eating, Kiyohime began to mercilessly mock him.

"Heh, so in the end, it took you one week. Hahaha~! I thought you would finish it in a jiffy? I have been waiting for you since one week ago."

Sol coughed to hide his embarrassment. He has really been a little arrogant earlier. When he heard that there was no Duke level in the first three circles, he was sure that he could sweep through everything.

How wrong he had been...

After mocking him for a while, Kiyohime wiped off any amusement from her face, her tone becoming serious.

"Let this be a lesson for you. Never underestimate Chaos Spawn. I remember dragons that were devoured after being swarmed to death by them."

Sol could only nod in agreement. It wasn't just their numbers either.

Be it their bodies that seemed resistant to magic, their strong attack, or the difficulties in using mana from the surroundings, Sol had never felt so stifled while fighting.

But, there was something that was nagging at him.

“Kiyō. There’s something I want to ask...In fact, two things.”

“Go on.”

“Firstly, the power of evolution of those spawns. Why does it seem like the devouring power of Gula?”

Sol had been in contact with both Nuwa and Milia. He knew more or less how they could <<devour>> energy and the like. Milia could increase her power temporarily by devouring while Nuwa could slowly increase her power permanently.

No matter how he looked at it, this was very similar to the chaos spawns. There were also those unsettling bloodshot demonic eyes filling Milia’s shadow.

But this wasn’t all.

“Secondly. I always thought the name Chaos Dragon sounded weird. Why did Tiamat, who works for Superbia, have a title related to the Chaos Goddess? When fighting those monsters, I found out that all of them seemed to have a weak resistance toward Mana and magic in general. If so, how strong would the resistance of a Duke level be? What about a King? Then...What about a demi-god?”

“...”

“...”

“You think the Sin Goddesses or at least the Divine Beasts of Sin are related to Chaos?”

“...”

Silence fell between them and the atmosphere seemed to grow heavy, until...

“Pfft! Hahahaha!”

Kiyōhime bent down and exploded out of laughter, so much that tears even gathered at the corner of her eyes.

“*Wheeze* I mean...Hahaha. I have heard weird theories, but yours is truly one out of a kind.”

Calming down, Kiyōhime shook her head, “Mother is known as the Chaos Dragon because her body indeed has a capacity similar to that chaos spawn. However, that’s all. There’s never been a chaos spawn who possessed full Immunity towards Magic like Blaze and Mother. Even your current resistance is way higher than anything even a demi-god ranked chaos spawn can hope to obtain.”

Sol nodded and relaxed, “You are right. I must have thought too much. It’s just that there are so many weird conspiracies around me. I am used to over analyzing everything.”

Sol laughed sheepishly as he apologized. “Could you get out, please? I need to change and wipe the blood out of my body. Though, I don’t mind if you want to stay.”

Kiyohime smiled and shook her head, completely nonplussed. "I will stand guard outside for you."

"Thanks."

Nodding to her, he turned around and began to disrobe. The smile on his face—vanished.

His speculations about Gula and Superbia had indeed been a little ridiculous. Then why...

'Why did she not address the whole Goddesses and Divine Beasts of Sins when refuting my words?'

Lost in thought, he completely disrobed and looked at his filthy body.

It has been one week since the last time he bathed. Blood, guts, and other sketchy substances were covering him.

His wounds were healing at a faster rate than when he was fighting, but it was still pretty slowed down.

Taking the water from the basin Kiyohime had left for him, he began to carefully wipe away the filth from his body.

The moment the water came in contact with his body, it was as if he was resting in the most relaxing spa ever created.

All his muscles were screaming in pain and pleasure.

He continued to wipe his body, and his regeneration power seemed to be boosted greatly, even his stamina recovery increased.

'I need to rest.'

In the end, the best he could do was sleep now and recover faster.

'I wonder if he caught my hints.'

She thought a little but shrugged. She liked Sol quite a bit, but they weren't close enough for her to risk her life to reveal a secret that even most demigods didn't know.

Feeling the breathing of Sol slow down in the cave, Kiyohime showed a gentle smile.

'His curiosity aside, he is far better than I thought.'

Sol was far from being the fastest to complete the first three circles but, he was without a doubt the most careful one.

The young elite dragon who had been chosen to pass this test generally failed after being flustered by the unexpected difficulty or used their full dragon's body to tank all attack and rush down.

What they seemed to forget though, was that this has never been a competition. This wasn't about who was the fastest or who killed the most.

Because of this, Kiyohime saw Sol as the third person to perfectly understand the purpose of his training and act on it.

But this wasn't enough. In fact, this was just nothing but a warm up.

Once he woke up?

Then the real thing would wait for him.

