

Hunter 941

Chapter 941: Most Challenging Skill Selection Yet

Jake had never been a massive fan of fully committing to something, especially not if that decision would have permanent consequences. At least, he wasn't when it came to defining his Path. He still felt as if he was barely getting started exploring the system and his Path despite having spent well over a century with the system, if one counted time dilation.

He did commit sometimes. Arcane Supremacy had been a big commitment and "locked" him into his arcane affinity for good. There was no going back from that one, with his body permanently altered to better fit his affinity while making any other weaker in combat. However, that one didn't feel like that big of a commitment. Jake's arcane affinity was his affinity, so it was just confirming it did indeed belong to him and was optimal for his Path.

This entire skill selection felt different, though. Outside of the two first skills – Disruptive Arrow of Arcane Shadows and Stealth Attack of the Unseen Arcane Hunter – the other three were very much permanent decisions. Even the Gluttunous Fangs skill was a very permanent decision.

Passive skills tended to be, and the curse skill had a whole bunch of passive effects. It would link Jake far more closely with the Sin Curse that made up Eternal Hunger, and while it wasn't quite an attunement skill, it would tie Eternal Hunger and the Path of curses even more closely to Jake... and he still wasn't completely certain he wanted that.

Sure, Jake did want to use curses, but he didn't want it to be too big of a part of his Path. He still wanted to primarily be an arcane hunter first and foremost. There was also the fact that Gluttunous Fangs of Eternal Hunger only worked on melee weapons and melee attacks.

Jake had made considerations about integrating Eternal Hunger into ranged combat for a while. More accurately, he had considered if he could use the mythical weapon in conjunction with Protean Arrow. If he could design an arrow using Eternal Hunger as its base, shooting it more like a spear. Seeing as he could always retrieve the weapon as it was bound to his soul, this idea was quite appealing, even if there were still a few snags.

Nothing said the skill would mess up that plan. In fact, it was even possible that Gluttunous Fangs would make this idea even better, but Jake was still a bit doubtful. Honestly, a lot of what made Jake apprehensive about this skill was pure speculation... and the fact that he kind of liked Lone Hunter and Huntmaster more simply because of the future potential he saw in both of them.

Also, both had "hunter" in the name... alright, one had Huntmaster, but a Huntmaster was also a kind of hunter, so it counted. They were also both related to his class, so that was an extra bonus point, once more due to the future potential. He could see this choice unlocking another greater one once he reached level 320, where he would get the final skill selection of C-grade... and the final skill selections tended to have an extra good skill. For reference, E-grade he got Arrow of the Ambitious Hunter – now Protean Arrow - and in D-grade, he got Relentless Hunt and the entire concept of Hunting Momentum.

Who knows, chances are it would even help define his B-grade class evolution, making him lean further into either the Path of a Huntmaster or a Lone Hunter.

The big question was... which one fit Jake better? Going by recent happenings, Huntmaster probably did. It also had a lot of pros. As mentioned, Jake believed it was a slightly higher rarity skill than Lone Hunter, thus making it closer to mythical. In a fight like the Prima Guardian he had just gone through, it would definitely have been great with no real downsides. All it would have done was make everyone else a little bit stronger and help Jake build up some Hunting Momentum for a few more big arrows.

Not to say Lone Hunter wouldn't have been helpful. Here, in the final parts of the fight in space, it would probably have worked, right? Seeing as he was alone, that is. This also raised some questions about when Jake was truly "alone" or fighting with others, but knowing the system, it tended to be pretty smart about things like that, such as how Big Game Hunter worked even before Jake technically entered a fight with a more powerful foe, simply due to his intent to attack. So there was a good chance Lone Hunter would work as long as Jake "felt" as if he was fighting alone.

That was actually one of the big differences between the two: Jake getting stronger. Huntmaster didn't buff Jake at all; it only made everyone else stronger. Meanwhile, Lone Hunter only worked on Jake... and Jake guessed it would work quite well.

All the effects of Lone Hunter were great. It buffed his stealth skills passively, made his Relentless Hunter better, and even gave him more stats from Big Game Hunter. It was just a straight-up buff when fighting alone.

Huntmaster relied on other people and only ever worked when he was with others. The buffs it gave them were great and numerous, but, in general, Jake wasn't a huge fan of relying on other people, even if he had a lot of reliable ones around him.

But... could Jake guarantee they would actually fight alongside him? The only reason everyone had been here for the Prima Guardian was because of the system event. What would happen after the event was

over? Could he seriously expect a full party to just stick around and level with him? And level with him when he wanted to go hunting? There would definitely have to go a whole lot of scheduling and planning into making it work...

Everyone simply had their own things to deal with and their own Paths.

Finally... Jake couldn't help but remember a conversation he had with the Viper a long time ago. He had always described the Path to godhood as a lonely one. Even if Jake could assume others were willing to walk alongside him for Huntmaster, would they be able to? Right now, they were still only C-grade, and while he didn't doubt most of the people on Earth he usually fought alongside could reach B-grade, he wasn't really that certain how long they could keep going.

Nor how fast they would be.

One of the reasons they had all kind of kept pace for now was due to the peculiar circumstances of a new universe getting integrated. The sheer flood of Records allowed everyone to level a fair deal, but as the system events slowed down and everyone began to do their own things, it wasn't hard to imagine their leveling paces would also start to differentiate significantly.

Not to mention that they all had their own matters to deal with. The Fallen King had to manage those who served him, and Jake didn't doubt he wanted to expand his influence. Caleb was a Judge in the Court of Shadows and had their family to take care of, while Carmen was a Runemaiden of Valhal. Even if she decided to fight in a group, it wouldn't be with him but with others from Valhal.

Casper was the same, belonging to the Risen. All the humans he knew belonged somewhere, except maybe the Sword Saint, but Jake was fully aware he and the old man couldn't be attached to the hip all of their lives. He had his own Path to travel as he pursued the peak of swordsmanship.

So... who could Jake even have in this Huntin Party on a consistent basis? Sylphie, perhaps? Sandy wasn't a fighter and didn't count, and Vesperia would definitely not be out running after Jake and hunting. She was a True Royal Hive Queen, and even participating directly in a fight against the Prima Guardian was a big deal.

Finally... there was one big reason why Huntmaster made him hesitate: Jake genuinely preferred to fight alone.

Not just because he was a selfish asshole who didn't want other people around him but because he didn't like the loss of control when other people got involved. Jake felt like he could ensure his own safety and the flow of the battle for the most part. When others got involved... not so much.

He always had to split a part of his focus to watch out for his allies. When Jake saw Vesperia nearly have her entire head crushed by the Prima Guardian, his heart skipped a beat. When Sylphie was about to get crushed by the Twinhead Emperor, Jake couldn't even think clearly. He knew that they were both strong in their own right, but he also knew that he was stronger than both of them... and if Jake wanted to truly push himself, he would have to fight more challenging and formidable foes in the future. He wasn't even sure he wanted to drag Sylphie or Vesperia around for things like that if it was an option.

This tale has been unlawfully lifted without the author's consent. Report any appearances on Amazon.

Because... no matter how reliable others could be, they would never be able to measure up to Jake's trust in his own abilities. He could always rely on himself, no matter the situation. He was the only person Jake could one-hundred percent always rely on and the only person who never had any scheduling conflicts for when hunting would be a good time.

Jake also couldn't be forced into a situation where he couldn't rely on himself either, while it was more than possible someone like Ell'Hakan could isolate Jake from his allies. If that happened and he had Huntmaster... yeah, that would suck. Not to mention, Jake doubted Ell'Hakan or anyone like that would even try to fight Jake unless they could ensure they would fight him alone under favorable circumstances.

As Jake was still wracking his brain, he got a message through the Golden Mark.

"The cosmic worm will be arriving at your location in around fifteen minutes," the Fallen King informed him.

Hearing the King gave Jake an idea, as he asked. "Alright, thanks. Say, what do you plan on doing after dealing with all of the Prima Guardians and the event concludes?"

"That is an odd question that came out of nowhere... but if you wish to know, then I shall seek a way to separate myself from you in earnest. My soul remains tethered to yours, but I have been researching

methods to sever that connection for good to fully reclaim my life as my own," the Fallen King answered honestly.

"A good goal," Jake genuinely agreed. He kind of forgot they were connected most of the time, and he didn't want to lose his cool mask... but he also didn't want to keep the Fallen King tied to him against the Unique Lifeform's will. "Let's assume you succeed. Would you ever be interested in going hunting together?"

"Knowing you and what hunting entails, no. I do not see the purpose in taking tremendous risks and facing more powerful foes than myself repeatedly," the King answered, seemingly not even taking his question that seriously.

"Alright," Jake said, as he decided to quickly reach out to some of the others. Before he made his decision he at least wanted to probe what kind of response he would get if he did end up with Huntmaster. The message he sent didn't explain what kind of skill he had been offered but just asked in general if people wanted to form a hypothetical "hunting party" with him, and the responses were kind of predictable.

"Not gonna say no to a bit of adventuring once in a while if I got the time, but to make an entire thing out of it? Nah, no thanks," Carmen answered casually.

"Go hunting with you on a consistent basis? My boss and my wife would both kill me. Even if they don't, the paperwork when I return from an adventurer definitely would," Caleb shut the idea down.

"While I would love the occasional excursion with Sire, I would find it difficult to commit to anything... and do be aware that should we go hunting outside of the ninety-third universe, or should the universe open up, I do have protectors assigned to me while outside the Heartlands," Vesperia also made it clear she wouldn't be able to hunt much and would be a sucky hunting partner as Jake didn't want a bunch of hidden gods keeping watch at all times. It would ruin the experience and the Records of it all.

"I don't need you to be a third wheel during my leveling... it's pretty much the only time me and Lyra can just be the two of us,"

Casper also shut Jake down, preferring dates with his ghost girlfriend.

"Ree, ree, ree," Sylphie explained, being the most agreeable of everyone... though even she had the "sometimes" part. Apparently, Stormild had actually been a useful Patron and given Sylphie some advice to strike out on her own more and explore herself and not be shackled down. That, as a part-elemental of the wind affinity, her Path was one of freedom and impulsivity, and she should take the time to just be her flighty self and let the wind take her wherever it blows. Doing anything else could hurt her Records... something Jake definitely didn't want to risk doing.

However, out of everyone, the one who seemed to understand the most what Jake was asking and what he meant with his question was the Sword Saint, who also gave the longest answer.

"Rather than merely giving you a yes or a no, let me explain a bit about my own approach to this topic. Hunting with others isn't something I do out of personal preference but out of necessity or when it's proven the superior option. If given the choice, I would face all fights on my lonesome. This is not because I dislike fighting with you, but because of the Path I walk. Fighting alongside others makes you adopt certain habits, and I fear that I may develop a form of swordsmanship reliant on others... which could prove fatal when I find myself alone. Also, I initially picked up the sword for sport and to duel with others. I prefer a good bout against a single foe to see who is superior, not who can overwhelm the other with numbers first."

Jake listened as the old man shared his thought process on the matter quite in-depth, likely seeing the true reason why Jake asked what he asked.

"I have been on the battlefield many times, but before and after the system arrived. Having comrades you can trust fully is a beautiful thing... but I also know the pain of losing those comrades. Even if you trust them, that doesn't make them fully reliable, and should they fall, you are back to relying on yourself once more. What I'm saying is I wouldn't make any decisions that rely on the whims or abilities of others. I have skipped skills that would have helped us fight as a group for more selfish options, as, ultimately, I'm selfish. And I know that so are you. A certain egotistical mindset is required to try and reach the lofty goals we both aspire toward, and I'm not even going into how big egos tend to clash. Let me finish rambling and just say I would recommend that you embrace your selfishness... assuming it doesn't mean you are no longer able to fight alongside others when the preferred option. Limiting yourself also doesn't sound like a smart choice, but choosing your own Path is naturally entirely up to you. I just shared my own selfish desire to not lose a valuable – occasional – comrade in arms."

Much of what the Sword Saint said echoed Jake's own thoughts, and while he didn't say it directly, he also made it pretty clear he wouldn't be a member of Jake's hunting party. It did validate quite a few of Jake's thoughts and confirm his doubt if being a Huntmaster was even a viable Path for him.

Jake could see it work way better for weaker people. The problem was all the peers of Jake were supremely talented individuals themselves. Would they even be willing to effectively work under a Huntmaster? Jake knew he wouldn't...

If Jake was weaker, he could more easily find people to join his Hunting Party. Jake didn't think that this Hunting Party was a permanent thing, but one where he could switch out members or even the entire party for every hunt. If it was possible to recruit just ten regular elites for this, it would be far more valuable, but for Jake, it would just end up being him effectively running a boosting service.

Yeah... it wasn't that Huntmaster was bad, but that it didn't really work properly. To put it simply, Jake was too strong to try and assemble a proper Hunting Party:

Better to just become a one-man hunting party instead.

He didn't ask Arnold about his opinion as the scientist didn't have a Golden Mark, but Jake also knew there was no reason to. Even if he had the choice, Jake didn't want to go hunting with Arnold. The dude would probably turn everything into an experiment or never actually go himself, but just send different test robots or some shit. No, best to keep him as Jake's favorite crafter buddy.