Son of the Hero King

Chapter 230: CH 205: 4TH CIRCLE OF HELL (1)

The moment his consciousness began to awaken, the first thing Sol did before even opening his eyes was to open all his senses wide, trying to feel where he was.

This was also a habit he had developed. If there were any enemies in the surroundings, he could fool them into thinking he was still asleep.

Once he was sure that there was only one person aside from him in the cave, Sol slowly stood up while grunting.

Crack *Crack*

All of his body seemed to produce sound as his bones aligned themselves in his body.

‘What the?’

“You are awake? I see that we reached our first goal sooner than I thought.”

Sol threw a look at Kiyohime before focusing on the changes of his body.

If he had to be honest, the changes weren’t that incredible. But he felt at ease now. He was without a doubt much tougher and more resistant than a week ago.

“Don’t be surprised by only this much. This was to be expected after what you went through.”

“What do you mean?”

Sol finally stopped inspecting his body and asked Kiyohime.

“Well...You know about the saying, what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger, right? For divine beasts in general, that saying is very, very accurate. Even more so at a low level before becoming a duke.”

Kiyohime mused, wondering how to explain easily, but Sol beat her to it.

“Basically I am like a mortal who began to live on a high mountain. At first, I was unaccustomed to the low amount of oxygen and had a hard time breathing. But now, it’s becoming easier for me. Once I completely adapt, it will be even easier.”

Kiyohime nodded in appreciation, “I like smart people since I don’t have to explain too much. The goal of his training isn’t for you to clear Tartarus or whatever, but to simply induce your body into evolving faster. Once your body reaches a certain level, I will allow you to leave and continue the training with Mother.”

Standing up, Kiyohime walked toward him and stretched her finger. A blue light flowed from it before it changed into a transparent flower as it entered his body.

“This is a small protection. I won’t necessarily be with you during this trip and mother can’t always check on you, right? This mark allows me to sense you anywhere in the whole of Tartarus.”

She took a few steps back as she continued, “From now on, there will be a safe zone at the end of each hell. I will wait for you in each of them. I will also guide you if necessary and or give you information. Remember. If you feel like you are in danger, just activate the flower. Your training can take place any time, but there is only one you.”

Kiyohime proceeded to explain the situation to him. From the 4th circle onwards, the situation was completely different. Previously, the chaos spawn had attacked crazily as mobs without organization, but from the 4th circle, all the spawns were under direct order of Duke class chaos spawn.

There were already more than 10 Duke in the 4th circle alone, and those 10 Duke generally had different territories. After all, the size of the 4th circle was equivalent to that of an entire medium-sized kingdom. The numbers of Duke tripled in the 5th circle

In the 5th circle, there were more than thirty Dukes present and furthermore, some of them were powerful beings from the Astral Realm or Mortal Realm. There were even some divine beast traitors who chose to stand with Chaos over Order. Each of them was more powerful than the last.

As for the 6th circle, the ones residing there were the mighty Giants and Titans. There were basically more than hundreds of Duke at that level and they were extremely well structured.

“No young dragon has ever completed the 5th circle. The highest one reached the 6th circle before having to be saved immediately. That person is Kaiser. He is a good child related to Fafnir.”

Kiyohime had a good impression of Kaiser. Aside from a little too much pride that needed some grinding, he was a good boy who had a chance to reach the King level if everything went well.

Sol wasn’t interested in beating some kind of records, in fact, he was more curious about what laid further in, “What about the 7th circle?”

Kiyohime's expression grew stern as she shook her head.

“Don’t enter that place. Even if you somehow manage to reach the end of the 6th circle, just call me and I will take you out. The 7th circle has a few King ranked Titans and Chaos spawn.”

Her gaze showed an incredibly serious glint, “I am serious Sol. Don’t enter there. Just don’t. If you are unlucky and meet one of the three Hecatoncheires[1]—you will die. Even someone at my level has to be very careful when entering that zone with my siblings for the recurring purge.”

Sol waved his hand, “Just what do you take me for? Relax, I am not dumb.”

He wasn’t one of those protagonists who were too curious for their own good.

Why the hell would he enter a super-death zone that even a King ranked dragon feared?

Sol was confident in his Dimension, but he knew that a King who had mastery over space like Freya or Lilith could still kill him if they were determined.

Once Kiyohime made sure that Sol wouldn't act crazily and explore the 7th circle if he had the chance, she released a sigh of relief and began to walk away.

"The last thing I have to say is, you can stay here or in any safe zone as long as you like. If two months are up without you moving, I will take it that you gave up."

She stopped and threw him one last glance before leaving.

"Don't forget Sol. You are the one who wishes to become stronger. You are also the one who accepted this training. I hate quitters more than anything, but there's nothing I can do about them. So, whenever you are about to give up, remember why you are doing this and that no one forced you to do it."