Maria also wasn't asked, simply because Jake didn't really want to form a hunting party with her either. Firstly, they were both archers and secondly, because of what Jake had just gone over: She just wasn't strong enough. Oh, and third, he didn't really know or trust her that much. Eron was also in the camp of people he didn't really know and trust well enough to be a hunting partner. Jake was also sure he would say no.

Sighing, Jake kept staring at the five skill option in front of him. This was definitely the most excruciating skill selection he ever had, and he low-key wanted all of them. The thought of not picking Lone Hunter or Huntmaster also struck him, as it was possible to wait and see if he could get a "merged" version of the two down the line... but that would cut him off from any potential skills picking it now could unlock when he reached level 320.

Also, nothing said he couldn't upgrade Lone Hunter to still have some effect while fighting in a group. The fact that it didn't have any drawbacks meant that it likely wouldn't develop any either... and if it did, he could just choose not to go down that Path.

Jake had always been strongest when alone... and in the end, he ended up doubling down on that to become even stronger as a Lone Hunter. He genuinely believed it was the best choice for him.

Besides, he doubted it would have been easy to find anyone willing to go on a hunting spree for gods while still a mortal.

Right as he felt Sandy approach, Jake finally made the most challenging skill choice he had to so far as he picked Lone Hunter.

Skill Gained: [Lone Hunter of Horizon's Edge (Legendary)] – Hunting is a lonely endeavor, yet one best enjoyed alone, as there is only the hunter and his prey. As a Lone Hunter, you prefer the solitude found in a good hunt, and you specialize in facing your prey alone. Allows the hunter to gain certain benefits when hunting alone, but will have no effect if you work alongside others. Significantly increases all bonuses granted by your Big Game Hunter skill when hunting alone. When Lone Hunter of Horizon's Edge is active, all stealth-related skills are more effective. When hunting alone, Hunting Momentum is accumulated from Relentless Hunt of the Avaricious Arcane Hunter far faster, and less is lost when the hunter takes damage. As you walk down the Path of a Lone Hunter, more benefits may follow. Increases all experience gained from successful lone hunts. May you strike fear into the hearts of all who find themselves marked as the prey of the Lone Hunter of Horizon's Edge.

Chapter 942: Within the Prima Vessel

Likely due to the passive nature of the Lone Hunter, Jake didn't really feel anything different after getting it. He considered testing out the one aspect he could right now, namely the improved effectiveness of stealth, but he reckoned there would come a better time after returning to Earth. Right now, all it could potentially do was make it harder for Sandy to find him. Besides, there would definitely be many chances for Lone Hunting around during what was to come with the Prima Guardian Alliance.

As Jake had felt, Sandy appeared not long after, popping out of what looked like a hole in space. Jake regarded the worm, and once more, he could only be happy to have a living spaceship available. If not, it would have taken annoyingly long to fly back to Earth, especially with his Wings of the Malefic Viper unavailable.

"Couldn't even have begun flying to meet me halfway?" the giant space worm asked in an admonishing tone.

"Shouldn't expect an injured patient to move around too much," Jake responded.

"Always with the excuses... now get in here," Sandy said while opening their maw. Jake felt the suction and didn't resist as he was eaten.

He appeared in a pretty familiar-looking room as he raised his eyebrows. "You made a new alchemy lab for me?"

"I didn't make it; the people at the Order did. Try not to make me break everything again by making me face another B-grade, alright?" Sandy said semi-jokingly.

"Now that you mentioned it, we could check out what's going on with Mars..." Jake said, for a split second seriously considering it, before shaking his head. "Next time, that is. For now, let's get back to Earth. Good suggestion, though, maybe there's also a few B-grades on other planets."

"Sure, sure, let's also go see some of the solar systems closer to the core of the galaxy! Maybe we can even find a few A- or even an S-grade or two there! Great thinking, Jake!" Sandy said, not super receptive to Jake's great suggestion.

"That definitely does sound like something we should do down the line! Imagine what kind of treasures they're hiding; it's gonna be awesome!" Jake kept the gag going... though he not joking at all. But, again, all of that was for later.

Nothing in his Lone Hunter skill said anything about using a taxi service either, and seeing as Sandy wasn't a fighter at all, Jake believed it should be possible to have Lone Hunter be active even while traveling with the worm. It was not like Sandy would ever get involved in any kind of fighting if the worm could avoid it.

Sandy didn't give any response but was too busy entering subspace, or Sandy's Sand World, as they called it, to speed up their return trip. Jake got the hint and entered meditation to try and fully recover by the time they got back. He had already healed a fair deal during his skill evaluation time, but he was far from in top form.

The space voyage ended up being relatively uneventful, taking only about four hours in total, Sandy having gotten even faster since their moon journey despite literally dying. Jake healed up as well as he could during this time, with the only communication happening during this time being Miranda sending

him updates about how everything was going and the Fallen King asking once when Jake and Sandy would be back.

Jake learned from Miranda that things were going pretty damn well. It was just a cleanup of Primas, with everyone able to assist in killing the many enemy monsters doing their utmost. Earth did still take quite a few losses, but not a single person Jake knew the name of died.

After Eron had dealt with healing the strike team, he began to help kill regular Primas, with others also following suit when able. Miranda even praised William a fair deal, calling him a "valuable asset," with Jake not socially inept enough to not know what she meant by that.

She wanted to make use of William. Even if Jake didn't like him, he could recognize William could be of great assistance in certain matters. Karma mages were one of the rarest types of mages around, primarily because learning about karmic magic without a teacher was incredibly difficult, and it was easy to form wrong conclusions that could make you screwed down the line. Shit, Jake would probably suck quite a bit at karma magic due to his overly simplistic view of karma. Even if it wasn't inaccurate, he just viewed karma as some kind of connection between people and other people or things. This wasn't wrong... but too simplistic to work with to achieve anything substantial. So, to conclude, karmic magic wasn't anything Jake wanted to learn about actively.

William, on the other hand, had learned the Legacy of Eversmile, the foremost expert in karmic magic in the entire multiverse. Eversmile hadn't taught him anything fake either, but his genuine Legacy. From what Jake understood, William was even pretty damn talented in karmic magic. In fact, he seemed pretty talented in all forms of magic and mana manipulation as a whole. He truly was a genius in his own right... but that didn't mean Jake liked him.

Perhaps he could tolerate him, though. If Miranda wanted to make use of the mage, Jake could at least put his personal feelings aside as long as he didn't have to play too nice with the guy. He also knew that Casper had steered very clear of William for a good reason, as he was partly responsible for Casper having a ghost girlfriend and not a regular living girlfriend.

Actually... Casper wouldn't even have become a Risen if not for William, would he? He also wasn't sure if Jacob would have ever become an Augur. Who knows... the gods were clearly playing quite a few games during the Tutorial, and Jake really didn't want to uselessly dwell on the past. Suffice it to say, what William had done hadn't made him the most popular of sorts, but if someone like Casper could resist killing the guy on sight, so could Jake allow Miranda to make use of him.

And, no, Jake wasn't afraid of William taking advantage of Miranda or messing with her using karmic magic. He had personally seen all the damn magic she constantly deployed to defend herself, especially against any form of mental influence, and there was no way William could get through that. If he did manage to, Jake also felt confident he or someone else would notice. Finally... William could be bold, yes, but Jake really hoped he wasn't dumb enough to start shit, or they could have a repeat of the Tutorial, and this time there would be no Eversmile with a Golden Leaf of Yggdrasil.

These were just some of the things Jake considered on the way back, as he honestly didn't have anything better to do while recovering. Once they broke through the final layer of clouds, and he could fully see the desert below, he returned his attention to the outside world and the huge metal egg-shaped thing still nested within its crater.

He could see a bit of fighting still taking far away at a few of the defensive sections, but the Primas really were just about wiped out. At the Prima Vessel, he saw the strike team gathered once more, most of them never having left as they were recovering. Even if they had healed their bodies, prolonged use of boosting skills really wasn't healthy.

"Sandy Express arriving at Prima Vessel Station now. All passengers, please depart now or be thrown out forcefully and get a mouthful of sand," Sandy said in a very professional tone as Jake felt the space around his body quiver a bit.

Not resisting, Jake was spit out as he appeared floating a bit above the sand, not far from the rest of the strike team. Oh, and by the rest of the strike team, Jake only meant those who didn't have to disengage. Maria and Casper were still nowhere to be seen, likely recovering on their own somewhere else. Arnold was back with the group, though, and he looked quite curious to see what was going on with the Prima Vessel.

The author's tale has been misappropriated; report any instances of this story on Amazon.

Jacob had also appeared. It wasn't like he was of much help in the cleanup battle anyway, but he wanted to be there for this Prima Vessel exploration. Jake could perhaps have said no and rejected him, but he didn't care enough to. The more the merrier to check out what was up with the giant egg-like metal meteor.

"About bloody time," Carmen said when she saw Jake had returned. "Just how far up did you chase that damn chimera?"

"Quite far, obviously," Jake answered with a smile. "My escape skill has been put on a ridiculously long cooldown, that's for sure."

"Stop delaying and get us into the Prima Vessel already," the Fallen King said, having no patience for chit-chat.

Jake had already spotted the new opening, which had a white barrier blocking it. Not even Jake could see through it, but when he laid eyes on it, he faintly felt a response from the key imprinted on the back of his hand.

"Alright, alright," Jake said as he floated up, the others naturally following along curiously, with Sandy deciding this wasn't anything they bothered to get involved in as the worm took off once more. Reaching the barrier, Jake simply reached out, and the moment he touched it with the hand holding the key, it disappeared, leaving an opening about three meters wide and four meters tall. It led straight into a hallway, and to Jake's surprise, there was no spatial expansion going on.

He did notice whatever was there had been "generated" by the system after the Prima Guardian had died, as the entire section of the Prima Vessel he now saw hadn't been present before.

Entering the hallway, the others followed as Jake kept a lookout for traps, but he didn't feel anything dangerous anywhere. The hallway led to a cross-section not soon after, with a room to each side and one straight ahead. Two of the rooms were blocked by barriers, each with the same key symbol as the one on Jake's hand. The last one had both Jake's key symbol and a number that currently displayed "31" before dropping to "30" while they were looking. Jake quickly guessed this was the number of surviving Primas and that this one would only open after the last one was dead. What lay beyond this barrier was quite interesting, too, because there wasn't anything on the other side.

Not as in there being a big empty room, but that the entire space just didn't exist. It looked like the inside of a lockbox that hadn't been opened yet... making Jake guess this room could effectively be a giant lockbox. That was pretty exciting to think about, but he was more interested in the two other rooms first. The room off to the other side had what looked like teleportation platforms within, and Jake was very curious to discover where they led.

The first room he chose to enter was the one straight ahead, though. Because Jake could see what that was before he even opened the barrier: a control room.

Holding up his hand with the seal on it, the barrier quickly melded away as Jake and the others entered.

"The interior is reminiscent of the Seat of the Exalted Prima," the Sword Saint commented, everyone nodding in agreement.

There was definitely a high magical tech vibe to the entire place. The silvery surfaces definitely helped set the mood, and as Jake approached what he assumed to be the main console, he saw what looked like a steel ball half-inserted into the dashboard. It reminded him of an old upside-down ball mouse.

"Pretty sure you're the only one who can operate stuff," Carmen said after she had haphazardly tried to press down on the surface of the dashboard several times.

"Very likely," Jake nodded as he reached out and touched the embedded steel ball. The second his hand laid upon it, the entire control room came to life, and a giant screen appeared in front of them all, showing a massive map of something quite familiar.

"The Milky Way Galaxy," Arnold noted as small flag-like markers began appearing all over the map. "And these markers appear to show planets certain planets."

Jake counted thousands of markers in total and noted how they all had three different colors. One color was red, which was displayed on most planets. Another was blue, which was showing on hundreds of others. Finally, there were green flags... three in total.

Focusing on the different colors, Jake quickly came to know that the red flags marked planets with an ongoing Prima Guardian conflict, but only those not part of the alliance. The blue markers were all the planets part of the alliance also with unkilld Prima Guardians, while finally, the green markers were the planets that had killed their Prima Guardian.

"Three planets have managed to take down their Prima Guardian?" Jake questioned out loud. "One of them is us, I bet Ell'Hakan is another... but who is the third one?"

No one said anything, seemingly as puzzled as Jake. He had nearly expected Vesperia to speak up that it was some insect hive or that Arnold would jump in and inform him it was another follower of some Void God, but nope, no one seemed to know.

There was also one other big question...

"If three planets cleared the Prima Guardian already, who did it first?" Caleb questioned.

"It should be us, right?" Carmen said, sounding pretty sure.

"Very likely," Arnold weighed in. "Even if we were not, I'm uncertain as to its significance if we were first. The Prima Guardian we killed was an outlier and likely the only one of its kind, so in some ways, it can assumed we would have gotten the first kill on our kind of Prima Guardian no matter how long it would have taken us."

"Dwelling on it is useless," the Fallen King added as he regarded Jake. "What more are you capable of doing with this Prima Vessel?"

"Good question," Jake said as he placed his hand back on the metal ball again. He connected to the Prima Vessel more than before, and quickly, information entered his mind. He saw an interior map of the entire Prima Vessel and what it could do... which wasn't a super lot. But it did have some functions, one of which he wanted to try pretty quickly.

"Hang on, people," Jake said, and without any warning, activated the teleportation function.

Turns out there was no reason for Jake to tell anyone to hang on, as no one inside the Prima Vessel felt a thing, as from the outside, the entire metal egg teleported away in the blink of an eye... to reappear again deep beneath the surface of the planet.

"What did you do?" Caleb asked.

"Teleported us close to the Planetary Pylon," Jake commented. "We're right now at the core of the planet."

"... I assume you can teleport us back again?" the Sword Saint asked with a raised eyebrow.

Jake just smiled and changed the topic, as the teleportation feature was entirely gone from the options he had available. "Oh, look at that on the map!"

He had activated some more features as information began to appear around the blue flags – the planets part of the Prima Guardian Alliance. It provided some basic information about the planet, such as its general core affinities and whatnot, and Jake saw quite a mix. Some planets had overwhelming water affinity, others were planets of rock and magma, while one was primarily wind affinity... yeah, they should definitely try to send Sylphie there to have some fun.

Jake's plan had been to distract everyone from the fact he may have fucked up with the teleport, and it had worked wonders, as Jake had even forgotten his own fuck-up as he noticed something else.

Right around the center of the galaxy, in an area dense with countless stars, there weren't any planets with flags showing Prima Guardians despite the density of stars, but a new marker appeared when Jake activated a function. A larger-than-average golden flag popped up, marking not the location of any Prima Guardian... but perhaps what this entire system event was all leading up to.

The Seat of the Eternal Prima.

And when Jake focused on it even more... he made a new screen pop up for them all to see.

Seat of the Exalted Prima

This marks the location of the Seat of the Exalted Prima within the Milky Way Galaxy. Currently, the Seat is being controlled and taken care of by a temporary administrator while the Administrator Selection is in progress. Should an individual be named the new Administrator of the Seat of the Exalted Prima, they will gain full control of it and be one step closer to controlling the true World Wonder known as the [Redacted].

Performance during this Prima Guardian event will heavily impact the rankings of all Administrator Candidates. Given a sufficiently satisfactory performance, full graduation to Administrator during this event is possible.

They all read this, as nothing was really surprising there. They had always known that the Seat of the Exalted Prima was just one part of what was some great World Wonder. A branch of sorts. Still... taking control of it was an interesting prospect, and Jake was sure Miranda would be more than happy to have Jake unload all responsibility on her if he did end up taking control of it.

"What can the Seat even do if you take control of it?" Carmen questioned. "Maybe something to do with that Myriad Paths event we did there?"

"Perhaps," Jake shrugged, truly not knowing. Nor did he care. "This isn't really as much about me wanting to take control of it, but to make sure someone like Ell'Hakan doesn't."

"Fair," Carmen shrugged. "Can you see the rankings anywhere?"

"Let me see... oh, here we go," Jake said as he made a ranking pop up over the golden flag, displaying three names.

Current Administrator Candidate Rankings (subject to change):

1: Jake Thayne

2: Ell'Hakan

3: I

Seeing himself at the top over Ell'Hakan was nice... but...

"Who the fuck is called I?" Jake questioned, confused... though he had a strong feeling he would come to learn who – or what – they were during this event.

Chapter 943: Planetary Pylon

"This makes little sense," the Sword Saint frowned. "The Milky Way is only that big, how could a third being roughly on the level of you and Ell'Hakan have appeared?"

Jake could only remain silent, as he truly had no idea. This made the old man sigh as he continued. "If it was someone from Earth or related to us, it would make more sense... do you think this individual may have some kind of connection to Ell'Hakan?"

"No way to know," Jake shrugged. "But I somehow doubt it. Either way, chances are we will end up meeting this person at some point, and we can learn the details then. If it's another enemy, fine. If it's an ally, even better. For now, who cares? I think we got plenty of other matters to deal with."

The Fallen King looked at Jake, who expected what he was about to say to be about this "I" individual, but instead, he reminded Jake of something quite important.

"Seeing as we're now close to the Planetary Pylon, perhaps going to claim it would be an idea? Possibly, there are bonuses to doing that first," he reminded Jake.

"Oh, fuck," Jake realized. "Be right back."

With those words, Jake stormed back down the hallway to exit the Prima Vessel, leaving the rest to enjoy staring at the pretty map of the galaxy. It was finally time to lay claim to his planet for good.

Ell'Hakan clenched his newly regenerated fist, recognizing that the Prima Guardian had been more powerful than expected. In the end, he even had to give up one of his arms to strike it down for good. The losses they had taken also weren't insignificant, and the Chosen had to recognize that these "helpers" he had chosen left much to be desired. At times, he regretted getting rid of the Ashen Devourer, but he also knew that keeping the Unique Lifeform under control wouldn't have been feasible.

Nevertheless, this hadn't been something Ell'Hakan couldn't handle with his most trusted aides, and he made sure all who died were those he didn't view as essential. It did help a good amount to have the powerful "champions" of other planets die, as they would make them more reliant on Ell'Hakan going

forward, but he also couldn't overdo it. No, ultimately, it was far better to simply turn those champions into his own aides.

The Prima Guardian they faced had been an odd creature. It was some form of chimera that, after a bit of fighting, had morphed and transformed into a creature reminiscent of a large stone elemental, just with a bit of the stone replaced by biological parts. With its level at 345, it had nearly reached peak C-grade, far above what most of the people present could handle.

Its primary abilities seemed to have been to absorb all forms of energy attacks thrown at it while at the same time taking in the atmospheric mana and using that to create an optimal form for itself. An interesting and tricky opponent, for sure.

The assistance of the many regular Primas had naturally also been a problem, but they'd handled it pretty well. Sure, a few tens of thousands had died, but they were all from the more problematic camps. Meanwhile, the ones from the greater factions had done quite splendidly. The armies from the Holy Church, as one example, had done exemplary.

Which perhaps shouldn't be surprising considering they controlled so many of the planets part of the alliance and were more than willing contributors to his cause. Striking a close relationship had been one of the best decisions Ell'Hakan had made.

With the Prima Guardian slain, he proceeded into the Prima Vessel and headed straight for what he recognized as the control room. A few of his most loyal aides went along with him, studying the Prima Vessel.

Laying his hand on the dashboard, the map of the galaxy appeared. His eyes opened wide, when he saw it display not just the planets part of the alliance, but all of them. Knowing the exact location of a planet held a lot of value... far more than most recognized. Having everyone know where his own homeworld wasn't particularly pleasant either.

Manipulating the map a bit, he finally had the rankings appear.

His face fell as he stared at the list. The Chosen of the Malefic One being in the first spot on the list to become an Administrator of the Seat of the Exalted Prima was not something he liked to see, but it also wasn't unexpected. It could be worked with, at the very least.

However... the third individual... someone simply named "I," a single letter...

Ell'Hakan truly had no idea how that had happened or who it could be. He had no intelligence from his god or any of the other gods who worked with Yip of Yore either.

Sighing, Ell'Hakan wasn't a fan of this development.

The situation and event overall were already complicated enough as is, and he didn't need some other unknown factor to mess things up further.

You have claimed a Planetary Pylon.

By controlling the Pylon, you have claimed ownership over the planet known as Earth. Your aura seeps into the planet itself, marking it as your own. While on your own planet, all energy regeneration is increased. Protect the planet, expand your empire, and walk the Path of Kings. Note that contrary to Pylon's of Civilization, a Planetary Pylon cannot be taken from you unless you are slain.

Having claimed the Planetary Pylon, so have you claimed every Pylon of Civilization on the planet. All City Lords will remain unaffected unless actions are taken to make it otherwise.

Bonuses to all citizens on your planet:

Increases all experience earned while within the domain by a minor amount for all non-combat-related activities.

Jake stood in front of a large all-black core that looked like it was made out of pure carbon. He had his hand on it, and despite the blistering heat of the Core Room, Jake didn't feel a thing as an aura expanded from the Planetary Pylon.

The genuine version of this novel can be found on another site. Support the author by reading it there.

He had finally fully laid claim to Earth, and he felt his energy spread out through the mantle of the planet. Every single part of it was marked as his territory, and Jake faintly felt the slightly increased energy regeneration. It was incredibly minor and didn't really matter in the grand scheme of things – neither did the extra experience points for doing non-combat stuff – but it was all just good bonuses to get.

These were also the exact same bonuses the Pylon of Civilization gave. In fact, one could view this as Jake having just claimed a Pylon of Civilization that covered the entire planet. It was all his now... or, more accurately, it was all Miranda's to deal with now.

Having claimed the Pylon, Jake also got a small bonus of his own, though it wasn't really anything he cared much about.

Congratulations! For being one of the first people to claim a Planetary Pylon in your universe, your nobility title has been upgraded!

Titled Upgraded: [Nobility: Marquess] --> [Nobility: Duke]

[Nobility: Duke] – A noble who has been voted World Leader and finally fully claimed his planet as one of the first in his universe. Allows you to control several Planetary Pylons. Grants access to certain events and opportunities exclusive to nobles. Opens many new paths to power

Now, calling himself a Duke was maybe a bit cool at times, but the title was really wasted on Jake. He was perhaps one of the people in the multiverse who made the least use of his nobility title, as he'd actively avoided ever picking any skills or classes reliant on or using his nobility status. But it wasn't like having a high nobility title had any downsides, so Jake didn't really care.

Scanning the core room that now had a big metal egg sitting in it right beneath the core, Jake couldn't help but admire the size of the place. It was a huge circular cavern surrounded by magma and rocks. A few streams of lava floated as if there was no gravity from the bottom to the top or vice-versa in several areas, and Jake reckoned that the area alone would kill most early-tier C-grades. From ceiling to floor, there had to be nearly a hundred kilometers, and the mana density in the room was quite frankly insane.

Staring at the Planetary Pylon itself, Jake also had to admit that it was quite something... mainly in the sense that it felt so damn dense not even a B-grade could break it easily. The energy it contained was also through the roof. As a Planetary Core, it also had the ability to create new mana, not unlike that of a soul. It was what regulated and created most of the environmental mana on the planet, and in some ways, it was in a feedback loop with the planet itself.

It would absorb the Records of those on the planet, making itself grow. At the same time, it would spread those Records back into the planet, allowing those on it to grow. This effect was very minor, though, and it was generally recognized that there was a slight decay over time. Especially when people left the planet after having absorbed a lot of the Records provided to them.

When it came to pure energy, the Planetary Core was nearly inexhaustible. This was also the reason why Jake was certain Miranda was gonna use it to strengthen Earth's defenses. Pretty much all barriers that protected planets relied on the Planetary Core to power themselves, as there rarely were any better power sources. While using a Planetary Core to set up a barrier was quite difficult, it was far different if one had a Planetary Pylon.

Quick thing to add here... all Planetary Pylons were Planetary Cores, but not all Planetary Cores were Pylons. This was something Jake had asked Villy about a while back, as Jake wondered why people spoke about some planets with cores and some with Planetary Pylons. It turns out that Planetary Pylons are just transformed Planetary Cores.

In a new universe, the system was behind this transformation, but in the rest of the multiverse, one would never find something like Pylons of Civilization or Planetary Pylons in the wild. They were all created using certain skills and crafting methods. It also took heavy investment to turn a Core into a Pylon, so most factions only bothered with the "important" planets.

So, yeah, having a Planetary Pylon was just another gift to the newly initiated universe.

"I see you've finally claimed the Pylon," Miranda sent to Jake a few seconds later after he'd taken the Pylon.

"Sure have. I assume you can see it on your end? Is there a lot to deal with?" Jake asked.

"A lot is an understatement. I have just been granted dominion over every single Pylon on the planet, all the statistics that come with that, as well as far more control than I could imagine... I believe I will find myself quite busy in the near future. I hope you didn't count on me going hunting on other planets for this Prima Guardian Alliance," Miranda quickly explained.

"Nah, I think you're good," Jake answered, shaking his head despite knowing no one was around to see it. "By the way, do you need me to give you more permissions or something?"

"No, it doesn't look like it,"

Miranda answered. "Also... I got my nobility title upgraded. You're now speaking with a Marquis."

"I see, I see... must be an honor for a lowly Marquis to be allowed to speak with an honorable Duke," Jake joked.

"Damn, that title is wasted on you... and here I thought I had finally caught up when it came to my nobility title. Gained a few upgrades here and there, such as when we made the World Council. Oh well, I'm at least confident in making it to Queen first, as I'm not even sure where you would get more free upgrades from," Miranda said, only sounding a little bit frustrated.

"You never know. Maybe I end up taking control of the entire galaxy by accident, turning myself into an emperor," Jake joked.

"Wouldn't even be surprised at this point. Anyway, you should look into coming topside once more. The Prima cleanup is finished, and we're waiting for you and the others to discuss our next plan of action."

"Alright, see you soon. Now I just gotta figure out a way to do so fast..." Jake muttered as he turned around and flew back toward the Prima Vessel. With the planet claimed, that was one other matter handled. Miranda had also mentioned that the Prima cleanup was just about done... and releasing a Pulse, he saw the inside of the Prima Vessel, including a few people standing in front of the barrier that Jake theorized would contain loot.

Guess it's finally time to see if this damn event has some proper loot to offer.

The cracked, gray ground stretched out as far as the eye could see. The land was entirely dead, with not a single plant growing anywhere... yet this place was far from empty.

Tens of millions of figures were lying on the ground, their bodies perfectly preserved. Below them all, odd scripture marred the ground, signifying something grand had happened here. Something that had taken the life of every being on the entire planet, as there was no sign of life to be found on the entire celestial body.