Once Kiyohime left, Sol, now alone, stood up silently as he examined the cave more deeply.

After one hour of careful search, Sol found a spear, a pair of gloves, and a hammer as a weapon as well as a few knives. He also found many medicines that could heal him when he was in danger.

There were also rations of preserved food that could last him a few days if he took care of them. Since this time he wasn't restricted from opening his dimension, Sol easily opened a small gate and threw the food there.

As for the weapon, he immediately equipped them by placing the knives around his leg, the spear on his back, and he had sent the hammer in the dimension.

Finally, he found a map that showed the different territories in the 4th circle.

Since the seven circles were regularly swept clean in order to avoid an overflow, the different Duke's identities would also change whenever previous ones got killed.

There was also the fact that Chaos Spawns were cannibals who mercilessly devoured each other.

Thus, it was common for dukes to fight each other. In the end, the map was only there to serve as a reference and indicate to him where the exit was.

Once everything was ready, Sol finally opened a drawer and took the few hunting suits folded in them.

'Well, I am more than ready...at least I think I am.'

It was time to see what the fourth circle looked like.

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[4th Circle of Hell]

"Ugh...Disgusting."

The moment Sol entered the 4th circle, he bent down a few seconds as he fought to get back his bearing.

Currently, he felt as if thousands of maggots were crawling all over his body, and breathing became once again nearly impossible.

'Is this really the kind of world the Wings of Freedom fight to bring?'

He had heard about the little speech of Neun from Setsuna. In essence, their ideology was not bad, only their means were detestable. Now that he saw what it means to live in a world infested with Chaos, Sol couldn't help but reject their dreams from the very bottom of his heart.

This world was a world unfit for the weak. There was only one rule, "Survive, evolve, or die."

It was the rule of survival of the fittest at the highest degree.

"Where am I?"

He could see that it was in what looked like a jungle with trees of different colors. Once Sol became a little accustomed to the ambient mana and atmosphere, he was about to bring out the map and find in which territory he had landed in, when—

Bzzz *Swoosh*

More with instincts than with thought, Sol leaned back and avoided a fast-moving projectile.

The moment it landed on the ground, everything began to corrode and in the blink of an eye, a large portion of the tree and the ground in the surroundings melted away.

Sol's expression grew awful and he immediately converged all his energy while moving forward.

'What the hell was that? I couldn't even feel it until it was close to me.'

Bzzz *Swoosh*

A long chase begins as Sol ran through the jungle. Running, jumping, and climbing trees, again and again.

His movements were incredibly erratic as he constantly avoided all the projectiles. In the process of evading, he extended his senses and tried to find the source of the attack.

The more he moved, the harder it was to move as he wanted. The enemy seemed to slowly grasp his movement and corner him. In the end, after Sol jumped out from a tree, the very moment he landed—

Bzzz *Swoosh* *Bang*

He was finally unable to avoid it and was shot in the head.

Somewhere a little more far away, about three kilometers, a weird life form that looked like a fusion between a mosquito and a man, lowered an appendage that had the form of a sniper rifle and showed an ugly smile.

"Hahaha, those little dragons aren't that strong after all. Lord Dordonii will reward me greatly. Perhaps I can even eat enough to become a lord myself. Kukuku! Lord Derk! Such a mighty name I will have!"

Since the dragons would regularly send young elites to sweep through the lower level, the Dukes that managed to survive were extremely cunning. Different entrances had different guardians and their job was to attack the intruders while judging their strength.

There have been very very few cases of them succeeding in killing a young dragon, but they didn't need to. As long as a dragon was put on the verge of death, powerful dragons would come and save them.

"To think that his head didn't explode even after receiving a direct shot."

He couldn't help but salivate at the thought of such a powerful body.

'It would be fine if I just ate some of his limbs, right?'

"Heh, It's the first time I see a Chaos Spawn that isn't a mindless beast. I guess those close to the Duke level are different?"

'Not good!'

The insectoid being felt a chill run down his spine and tried to flee, but a claw powerfully gripped his neck, threatening to snap it at any moment.

"I like dealing with intelligent beings. After all, intelligence means an understanding and fear of death."

'How is this possible! I was sure I got him. Even if he has a powerful body, how did he reach me so fast?'

"Now then, let's make some rules clear."

Derk immediately felt like he was being plunged into cold water. A killing intent so powerful, that it was as if a sword was piercing his heart.

"Move and I will kill you.

Use your mana and I will kill you.

Make a sound and I will kill you[2]."

At each of his words, the killing intent grew stronger and fiercer. He had no doubts that the being behind him was no young dragon. The difference in power between them was simply too wide.

"Now that you understand, slowly close your eyes. Don't resist. You know what will happen if you don't listen to me, right?"

Standing behind him, Sol grinned. Now it was time to experiment on a live body.