The only movements to be seen were the ground dust that floated everywhere, originating not from the corpses of those who had once called the planet home but that which had arrived not long ago.

A large metal egg-like object sat not far away. Its surface was no longer blank and shiny but had an odd, almost rusted color in many places. The creatures that had emerged from this thing were now naught but the dust that made up the atmosphere of this dead world.

Yet, just then, there was movement.

A wizened hand raised itself from the ground as a creature crawled out. Dragging along with it, the giant corpse of what had once been a Prima Guardian began to turn to dust as it held it, a golden key-like symbol glowing on the creature's hand.

Within seconds, the entire corpse of the Prima Guardian had become dust, and the world turned fully monochrome again.

Congratulations on becoming a potential Administrator Candidate for the Seat of the Exalted Prima.

You do not currently possess a name to display. Please choose your display name (this will also appear on your official status) or choose to remain anonymous.

This notification appeared in front of the creature. Words it couldn't read but faintly understood.

"I... am... I..." a hoarse voice came out, as the gray dust shuddered before all fell silent once more, and the creature turned its attention toward the giant metal vessel.

Chapter 944: Prima Guardian Loot & Teleporter

Back in the Prima Vessel, Jake headed straight for where most of the strike team had already gathered. The barrier that had been sealed not only due to the lack of a key but also surviving Primas now only had the key symbol left, signifying every single Prima was indeed dead.

“Good for you to rejoin us,” Caleb said with a smile as he poked the barrier. “Need the Keymaster.”

“Eh, does anyone really care about opening it?” Jake asked casually. “It’s just the loot room. Who has time for the loot room?”

“Just open the damn thing already,” Carmen sighed. “Let’s not act like we’re expecting anything good. The real reward is supposed to come after the system event is fully concluded.”

“Who knows, maybe we get a pleasant surprise,” Jake said as he didn’t delay but walked over and placed a hand on the barrier. The moment he did, it naturally faded away, revealing what looked like a large storeroom. Large and pretty much completely empty.

“Unsurprisingly disappointing,” the Sword Saint said, shaking his head.

“It’s not completely empty,” Jake said as he walked into the room. The walls were lined with shelves that were all empty except for one spot where a shoebox-sized container sat. Jake had naturally seen this box from far away, especially because of what was inside:

More boxes. Lockboxes, to be more accurate. Each of them was a black void inside, meaning no items had spawned yet, which effectively made it into a shoebox-sized loot box for their group.

Opening the box in front of all the others, the conclusion of what the reward would be was pretty obvious.

“Rings for everyone, huh?” Carmen commented.

“Three of the boxes are of slightly different size,” Caleb pointed out.

“And one of the ring-sized ones looks different from the rest, and based on the key-symbol... I believe that is the one given to the new owner of the planet,” the Fallen King said, also looking down into the box.

“Well, it only seems fair I get my own special boy reward,” Jake grinned, teasing the others a bit that he would get his own unique reward.

Getting to their loot opening, Jake decided to be nice and let the others go first. Counting the boxes, it nearly lined up perfectly with the people who took part in the strike team. There were even boxes for Maria and Casper, who had to abandon the fight. Jake said it nearly lined up perfectly, because there was one too many, but Eron had a good idea who that belonged to.

“The karmic mage did contribute to the fight, if only by a little,” Eron said. “Perhaps just enough to qualify based on the system’s assessment.”

“I guess,” Jake muttered, not really sure who else it could be.

Without further delay, they opened the first of the “regular” ring boxes, Jake wasn’t sure what he should have expected, but based on the reactions of everyone, the reward definitely exceeded expectations. Even if the item looked a little bit confusing.

[Band of the Exalted Prima Guardian Slayer (Legendary)] – A ring worn by one who has managed to slay not just a Prima Guardian but an Exalted Prima Guardian. The Records of the Exalted Prima Guardian seeps through the ring, granting it powers. This allows you to mimic a part of the Exalted Prima Guardian’s powers, giving you adaptable stats. These stats will apply dependent on your situation and your actions. These stats can exceed the stat cap provided by equipment by up to 5% or 2500 stats, whichever is lowest. Enchantments: +10000 Adaptive Stats. Adaptive Stat Amplification. This ring may be upgraded further at the end of the Prima Guardian event.

Requirements: Slayer of the Exalted Prima Guardian

Jake had never even seen an item like this before. It reminded him a bit of his Altmar Signet, except just way fucking better in every way. From how Jake understood it – and with confirmation from the others

soon after – the ring functioned just like regular equipment when it came to giving stats, except the 10000 stats the ring provided didn't allocate themselves before it was needed.

So, as an example, when Caleb swung his staff while wearing the ring, his Agility, Strength, and Intelligence all increased by quite an amount. The Judge from the Court of Shadows wasn't fully capped out in stats he could get from equipment, so the adaptive stats capped him out on both Strength and Agility and even gave a bit extra.

The Sword Saint also tried the ring, and Jake was very interested to see how it would work for him. One had to remember that the Sword Saint was always capped out on stats he could receive from equipment while wielding a sword due to one of his skills. Yet when he used the ring, he still benefitted. His Strength, Agility, Perception, Endurance, and Vitality all increased as he swung his sword, all up to the "cap" of the extra 5% above the stat cap he could get.

This was just a few thousand extra stats... and that was for someone who was already capped out on what he could receive from equipment.

Arnold also quickly clarified the ring even worked while crafting, giving stats where relevant. Carmen even decided to go as far as to punch Eron to confirm the ring would grant defensive stats. Something it indeed did in reaction to the attack.

"Isn't this ring completely overpowered?" Jake muttered in disbelief.

"I'm not sure I would classify it as such... but it certainly is one of the best rings I have seen," the Sword Saint said. "It's also not something I think anyone can really craft that easily. The touch of the system is all over it."

"I think it's pretty fucking overpowered," Carmen chimed up in agreement with Jake's assessment. "Not to mention that last part... it can be upgraded to be even more overpowered at the end of this event."

"Glad we're all in agreement regarding its overpoweredness," Jake said with a smile. He also looked forward more than ever to seeing his own special ring... perhaps it was even better than this. For now, he had to show patience, though.

The three rings belonging to William, Maria, and Casper were all taken by the Sword Saint, who promised to hand them out later. Jake gladly had the old man do it as he really didn't want to go and give William a cool legendary ring himself.

As for Sylphie, the Fallen King, and Vesperia, they naturally couldn't get rings on account of them being monsters and unable to use equipment. However, the system hadn't forgotten them but provided them with three small boxes of their own. Opening them, each contained a small multi-colored bead within, and using Identify, Jake reckoned they were pretty damn valuable.

Unauthorized tale usage: if you spot this story on Amazon, report the violation.

[Bead of the Exalted Prima Guardian (Legendary)] – A bead containing some of the power and Records of the Exalted Prima Guardian. This energy is primed to be easily absorbable by any monster and will adapt to suit the one who consumes it perfectly. This item may be upgraded further at the end of the Prima Guardian event.

Requirements: Slayer of the Exalted Prima Guardian

Like with the rings, these beads could also be upgraded at the end of the system event. A bit cruel to force Sylphie to wait with a tasty snack right in front of her, but Jake was sure she could handle it.

He had been a bit worried it wouldn't really be of any help to Vesperia considering the flood of resources she already got from the Endless Empire, but she seemed incredibly intrigued by the item, and when Jake mentally poked her, he got an expectedly scary answer as to what she planned.

"I believe I could use this item as a catalyst when creating a Hive Queen... though I am unsure if I can create one suitable for reproduction. I may be forced to create a Warrior Queen instead, but it's too early to tell. Only at the end of the event shall the final form of the item be revealed... and if worst comes to worst, it does look quite appetizing."

So, yeah, Vesperia could potentially create some Hive Queen with Records of the Exalted Prima Guardian. Definitely scary True Royal stuff.

Everyone seemed happy with their loot so far, which left only one person to open his box. With all eyes on him and a smile on his lips, Jake opened the special final ring box. When he did so, a beautiful ring was revealed, looking very similar to the ones granted to the others. However, it somehow looked even more expensive, with a key-like symbol on the face.

With a big smile, Jake used Identify on the ring and-

[Seal of the Exalted Prima (Unique)] – Proof that you are an Administrator Candidate for the Seat of the Exalted Prima. Grants certain privileges during the Prima Guardian event. This item's true power is currently sealed and will only be unlocked after the final Prima Guardian has been slain, and will be upgraded accordingly to your performance during the event.

Requirements: Jake Thayne

"... what the fuck is this?" Jake asked out loud as he stared at the ring.

The others had also used Identify, and Carmen couldn't help but chuckle. "Hey, maybe it's just a grower, not a shower. Does say it can also be upgraded."

"Very funny," Jake muttered as he threw the Sword Saint a look. "Say, wasn't there an extra ring available?"

"The one we agreed to give to the metal mage?" the old man asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Wow, Jake is trying to steal loot from others," Carmen said, shaking her head. "You already received a ring, haven't you?"

"May as well not have," Jake muttered.

"Perhaps it shall turn great once upgraded post-event," the Fallen King commented.

"Maybe, but then it would feel like I didn't get any reward until then. Can you imagine how that would-"

The Fallen King flashed the bead, Jake shutting up.

“Fine... but at least you have the option of eating it here and now, even if that would be dumb...” Jake relented as he picked up the ring and put it away.

With all the shitty loot distributed – save for what had to be given to those who weren’t there – the hunting gang went toward the final unexplored room of the Prima Vessel. While one had housed the control room and one the loot and storeroom, the final one was perhaps the most interesting.

Unlocking the barrier and heading inside, Jake and company found themselves in a large room with a teleportation circle covering most of the floor on a raised platform in the middle. Several instruments lined the walls, with the far end having a big screen that mirrored the one in the control room. Heading inside to explore the room further, Arnold went straight to the control panel and quickly understood what it was for.

“This teleportation circle is linked to every single Prima Vessel but only established pathways to those who are part of the alliance,” the scientist shared.

“Does that mean we will be teleported directly into other Prima Vessels if we use it?” Jake questioned.

“No, they appear to link up with other teleportation circles on each planet,” Arnold shook his head.

“When entering the Prima Guardian Alliance, the system would grant the planets a blueprint to a special teleportation circle linking them to other planets part of the alliance,” Caleb shared, naturally having some insight as a Judge of the Court of Shadows. “That’s how most did all their preparations before this event and met up beforehand.”

“Can anyone teleport to this circle here on Earth now that we entered the alliance?” Vesperia questioned with some concern.

“Yes, but only those who have used it to travel in the past,” Arnold said as he kept scanning the circle and the documentation provided by the system. “That is to say, if you use this to teleport to another planet, you can use it to teleport back again. Even if you teleport to other planets from the original one,

as long as you use this teleportation circle to leave Earth in the first place, you can always return again. I will warn you that I can find nothing about bringing others back with you, though. So that may be a potential danger.”

“Do the planets part of the alliance have no say if we teleport there?” Jake asked, frowning a bit.

“They do,” Arnold said. “They can block anyone from teleporting to them or only give certain planets permission. I also see some have messages attached to who they wish to come help. Not all of them are part of Ell’Hakan’s group, but the vast majority most certainly are.”

“I see,” Jake nodded. Before they decided to teleport anywhere, they still had to get topside and meet Miranda to plan out what they planned to do. He just hoped he could teleport the entire Prima Vessel back up to the surface again because trying to dig and fly the entire way seemed like a pain.

“I’ll go check if we can teleport back up again so we can have a meeting about our plans,” Jake said as he turned to go toward the control room. However, a question from the Fallen King stopped him in his tracks.

“Can we use this circle to also teleport to the Prima Vessels on the planets not part of the alliance?” the Unique Lifeform questioned.

“Or, at the very least, use the connection this Vessel had with theirs to create our own method of transportation. Because if not, won’t we have to wait till every single planet has dealt with its own Prima Guardian before the event concludes? That could turn into quite the wait,” Caleb quickly recognized as he followed up.

That... was something Jake hadn’t really considered. He remembered that unless triggered on purpose, the Prima Guardian would only be released from the Prima Vessel in a thousand days or so under natural circumstances. Based on their estimates, this was how most planets would handle their Prima Guardians.

They would spend the next nearly three years hunting down regular Primas all over their planets to weaken the Prima Guardian. Then, once free, they would face the Guardian if they felt ready. Considering they then had five years to beat it... that meant Jake could potentially be stuck with his shitty un-upgraded ring for several years.

Jake was already cursing this system event as Arnold looked deep in thought before he spoke, sparking hope in Jake's eyes.

"It shouldn't be impossible. Perhaps we cannot use this teleporter, but it should be possible to use the map to roughly estimate the spatial coordinates of all the other marked planets in relation to ours. Using this, we can teleport, at the very least, to the vicinity of the planets with Prima Vessels on them," the void scientist said. "However, we will need skilled space mages, and it will take a while to ensure we will not teleport people into the middle of nowhere. Focusing on the other planets that are part of the alliance should be our primary objective for now."

Just hearing it was a possibility, Jake was in a lot better mood as he headed back to the main control room. He knew he still had a lot more features of the Prima Vessel to explore, and instinctively, he also recognized that the entire thing pretty much belonged to him now. He was the only one who could control it, and if he wanted to, he could even reestablish the different barriers.

In the core room, Jake also luckily discovered that the teleportation feature worked again. With relief, he quickly activated it, and in a flash, they teleported from right next to the Planetary Core all the way back to the desert.

"Hey, Miranda, I think we may as well hold our meeting within the Prima Vessel. Just enter through the door toward the top of the egg," Jake sent to Miranda after a bit, as he was joined by the Sword Saint and Fallen King in the control room.

"Are you prepared for what's to come?" the old man asked. "You will soon be face to face with quite a few people who may or may not be big fans of you."

"And servants of the Chosen of Yip. Individuals with warped emotions and unnatural loyalty toward a sworn enemy," the Fallen King added.

"Ready as can be," Jake shrugged. "I'm more worried about who we should even send off-planet to go help the alliance... but we'll talk about that when the others get here."

As he said this, he also got a response from Miranda. "I'm gathering those relevant. Some may join only as projections. See you in a few."

Chapter 945: A Galaxy To Explore

It hadn't even been a full day since the Prima Guardian arrived, but they were all gathered once more to discuss the future of the Prima Guardian event. The venue had changed, though, and it now took place within the Prima Vessel, more accurately, the control room with the large map also there, serving as a nice reference.

Arthur and several others joined the meeting as projections as they were far away from the frontline. However, the majority were present in person, as they had also taken part in the battle.

The meeting started out with Miranda congratulating everyone, but also taking a moment to go over the losses. Even if the event had gone exceptionally well so far, they had still lost a lot of people. Jake knew that Miranda and the rest of the World Council had set up different programs to help the families of the killed, but it naturally couldn't replace those who had died. They had all known some casualties were inevitable, and the losses had been less than estimated, but the many deaths still put a dampener on the celebrations.

But they had to move forward. The event was far from over.

Maria and Casper had also both returned for this meeting, both looking a bit worse for wear and clearly still recovering. Maria definitely looked the worst of the two of them, her escape skill incredibly potent but also with quite the backlash afterward. Still, having them there was good for morale and just to see them again.

It was one thing they all took solace in: no one from the strike team had died. That meant the strongest people on Earth were all alive and kicking, the planet as a whole not really having lost much fighting power should things go south during this Prima Alliance event. There was still a sneaking fear some had that this event would devolve into a big conflict with many other planets, and honestly, Jake couldn't rule that out entirely. Especially not considering some of the plans he had.

On a side note, the ring situation was also sorted out with everyone gathered.

Jake had also low-key hoped that William couldn't wear the ring so Jake could get it. It had totally been a possibility that due to William only really fighting the Prima Guardian indirectly using his karmic magic,

he wouldn't meet the requirements to wear the ring. Also, was it really out of the question that the system had actually wanted to give Jake two rings due to how good he was?

Well... two things. Firstly, William did qualify to wear the ring. So that sucked. Secondly, Jake did convince the group to at least let him see if he could use one of the rings, but he hit a snag of compatibility. If he had the shitty ring that gave no stats bound to himself, Jake couldn't bind one of the awesome many-stat-giving rings. Too similar items, especially jewelry, tended to not be useable together, as an example, Jake couldn't wear two Altmar Signets if the two rings effectively did the exact same thing. Actually, the signet was a bad example, as pure stat sticks tended to be compatible... anyway.

This did suck, but it also indicated that once unsealed and upgraded, Jake's special ring would be similar to the cool rings everyone else got. Sadly, Jake had to wait, and not keeping the new ring bound to him seemed like a dumb idea due to it talking about giving Jake certain privileges during the event. Exactly what these privileges were, Jake naturally still had no idea, but he didn't want to risk it being something he would miss out on.

Anyhow, with the meeting beginning in earnest after going over how the Primas and Prima Guardian had been dealt with and the losses they had taken, it quickly became clear many people and factions already had their own agendas to deal with and places to be.

As was already touched upon, Caleb had to go help the Court of Shadows, and Carmen had to go assist Valhal. Vesperia had also voiced her intent to go assist a few planets where it looked like the humanoid side was gonna lose and the Endless Empire would take over.

Now, Jake did recognize that this was perhaps a bit fucked up. He was sure that in the eyes of many, the army of underground insects would be considered the bad guys, while the weak humanoid faction getting suppressed would be the underdog good guys.

However, wasn't it also a bit messed up to just wipe out all the ectognamorphs just to make room for the humanoids? Also, this was a quest to kill the Prima Guardians. If things were allowed to run their natural course, these planets would be wiped out after the Guardian was released, if not before, with all the Primas roaming about.

Based on what Vesperia said, these were planets where the humanoids were reduced to nearly nothing, more often than not from internal strife or the majority having abandoned the planet already. Not even Ell'hakan cared about these planets, as they were now too weak to contribute anything.

What would likely happen if Vesperia or someone else didn't stop by was that the ectognamorphs would just wait for the Prima Guardian to naturally die after it claimed the Planetary Core and then emerge to claim the entire planet as their own. They naturally couldn't fight the Prima Guardian themselves as they had most certainly consumed many system-given unique items. As for if they decided to join the Prima Guardian... well, it would only speed up the annihilation of the humanoids.

Thinking about it, it was a better situation for the humanoids if Vesperia went and killed the Prima Guardian. If she took over, the humanoids at least had a chance of surviving and maybe even leaving the planet to go elsewhere. While Vesperia did view humanoids as potential resources – to be read as food – she didn't see their value as that big, and was okay with just letting them go as long as they didn't make any problems.

Vesperia was also only really focused on eight planets total in their galaxy, only three of which had joined the Prima Guardian Alliance. From how Jake understood it, this wasn't because the people on the remaining five had confidence in beating back the Primas themselves, but because their World Leader had either been incredibly incompetent, the planet was fucked over after the World Leader was elected, or the leader literally wanted them to die and had abandoned the planet long ago after agreeing to fight the Prima Guardian.

So, it definitely sounded like Vesperia was going to be busy, and she was also very interested in the project of making their own teleporter to get to planets that hadn't joined the alliance. While the Endless Empire winning on most of these planets was pretty much a given, Vesperia still wanted to speed up matters and officially link up with the different Hives before it was time for her to head back to the heartlands of the Endless Empire.

When it came to the Risen, the situation was a bit more complicated. Primarily because they were also on Earth to establish a permanent presence once more. For that, there were quite a few details to discuss, such as what area the Risen would be given. Sure, they could just give them back their old territory, but seeing as they had now claimed the entire planet, there had to be somewhere better for them to settle down while ensuring they wouldn't be bothered. Jake wasn't that invested in where they would live as everyone would just get there through teleportation anyway, but he knew many cared.

This novel is published on a different platform. Support the original author by finding the official source.

No one had any illusions that the Risen would be welcomed by everyone with open arms. They were still a very controversial faction, and despite Arthur trying quite a lot to improve their reputation, people just had a strong innate dislike of the undead. Perhaps it was entirely natural for life-based entities to dislike those rooted in death, but Jake still wanted to allow the Risen to live on his planet, even if a lot

disagreed. It did sound like they were gonna be thrown onto their own island, though, but that didn't seem to bother Casper or Priscilla particularly much.

Casper also mentioned that even if their primary objective was to establish a small base on Earth, they also wanted to provide assistance to other Risen in the galaxy. Not that there were a lot. In fact, there was only one planet ruled by Risen in the entire Milky Way. The rest had either been wiped out by the other natives, or there hadn't been any in the first place.

There even being one was honestly a surprise. Most Risen in all universes tended to be gathered in the same areas. Even in the ninety-third universe, entire galaxies existed filled with undead and Risen. Ones where the living were heavily outnumbered, and death ruled supreme. Entire areas of a universe could be dominated by death and quite unwelcoming of the living.

Jacob, who had been uncharacteristically silent all while wandering the Prima Vessel – perhaps because he hadn't really been part of the Guardian fight – also explained that all those from the Holy Church were expected to go assist the rest of their faction. In fact, even coming to Earth had been considered a special privilege, and Jacob had only sold them going by promising to try and establish an outpost on the planet. Something he knew wasn't going to happen, but the higher-ups had humored him nevertheless.

His talking about helping the Holy Church did bring up one pretty big concern, though.

"Isn't the Holy Church actively working with Ell'Hakan?" Jake questioned after the Augur began to explain their plans. "Won't that mean you going to help the Holy Church from here means that you're going directly to his side?"

"That... I cannot rule out," Jacob said with a sigh. "The higher-ups are quite insistent on providing him with all the aid we can."

"Why the hell are they even sucking up to him so hard?" Jake said, exasperated. "Do they really want his creepy-ass Bloodline that badly?"

"Yes," Jacob just said in a matter-of-fact tone. "Yes, they do want his Bloodline that badly. It holds extreme value to them. I have already tried to voice my dissent toward working with the Chosen of Yip of Yore, but it was quickly made apparent I had no say in the matter. This is from very high up, and even if they value me as an Augur, the potential value Ell'Hakan can provide exceeds my existence manifold."

Jake opened his mouth for a moment before closing it again, not saying what he was about to say. He wanted to trust Jacob. He really did. But Jake knew he couldn't. While the Augur could keep some secrets, if the information was too important for the Holy Church to know, he would share it. No, some things were best kept in his heart or only spoken between himself and those he knew he could fully trust.

There was no reason to tell Jacob that there was no fucking way he was going to let Ell'Hakan live long enough to make a bunch of brain-washing babies for the Holy Church. Nor, that should he make some... Jake was going to make sure they were unmade. Sure, one could argue about the immorality of sins of the father and whatnot, but Jake, quite frankly, didn't give a shit about any of these things. Ell'Hakan and his entire lineage would be wiped out. Of that there was no question.

For now, it was best to not say any of these things, though. In fact, it was better to communicate the opposite outwardly to make Ell'Hakan and the Church believe there was a world where Jake wasn't going to hunt down the other Chosen to the ends of existence. Thus, Jake just sighed as if relenting. "I am not a fan of you or the Holy Church working with him, but I'm not your boss. Just watch out and keep a cool head, alright?"

"I appreciate the understanding," Jacob nodded. All around the room, those who knew Jake's feelings kept a pretty straight face despite knowing Jake was far more than "not just a fan."

The meeting proceeded, and people began to split up into groups based on where they needed to go or wanted to do. Jake had expected Eron to have some plans, but there was apparently not anywhere he had to be. In fact, he didn't seem interested in going anywhere whatsoever.

Maria ended up talking to Caleb and would head off with him to help the Court of Shadows. Being a mercenary through and through, she would happily go assist wherever she was paid to be.

Sylphie and the Fallen King surprised Jake a bit by joining up with Vesperia. He was pretty happy to see the three of them go together, though, as he doubted there were many forces in the multiverse who could handle all three.

Arnold would remain on Earth to work on the teleportation circle with assistance from Miranda and others. William even volunteered to stay behind and help with this teleporter, too, when Arnold pointed out that a karma mage could prove useful when more accurately pinpointing the location of each planet.

Arnold sounded confident, so Jake had hope that soon they would have access to far more Prima Guardians than just those in the alliance... along with the planets that were part of the alliance but had blocked off teleportation access.

The primary reason for this discussion about where people would go was to ensure they didn't get in the way of one another while traveling the galaxy. Most of the factions on Earth already had somewhere they needed to go, which really only left two people without any particular plans: Jake and the Sword Saint.

Neither of them belonged to any faction who had to go help elsewhere in the galaxy, nor with a need to assist any of the others. Sure, Jake could have stuck to Vesperia and the others... but he wanted to go have some alone time.

He'd just gotten Lone Hunter, after all. It was only proper to put it to a good test. The Sword Saint also sounded like he wanted to head off alone for a bit to practice his swordsmanship. Totally understandable.

With most things planned out, Miranda addressed the group of those who would leave with a final small speech.

"Before everyone heads off to make the galaxy a safer place, I think we should all agree on a few things," Miranda said, addressing the room. "This is something I know quite a few have already discussed before the event began, but we believe that keeping the fact we all come from Earth a secret would be counterproductive. Flaunt your origins. Let everyone know you come from Earth and spread the word of our presence. However, do try to avoid ascribing any specific values to the planet. Just leave it there as a fact Earth is where you come from."

Jake did remember Miranda talking about this prior, and he kept quiet as she continued.

"There have been certain individuals who have sought to villainize Earth and those from here. Trying to actively argue against this may only reinforce this belief, while should we all just act normal and be helpful, we will naturally spawn doubt about the lies of Earth. Of course, should people cause problems, feel free to clap back, but don't make it about protecting Earth's honor, only your own. We are a planet of individuals, not one massive, cohesive faction, even if we may sometimes be united toward the same goal."

Everyone slowly nodded along, as Jake hadn't really ever considered standing up for "Earth's honor" or whatever.

"Well then," Miranda smiled. "I guess I can only wish you all a happy hunt. Let's see if we can make the Milky Way galaxy not just have the best planet in the universe but also the fastest time in clearing this event."

With that, they all headed off toward the large teleporter, and Jake felt excited to go on a bit of solo hunting. He was also excited to see what other kinds of worlds the Milky Way had to show for itself as he had an entire galaxy to explore. Oh yeah, and potentially saving a few civilizations along the way was also pretty cool.

Chapter 946: The Commander, the Mage, & the Savior

"The barrier won't hold for that long," the exasperated elven mage said to the heavily armored warrior – a rare Path for elves, but some had to take the frontline in these wars. The warrior was lacking an arm, and a healer was desperately trying to heal him enough for the man to be able to engage in combat again. For now, he would be stuck in this tent for a little while, though.

"It will have to," the armored warrior said. "A small temporary reinforcement force should arrive by the end of tomorrow. The attacks on the eastern borders were more extensive than the general first predicted."

"Even if we manage to hold on till tomorrow, how many are even coming? A few hundred fighters? Commander, we need to seriously consider evacuation," the mage said in a stern voice.

"Evacuation would mean the fall of the entire northern border, and what about the civilians?" the commander shot back. "It's not an option. Our potion supply should be enough to tide us over until the main force can arrive, it-"

"It won't!" the mage slammed his hand on the table. "Eleven Primas are baring down on us, more than ten thousand beasts at their side! The barrier will not hold for more than half a day if this keeps up."

"The strain will be lessened once I move out again," the commander tried to argue.

“So you can extend the barrier’s lifetime by half an hour if you get lucky... it’s still not enough. We underestimated the Primas and how many would attack, pure and simple. Take the loss, and let’s get out of here while we still can. If we bunker down in the capital,” the mage argued.

“Have faith. We should be able to survive and hold on until the Prima Guardian Alliance comes and helps us,” the commander tried.

The mage just looked at the commander for a moment before he sighed and shook his head. “We both know they aren’t coming.”

“Stop... just stop,” the commander said, as the healer at his side looked confused at the mage’s words.

“How long are you going to keep pretending?” the mage scoffed. “Her majesty, in all her wisdom, rejected the leader of the alliance quite openly. Talked about mental manipulation or some shit. We are last on the list of planets that’ll get a hand. The most they’ll give us is a memorial.”

The commander clenched his fist as the silence hung in the air. He knew the mage was speaking the truth. Their planet had never been particularly powerful, and things had only gotten worse after two large factions emerged post-Tutorials. A war broke out soon after, leaving most of those with talent either dead or displaced. Many of the talented ones had even left the universe for good to join divine factions. Nevermore had been the killing blow, as most of those who went just never came back home.

When the Prima Guardian Alliance was proposed, they saw hope... but the queen was wary. She spoke of manipulation from the leader of the alliance and refused to work closely with the largest coalition. In the eyes of the mage, she was a moron, and usually, the commander would punish the man for treason... but what even was the point?

“No matter what you say, we will fight. We must fight, there is no other choice,” the commander said with a resolute voice. “However, I will allow you to begin initial preparations for retreat. Attempt to at least get most of the mages who run out of energy back to the capital... they will need them there.”

“Thank you for seeing reason,” the mage said, relieved. “We have enough materials to teleport at least a few hundred back to safety. Not like we’re gonna use the crystals to receive any reinforcements.”

“I already told you to begin preparations; don’t waste your time being a-“

“Commander!” a young-looking elven woman wearing a cloak said as she rushed into the tent. “A report has arrived that help is coming from the Prima Guardian Alliance!”

The commander’s eyes opened wide. “Truly?”

Equally surprised, the mage also couldn’t help but quickly ask for details. “How many? Where are they from, and what made them change their mind?”

“They are from a planet that hasn’t taken part in any of the prior Alliance meetings,” the scout said. “As for the numbers, I’m only being told now that... that...”

“What’s happening?” the commander asked in a stern tone.

“One... I... they say they’re sending one person...” the scout stammered out.

“You gotta be fucking kidding me!” the mage practically screamed before he began laughing. “What a joke...”

“Why would they even...” the commander muttered with a downcast expression.

It felt like a dumb prank had been played on them. To give them the hope of reinforcements only to take it away mere moments after. Even if someone at the level of the general arrived, what could they do? They faced nearly a dozen Primas on this battlefield. Even the general could at most handle three of them at once, and even that assumed they weren’t the most powerful variants.

“I don’t know... but he’s arriving now,” the scout said, looking as confused and deflated as the mage and commander.

“Great! Just great... let’s go see our great savior, then,” the mage said in a mocking tone as he walked out of the tent. The commander also stood up despite the healer’s protests as he went toward the middle of the camp where the teleporter stood.

Looking over the cliffside to the battlefield, the commander frowned even more deeply. A constant battle was ongoing, with the only reprieve that the elven side had a large barrier to hide behind when things got too tough. However, with nearly a dozen Primas attacking the barrier and fewer and fewer fighters to keep them occupied, things were rapidly going downhill.

It was all just one cruel joke to send a single person to this lost battlefield.

Arriving at the teleporter, it soon spun to life. The runes began to glow as the commander saw far more of the mana gems break than he expected. The more powerful the person using the teleporter was, the more would break... but this was far more than he could have anticipated. The mage also seemed to notice this, as a figure soon appeared on the platform.

If you discover this tale on Amazon, be aware that it has been stolen. Please report the violation.

The first thing that struck the commander was how small he looked. As elves, they tended to be naturally skinnier than humans... yet the human that had just appeared looked even thinner than them. What's more was the sparse gray hair on his head and his simple-looking robe. Having been part of one of the Prima Guardian Alliance meetings, the commander had seen many humans before but never one that looked this positively ancient. He looked almost halfway to being undead.

"You must be the commander," the newly arrived human said in a calm yet strong tone.

"Yes, I'm in charge of this battlefield," the commander said as he stood straight.

"I would ask you about the situation, but I've already gotten a good grasp myself," the human said, and only now did the commander notice the sword at his waist. That's when the swordsman asked something preposterous. "Could you have all your soldiers retreat behind the barrier? Oh, and make sure to keep it empowered; it may be struck during the battle."

"If they all retreat and those monsters are allowed to roam free, the barrier won't even last an hour," the mage spoke up in protest.

“That’s fine; it won’t need to,” the swordsman said with a calm smile. “I don’t intend on spending that long here. I have other places to be later today, so please do not delay me any further than absolutely necessary.”

“Are you serious?” the barrier mage questioned loudly. “Other places to be? There are eleven Primas out there!”

“Yes, only eleven,” the old swordsman kept his casual demeanor. “And they all appear quite a bit weaker than the ones on my planet.”

“I will make the soldiers retreat,” the commander said, not thinking about the matter any further. He had been on many battlefields, both now and during the civil war... and standing before this man, he felt like he stood before someone even the general would only salute in respect. A true man of the battlefield.

“You are listening to this madman?” the mage exclaimed.

The commander just ignored the mage as he quickly sent the order. He got many confused answers from the squad leaders, but they all did as they were told. As they all retreated, the Primas and thousands of monsters began moving to attack the barrier.

At the same time, the swordsman moved. He gave a thankful nod to the commander before he disappeared from where he stood, only to appear close to the barrier soon after. Already impressed by such speed... the commander wasn’t ready for what came next.

Raindrops began to fall from a cloudless sky. Yet when the commander looked up, he now saw large rainclouds covering everything as far as the eye could see. The old swordsman walked through the barrier as if he was out on a stroll, and not just the commander but thousands of soldiers looked on, confused as the solitary man faced an army.

“He’s going to die like a moron,” the mage said with his arms crossed.

“Just shut up already,” the commander said annoyedly.

Being outside the barrier, the swordsman naturally attracted some attention. Several large four-legged monsters with large maws and scaled bodies attacked him right away, these beasts serving as the vanguard due to their high durability.

All the commander saw was a flash before the swordsman now held his blade in his hand, and the four monsters that were upon him split in two. Another flash later, and crescent waves of water shot out, cutting through the battlefield and killing dozens on their path.

The mage had finally shut up as he just looked on while the swordsman went on a rampage amidst the falling rain. All of the monsters attacking the barrier soon began to gather around him as the eleven Primas, who usually took a more careful approach, also made their way over when it looked as if the old human couldn't keep up with the onslaught.

It was then the commander realized... the swordsman had been baiting them in. Once they were all soaked by the rain, the human suddenly stopped as he took a step back. He lowered his blade, and for a moment, time itself seemed to freeze as he spoke:

"Rain of Time: Reversal."

With that, the commander saw power beyond what a C-grade should be capable of displaying. With a single raised blade, the world was torn asunder. The follow-up attacks only further cemented this sentiment as the elven Primas were slaughtered one by one, two of them already falling in the opening move.

Less than ten minutes later, the rainfall stopped, and the old human walked back through the barrier, not even looking tired as he returned to the commander.

"That should be this area dealt with... I believe you should be able to hold on should any stragglers arrive," the swordsman said in his usual relaxed tone.

"Why... why are you even helping us?" the barrier mage said, his tone of arrogance entirely gone by now, having been replaced by pure confusion.

“Due to an agreement. Once I’ve dealt with the most troubled battlefields, your queen has promised me the Prima Guardian,” the man said. “That will make life for you easier, too. Once the Guardian dies, all the regular Primas are weakened.”

“How do you know that? Wait, have you already...?” the mage continued.

“Yes, but not alone. Not to fret, based on what I’ve seen here thus far, the Prima Guardian should be something I can handle on my own,” the swordsman said with confidence.

The mage looked like he wanted to comment, but he just shut up and kept silent, as the commander couldn’t help but ask:

“I cannot even begin to express but gratitude... if possible, may I know what our savior is called?”

The swordsman looked at the commander for a moment before answering. “I usually go by the name of Sword Saint.”

“Sword Saint... what does such a title mean?” the commander asked in awe.

The man who called himself the Sword Saint smiled as he looked upon the battlefield one final time. “It’s an oath and a Path. What I strive to be... and in my arrogance, a name I have dared to claim before I am worthy.”

They were all silent for a moment after he said this before the Sword Saint spoke again. “I should get moving. I have a few other places to stop by before it’s time to tackle the Guardian.”

“I wish you godspeed, Sword Saint,” the commander saluted the human who’d saved them. Who it appeared was on a quest to save their entire planet.

After he stepped onto the teleporter, the commander noticed the mage looked deep in thought, and the commander couldn’t help himself but ask:

“What? No objections when he said he planned on beating the Prima Guardian?”

The mage continued to look like he was thinking before he suddenly seemed to realize as he pulled out a list from his spatial storage. He quickly looked at it as his eyes opened wide. “I was right...”

“What?” the commander asked.

“The Nevermore Leaderboards,” the mage muttered.

Frowning, the commander wondered what the guy was talking about. As someone who had gone to Nevermore, he knew about these Leaderboards, but it hadn’t been something he had really looked at or cared about. Why would he? He wasn’t someone that would ever appear on it. That list was reserved for the absolute pinnacle of their entire universe. Complete monsters that couldn’t be compared to people like... wait...

“You don’t mean he-“

The mage turned the list around, with the name Sword Saint written right there on the top ten for the entire universe. That’s when the commander realized something else as he recalled things he heard while at Nevermore...

This Sword Saint had been from a party with the one who took the top spot - from the same planet as many others who had placed toward the top. That meant... this was the galaxy that housed the Chosen of the Malefic Viper... how had he never realized?

He’d known about Ell’Hakan, but it had never been anything publicly advertised that the Chosen of Yip of Yore and the Chosen of the Malefic Viper hailed from even the same galaxy. Realizing this, the commander felt a shiver run down his spine... questioning if their small planet would truly be fine when caught in such a massive conflict.

Yet, at the same time, he couldn’t help but question what kind of monsters could even compare to the swordsman they had just seen... because the commander just couldn’t imagine how anyone could rival such an entity.

He also began to question what was going on elsewhere in the galaxy and just how much change those from the planet of the Sword Saint could enact upon the galaxy.

Chapter 947: How the Alliance Works & A Synergistic Society

The Prima Guardian Alliance was both a simple and a complex setup by the system. The purpose of it couldn't be any simpler: to allow different planets to team up and face Primas together. However, the way this was done had become relatively complex, especially when one considered the automatic enrollment of the planets who had already successfully dealt with their own Prima Guardian.

Initially, when one joined the alliance, the World Leader would be granted a blueprint to make a special teleportation circle alongside documentation of how the circle would work. These teleportation circles were linked to every other circle similar to themselves on other planets and would allow cheap travel across the Milky Way – though there was some cost that the planet receiving people would have to bear.

Partly due to this, the teleportation circles wouldn't automatically just accept anyone who wanted to teleport to a planet. By default, someone with authority granted by the World Leader would have to approve the teleportation before it would go through. The teleportation could also be programmed, though, and be set to automatically just accept anyone trying to use it. This could further be customized to only accept people from certain planets or even by excluding some planets.

No one in the entire galaxy had their circles set to fully open teleportation.

Through the interface provided by the system alongside the enrollment in the Prima Guardian Alliance, the World Leader or those granted authority could also write a brief description about their own planet and those they wanted assistance from. Some of the information in this section would be automatically generated by the system, such as the general ecology of the planet, as well as what affinities dominated and whatnot. These parts could not be hidden even if the person wanted to. Neither could they hide the population numbers of the planet... making it quite apparent which planets were more fucked than others.

Most planets had set all this up many years ago while still waiting for the Prima Guardian to arrive, with nearly all planets only having one of these cross-galaxy teleporters present. These were also primarily placed in capitals, and were then connected to the rest of the planet's teleportation network from there.

To clarify, Earth did not have any of these teleportation circles. Earth only had the teleporter found within the Prima Vessel, which was an entirely different kind compared to those established by the

planets themselves. This teleporter didn't have the same possibility of allowing certain people to come and go as they pleased from different planets. It effectively only allowed people to teleport out and return again. In other words, it was a teleporter only for the natives of a planet to go help other places. At least, that's how Miranda and Arnold concluded the teleporter worked after their initial investigation.

Upon the defeat of their Prima Guardian, Earth had also been granted the other type of teleportation circle, but so far, there had been no interest in establishing it. The primary purpose of the provided circle was to allow others to teleport and help a planet... something Earth naturally didn't need. Having it was only viewed as a potential weakness, should they be tricked to allow someone to teleport to the planet they shouldn't have.

Of course, the chances of this happening were minuscule, considering only Jake and Miranda had the authority to view the blueprint of the provided teleportation circle and manage its permissions. With Jake more likely having failed to realize he now had this blueprint, only Miranda was a potential source of failure... and she concluded they didn't need the teleporter.

The only thing they would use the blueprint for was to study it, as Arnold theorized it held clues on how to make a teleportation circle capable of taking them close to any other planet marked by the map in the entire Milky Way.

Either way... Jake and all the others heard this explanation of how the teleporters worked before they headed off into the galaxy. The number of planets they could actually teleport to was relatively limited due to how the teleporters worked, especially as most had set their teleportation circles to only accept certain planets while requiring manual permission if anyone else wanted to come.

Many planets were naturally wary when someone wanted to teleport to their planet... especially because of the "someone" part. Like, who would have one person teleport? Sure, if it was some diplomat or something like that, it could make sense, but the people from Earth weren't trying to travel around the galaxy for peaceful purposes. They were there to slaughter Prima Guardians and get loot.

Those with factions they went to assist naturally didn't face this problem...but Jake and the Sword Saint, who wanted to go alone to help planets, found it quite challenging to get accepted. At least Miranda assumed they both would face difficulties... but the Sword Saint was gone nearly instantly, leaving only Jake behind, trying to find a planet willing to accept him, complaining under his breath.

"Why the hell are they being selective when they're so clearly fucked..." Jake muttered as he tried to teleport to a struggling planet, yet the one in charge of the planet still rejected him.

"Exactly what are you saying to them?" Miranda ended up questioning Jake. When one applied, a message could be attached. An application of sorts.

"Just the truth," Jake said, annoyed.

"... and what is the truth?" Miranda asked, and annoyed, Jake gave her permission to see the message he sent alongside his teleportation request, and...

"Hunter here. Will kill Prima Guardian quickly for free."

"Jake, have you considered you may need to include more information to make you look less like a delusional idiot?" Miranda asked in a curt tone.

"Why should I?" Jake crossed his arms. "I'm the one offering them help, not the other way around. Why would I waste my time trying to convince them I'm worthy of saving their asses? If they don't accept, they just aren't desperate enough. I've already sent more job applications in my life than I wanted to. No way I'm gonna write a damn essay about my strengths and weaknesses when I'm the one offering assistance. Free assistance, even."

"There are plenty of reasons why they would be apprehensive about allowing someone random to teleport to their planet... and it isn't helping that you are marked by the system as a World Leader when you try to go somewhere," Miranda sighed. "A solitary World Leader wanting to go to another planet less than a day after the Prima Guardian event fully began is incredibly suspicious."

Jake looked about to say something as he grinned. "And yet, some are willing to take the gamble."

Miranda saw a happy Jake jump onto the teleportation circle before it promptly activated, and she couldn't help but wonder just how desperate you had to be to allow him to teleport there with that kind of message while also considering his status as World Leader. Sighing, she turned to the last three people who were about to leave but had waited because Vesperia insisted Jake should be the first to go out of politeness.

"Does Her Majesty already have a planet in mind?" the witch asked, knowing Vesperia did have a few targets in mind.

"I do indeed, one that should be relatively simple to handle. I confirmed beforehand with a Hive Queen that the humanoid population is already de facto under their control," Vesperia answered. "Seeing as the hive cannot fight the Prima Guardian or even the regular Primas, they naturally need assistance, or the dwarves will simply be slaughtered."

"In that case, I wish you a pleasant and fruitful journey," Miranda bowed her head slightly.

Stolen content warning: this content belongs on Royal Road. Report any occurrences.

In her mind, it only made sense to remain as polite as possible in front of the True Royal, even more so than perhaps anyone else on the planet. This sentiment was also echoed by her Patrons, who had told Miranda to treat Vesperia more like she would treat another god than a mortal. Considering how scary the True Royal could be, that wasn't super difficult to do.

"Let us go, and thank you two for your assistance," Vesperia said to the Fallen King and Sylphie, who would go with her.

"Hunting down Primas and convincing planets to allow me to face the Guardian would prove difficult alone, while I believe going with you will provide ample opportunities," the Fallen King answered honestly.

"Ree," Sylphie screeched, making it clear she just thought it would be boring to go alone.

Without further ado, the bird flew over to the teleporter as the hawk disappeared when it activated. Vesperia and the Fallen King looked taken aback for a moment that she had gone ahead alone, but didn't immediately make any moves to follow.

"We will return here after we have slain the Prima Guardian," Vesperia said. "I hope for good news regarding finding a method to teleport even to planets that are not part of the alliance."

"And I hope I will be able to provide that upon your return," Miranda said, keeping a neutral tone as the True Royal nodded before stepping toward the teleportation circle. The Fallen King floated after her, and a few moments later, they, too, were gone.

Miranda took a deep breath with everyone having now headed out all over the galaxy. Arnold was busy inside the control room analyzing the map as well as the blueprint to the alliance teleporter, with William having set up some kind of ritual circle of his own to “read the karmic pathways” or something. Miranda wasn’t even going to pretend to understand karmic magic. Sure, some of her magic was equally weird and difficult to understand, but karma magic just still didn’t make much sense to her.

She herself would also stay on Earth as there was still plenty to do. They now owned the entire planet, and Miranda now had far more control than before due to the Planetary Pylon getting claimed. It also wasn’t like all the beasts on Earth could go around and help the rest of the galaxy. The current working theory was that they would also be suppressed on other planets, and sending them would simply be too risky for little gain. No, better to let Jake and friends handle the other Prima Guardians.

All Miranda could hope was that they would do a good job and succeed safely. That... and hopefully, not end up somehow making enemies.

“Ya sure this isn’t just a waste of time?” the old dwarf said as he stared at the teleportation circle within the chamber.

“The queen sure didn’t seem like it would be... in fact, I’ve never seen any of those Hive Queens more stressed than they’ve been over these past few months,” a younger female dwarf answered while stroking her beard.

“Why are they stressing? It ain’t like they’re at risk of getting wiped out by these Prima things,” the older dwarf sighed.

“Something about who will visit. Apparently, it’s some big shot who will help us deal with the Primas and even the Prima Guardian,” the female dwarf explained. “I hope they’re right.”

“So do I,” the old dwarf nodded as he kept looking at the inert teleportation circle, waiting for a request to come in.

These dwarves had always been a subterranean race, primarily due to the harsh environments on the surface of their planet. Even before the system, they very rarely ventured topside. Harsh acid rains and large storms ravaged the world above, leaving no space for life anywhere, and only while wearing

protective suits could they sometimes head up there to look for resources. However, this turmoil on the surface did lead to a very vibrant and healthy world underground, with plenty of space and opportunity for life to flourish.

Before the system, these dwarves had already established a relatively large country, spanning a huge area of the underworld. There had been about five million of them total when the integration appeared, and while a few had died during the Tutorial and the times that followed, more than four million still lived there to this day.

Unlike many other planets, they never had any big internal conflicts... but they also never truly grew much. Even now, the number of C-grade dwarves numbered less than fifty, with only three people having even gone to Nevermore. To put it in other words... a dozen Primas could likely wipe out this entire dwarven faction.

They had just never been fighters. They never had to fight, and it was not part of their culture... in fact, they hadn't even known about most of the usual weapons people used before the Tutorials. While these dwarves did have a certain level of technology, instead of weaponry and war, they had primarily expanded by working closely alongside the other lifeforms beneath the ground. Their closest companions had been a unique species of large ants that were all roughly the sizes of rats, with the queens comparable to medium-sized dogs. That was before the system, mind you.

The dwarves had cultivated these ants and used them to expand and even as a defense against some of the more dangerous beasts that lived close to their borders. In return, the dwarves fed and helped the ant colony flourish by providing them with food and even helping design the hives. They put in plumbing to ensure the ants always had water and even farmed certain grubs they knew the ants liked to eat. Some of them had even worked within the hatcheries to take care of the newborn.

It was a truly synergistic relationship.

And then... then the system arrived.

While gone in the Tutorials, the ant colony that surrounded their country expanded and grew. Hive Queens were born with intelligence rivaling that of the dwarves themselves and power far surpassing them. The most powerful Hive Queens were forced to seek deeper and couldn't approach the area controlled by the dwarves anymore, but they could still send messages.

It was an odd situation... but even after the integration, the ants were not antagonistic toward the dwarves. They still remembered the relationship their two races had before and continued to find value in it, even if a disparity of power was readily apparent.

In some ways, the ants taking care and defending the dwarves also ended up becoming a problem. The dwarves simply weren't able to level enough as there was nothing to hunt, allowing only the crafters to progress. By the time the ants and dwarves both noticed this glaring issue, it was already too late, and news of the Prima Guardian event was upon them.

Without help, the dwarves would definitely be wiped out. Even if all the Hive Queens and high-ranking ectognamorphs had been given permission by the current World Leader dwarf, they couldn't fight the Primas off. All they had been able to do was help create physical barriers to try and keep the Primas at bay as long as possible.

The old dwarf in charge of the teleportation circle was reflecting on all this as he waited for something to happen. He knew there were seven Hive Queens not too far away, making preparations for the arrival of this VIP.

"You think they'll come today? The Prima Guardian thing only just arrived, and I don't think we are in that big of a rush.. these Primas landed on the other side of the planet and on the surface. Should take them at least a week to get to us," the female dwarf said, her tone sounding like she was calming herself down more than anything.

"it will likely be today," the older dwarf shrugged. "But there is really no way to-"

Just then, he got a system message, and his eyes opened wide. He only skimmed the request and saw it was from the planet that had been mentioned to him, and without delay, he accepted it.

A message was instantly sent out to the Hive Queens, and within less than five seconds, seven Hive Queens appeared in humanoid form within the chamber. They all stared expectedly at the center of the teleportation circle as it glowed... the light faded soon after, and the dwarf just looked confused at what he saw.

In the center of the circle, a small creature appeared. One that looked different to something the male dwarf had ever seen before. It was small and green and did not look like an ectognamorph at all.

“Ree,” the creature let out a screech, the dwarf throwing a confused gaze at the Hive Queens, who looked equally perplexed.

“... are you related to her Majesty of the Vespernat Lineage?” the leader of the Hive Queens – a late-tier C-grade – asked.

“Ree,” the creature simply let out a screech again as it began to waddle forward, the Hive Queens clearly unaware of what was happening.

“Is it wearing a vest?” the female dwarf asked telepathically.

“I think so...” the male dwarf responded, his level of confusion only growing by the moment.

With everyone just staring confused at the small beast, a second application to travel to the planet suddenly came in. The dwarf quickly confirmed this was also from the right planet and approved it as the teleportation circle spun to life for a second time.

This time, what appeared made a lot more sense. Two large creatures were teleported in, towering over the dwarves and even the Hive Queens, whose humanoid forms also resembled dwarves. One of the newcomers looked like a large root creature of sorts and was floating slightly above the ground. The other one was a large woman with distinct insect-like features, making the dwarf quickly realize this was the one they had been waiting on. If nothing else, the response of the Hive Queens that followed made it absolutely clear as they all fell to their knees and spoke in unison.

“We greet the Vespernat True Royal,” they said, the two dwarves also quickly following along and kneeling. The male dwarf felt the aura of these two new creatures... and as a noble himself, he especially felt the presence of the wood-like being. A king... a true system-recognized king.

Perhaps it was fitting... for a Hive Queen above Hive Queens to appear together with a true king. It did still leave him questioning, though... why was the small green creature also there? And why was it currently trying to get into his backpack in the corner where he kept his dried worm snacks?

Chapter 948: Assistance Has Arrived

"It's truly an honor to finally lay my eyes on a True Royal," the dwarf wearing a stupidly large and decorated hat said as he kneeled in front of Vesperia. "And it's an even greater honor that Her Majesty decided to assist our small country."

Vesperia regarded the dwarf as she nodded. "Your kin has worked alongside the hive here for many years, and they have vouched for your usefulness. If they consider you part of their hive, I shall respect their assessment and assist you. Now, the three of us have little interest in wasting more time here than necessary. We shall hunt down a number of Primas and then proceed to engage the Prima Guardian."

"I have already been informed of Her Majesty's plan," the dwarven leader said with a nod.

"Hand us all the information you have regarding the location of the Prima Vessel, along with where you believe most Primas have gathered," the Fallen King added.

"Naturally," the dwarf kept nodding, not daring to show any disrespect to the Unique Lifeform either. Motioning to one of his aides, another dwarf walked forward and displayed a projection of the planet. On it, the location of the Prima Vessel was marked, along with areas colored in with assumptions about how many Primas would be there.

"Ree?" Sylphie asked after seeing the map. Vesperia concurred with her assessment and nodded.

"Yes, I also don't see a need for us to engage with any of the Primas beneath the ground. It would be faster to go to the surface immediately. Considering the barren landscape, we will stand out and easily attract the Primas, and at the same time, the Primas will not be able to hide from us," Vesperia said.

"Preferable to hunting down an army of elusive creatures beneath the ground for sure," the King said.

"If... if I may..." the dwarven leader said with some hesitation. "Each of these Primas are incredibly powerful in their own right, and we believe there are hundreds up there. Not to mention the Prima Guardian itself... is it safe for Her Majesty to engage them all with only two allies?"

Instantly, the dwarf had more than half a dozen Hive Queens from the ant hive staring him down, making the man try to instantly elaborate. "I do not doubt the capabilities of a True Royal! However, I'm unaware of the power of your companions, and I am merely veering on the side of caution..."

"Your worry is entirely misplaced," Vesperia said, shaking her head.

"I find the notion that I'm inferior insulting," the Fallen King also scoffed.

"Ree," Sylphie just said, not really seeming to care that much. She was way too busy dragging around a small bag of dried worm snacks to bother with any of that stuff.

After a bit more talking, the three of them were finally led toward the fastest way to reach the surface. As they had also been informed, the path upwards was entirely blocked, the dwarves and ant hive having worked together to create several natural barriers and gates.

While the ants couldn't fight the Primas or the Prima Guardian, they had been able to help with these preparations. It wasn't like filling a hole with soil and rock was considered fighting against the Primas, nor was it considering fighting to create extremely durable gates and handing control to the dwarves.

This did mean getting topside took a while, as Sylphie, Vesperia, and the Fallen King had to break through several barriers that the dwarves couldn't easily unblock for them. Luckily, this planet was quite a lot smaller than Earth, making the distance they had to cover not as significant.

The Hive Queens wanted to follow them all the way, but they had to stop in order to not risk engaging any Primas. This left only a small squad of dwarves with Vesperia and the others as they finally reached the surface of the planet, most of which had to leave soon as they wouldn't be any help in the upcoming fights.

"Not the most pleasant of worlds," the Fallen King said the moment they appeared up there.

The sky was tinged orange, with toxic gasses filling the air. In the distance, they saw some oddly colored clouds raining down acid rain while a constant wind buffeted them. At least it did so for a mere moment before the wind in their vicinity entirely stopped, surprising the dwarves.

Sylphie had naturally been the one who'd stopped the annoying wind. Even if the wind was infused with many different concepts, it was still ultimately considered wind and thus within her Authority. If she didn't want it to blow, it wouldn't.

As they looked around, they soon spotted their first prey. Or, more accurately, a collection of prey. Several elementals had embedded themselves within some of the rainclouds, a few Primas included.

"Far fewer regular monsters here than on Earth," Vesperia noted.

"Likely due to the environment. From what I was told, most monsters that appeared on Earth were transformed from regular animals. Considering the state of this planet, I doubt there were many living things in the first place," the Fallen King voiced his opinion.

"His Highness is correct," one of the few C-grade dwarves of the world said with a nod. "There never was much life here, even below the ground. Also, the Prima Vessel is in that direction... when it comes to the exact distance, I'm not sure."

"It does not matter, as long as you have the teleportation disc ready for when we get there. Till then, stay in the background for safety," Vesperia said to the dwarf, who quickly nodded.

In order to open the Prima Vessel, they needed the World Leader of the planet. That is to say, they needed the dwarven leader, who was still back in the dwarven country. This dwarf leader was, to put it bluntly, entirely useless in battle and was entirely specialized in administrative tasks.

Bringing him along would more likely than not result in him getting killed. That was why they had brought along the most competent of the dwarves. Someone who called himself a hunter, even if he left much to be desired compared to what the three monsters were used to when they heard that term. Either way, the dwarf had some good stealth skills, and he was one of the few people who had even gone to Nevermore, so he was at least a mid-tier C-grade.

The stealth skills were the most important, though, as the dwarf's only function was to set up a teleportation disc prepared by the Hive Queens that would allow the dwarven leader to teleport to the Prima Vessel and back again after unlocking it and activating the Prima Guardian.

"Ree?" Sylphie screeched after they had just been floating in the air for a bit.

"Yes, let's go," Vesperia nodded, Sylphie taking the go-ahead and running with it.

The air around them exploded as Sylphie shot forward, going straight for the cloud of Primas. A massive windstorm followed in her wake, and the moment she arrived at her targets, the entire cloud was blown apart along with several of the regular weaker elementals.

The story has been taken without consent; if you see it on Amazon, report the incident.

Usually, a destructive environment would be detrimental, but for Sylphie, these harmful winds only served as her weapon.

The dwarven "hunter" could only stare as Sylphie tore apart two Primas, proving her own power while also making it very clear the average level of these Primas was quite pathetic compared to what they faced on Earth.

Not wanting to get too far behind, the Fallen King and Vesperia also got moving. Having lost her Queen's Guards against the Prima Guardian on Earth, Vesperia was still working on spawning new ones, but the regular Royal Guards and soldiers were good enough to deal with many of the regular monsters they faced.

Days quickly passed as they made their way across the surface of the planet, slaughtering Primas on the way. The larger movements they made and the more energy they released, the more attention their group of three attracted, making many of the Primas come to them as they sent shockwaves echoing across the surface.

While each individual Prima wasn't any problem, there was still a lot of them, each having that extra infusion of vital energy, making them annoying to kill quickly. Nevertheless, they were three creatures at the apex of power in the multiverse for their level, and many of the Primas barely broke level 250, with some not even mid-tier C-grade.

Eleven days after arriving on the planet and hundreds of dead Primas later, they finally found themselves before the Prima Vessel. The dwarven hunter – who was honestly more like a scout hiding in stealth all the time – quickly set up the pre-prepared teleportation circle and activated it.

Soon after, the dwarven leader came out and, as agreed upon, opened the Prima Vessel and went inside, carrying several dozen defensive items to make sure he would make it safely out again. A few

minutes after going into the Vessel, the dwarven leader stormed out of it, looking frightened as hell while running for the teleportation circle to get the hell out of there.

He barely managed to activate the teleporter, getting swept away as a creature exited the Prima Vessel. It was a large, mostly elemental-looking monster. Its body was bulky, with stone-like growths everywhere and even a few traits reminiscent of the ants that lived with the dwarves.

"Still some form of chimera," the Fallen King quickly concluded.

"Yes, but clearly quite different from the one on Earth. As if this one is just incomplete and half-baked," Vesperia said, shaking her head.

"Ree?" Sylphie asked, seemingly confused as to why this chimera looked so boring compared to the one they had killed less than two weeks prior.

Looking at the Prima Guardian using Identify, it was also quite clear it couldn't hold a candle to the Exalted Prima Guardian had faced. The name of this one also differed.

[Honored Prima Guardian – lvl 317]

Jake mentioned that the Prima Guardian on Earth was originally called a Revered Prima Guardian before it reached its maximum level of power. This one was called Honored, which Vesperia quickly concluded had to at least be beneath Revered. If it was one or two levels below, there was no way to know... and it ultimately didn't matter.

The Prima Guardian had also noticed the three of them the moment it appeared. Perhaps it also saw the dwarven scout who was running away with a part of the teleportation circle, but it clearly didn't care as it focused on the three monsters who were the true threat.

Without further ado, it attacked. After spending quite a few days on the planet, facing weak Primas that were nothing more than high-health weaklings, the three finally got a good fight. Sure, the Prima Guardian couldn't hold a candle to the one on Earth, but it was still pretty powerful.

The fight ended up having only two phases, with it never going back into the Prima Vessel at any point. It just morphed and ended up adopting a far larger form than the one it started with, turning into what was effectively a giant living mountain.

Vesperia did lose a few more Royal Guards, and the Fallen King and Sylphie burned through the majority of their resources simply due to the sheer durability of the Guardian, but they were never truly in any danger. In fact, chances are any one of them could have taken on the Prima Guardian on their own, though it would have made the fight even longer and more annoying. Perhaps even a bit dangerous.

With the Prima Guardian dead, the dwarven scout returned and they summoned the dwarven leader once more, who looked utterly surprised they had managed to take down the Prima Guardian. Entering the Prima Vessel with newfound respect and the three monsters that had slain the Guardian, they went to claim the Planetary Core, the same as on Earth.

Returning to the dwarven country from there, Vesperia made sure to praise the Hive Queens there, and the dwarven leader effectively handed over all the powers of a planetary leader to the hive. While the power balance before the system had clearly been in the favor of the dwarves, now it was clear they were subordinate to the ant hive.

Also, even if the dwarven leader had tried to hold onto whatever feeble power he had, all that would have awaited him was a swift death from the giant hive that surrounded the entire dwarven country. He was wise enough to not try anything. Plus, it was now up to the hive to get rid of the rest of the Primas, as there was no way Vesperia and the two others would stay around for that, so making the hive angry would just be dumb.

And just like that, Vesperia, Sylphie, and the Fallen King laid claim to their first planet as helpers from Earth... though they weren't even the first "group" to have done so.

In fact, they had been quite a lot slower than someone summoned to a planet with even more... let's just say, questionable circumstances.

Jake was happy that at least some people weren't being selective assholes when it came to getting help with saving their planets. Now, granted, perhaps Jake should have considered why the planet was so desperate to get help in the first place. Maybe he could even have browsed for a bit longer to see the details of the planets he applied to. You know, done any research whatsoever and not just tried to shoot his shot with anyone who would have him.

Because it turns out that a planet that would accept an application like the one Jake sent out did so for a reason. The reason, in this instance, was absolute desperation because they had fucked up, and they'd fucked up badly.

Jake found himself teleported into what looked like a small base camp, surrounded by people running everywhere. Several more individuals teleported in all around him, many of them with desperate looks on their faces as if they'd also been fleeing from somewhere.

"Everyone! Go to--"

"The western front--"

"It's coming toward the--"

"I come seeking refuge!"

Everyone was yelling as Jake just stood there, trying to figure out what exactly was happening. Releasing a Pulse of Perception, he saw tens of thousands running around like headless chickens, many of them entering circular towers with teleportation circles within.

If Jake was being perfectly honest, he had expected some kind of welcome when he went to another planet for the first time. Instead, he got a clusterfuck of panic, with a single guy standing on top of two boxes trying to yell at the people who just kept teleporting in all around Jake. It was pretty fucking clear they just accepted everyone who applied, especially when Jake even saw someone barely in C-grade appear.

Deciding to get a grasp of things, Jake began to walk forward, pushing through the crowd quite easily. He went straight to the yelling guy on top of the boxes and stopped in front of it. His deliberate movements caught the attention of the guy, who looked down at Jake and quickly tried to be helpful.

"Go to the tent over there and--"

"Hey! Where is the way to the capital city!" another guy pushed through the crowd, interrupting the box guy.

"No one is allowed to-" the box man tried to answer but didn't get far.

"Where is the refuge camp!?" some woman ran up; Jake getting really tired as he sighed out loud. He saw no reason to waste more time than necessary dealing with this, so he decided to calm things down a bit.

Jake activated Pride of the Malefic Viper, further infused with his own aura as he blanketed the entire area with his presence. The effect was instantaneous as people stopped in their tracks, the woman that had pushed herself up to stand beside Jake throwing him a look of utter horror.

From one moment to another, the panicked basecamp had become still as everyone froze, giving Jake plenty of time to ask the box guy what he wanted to ask.

"What exactly happened on this planet?" Jake asked in a relaxed tone.

The box guy stared at Jake only for a moment before he gathered himself and answered.

"There... the World Leader decided to free the Prima Guardian with her party and all the elites she could gather. It was a disaster; nearly all of them died, and the Primas and Guardian are now running rampant, trying to chase down our World Leader, so-"

"Where is the Guardian?" Jake followed up, not wanting to traumatize the crowd with his presence for longer than necessary.

"The... the tower over there should take you close..." the box man said, pointing toward one of the teleportation towers.

"Thank you," Jake nodded, as he turned toward the tower and deactivated Pride and reined in his presence.

Yet even after he stopped the skill, everyone stood still and stared after him as Jake casually walked to the tower, quite happy with what he'd just heard. In fact, he could barely believe how lucky he'd gotten, not even having to convince the local World Leader to release the Prima Guardian, as they'd been nice enough to do so before he even arrived.

Chapter 949: Heavenly Tribulation

Overconfidence was the downfall of many who thought themselves geniuses and darlings of the multiverse. Rapid progress could lead to feelings of absolute power like there was nothing in the world that could stop you. This was more often than not seen with people from worlds that had little interaction with the rest of the multiverse, and in this particular case, the main cause had been the powerup from Nevermore.

Leaving for only a few years in Realtime, only to return with more than sixty levels under your belt, so easily led to this phenomenon. Especially when the planet itself didn't progress as much during this time. The wildlife remained as strong – or weak - as before, with many of the dangerous beast lords none dared to engage before now viewed as nothing but easy prey.

This was the folly the World Leader, Olliandra, had fallen for. Despite having agreed to enter the Prima Guardian Alliance and the fact that everyone during the final World Congress had been on the same page that facing the Guardian alone would be stupid, her thoughts changed after her return from Nevermore.

As a party of five, they had gone there and done way better than expected. They had gained so many levels and with the rapid progress one experienced after hitting a new grade, all got stronger incredibly fast. It was so fast, and they got so strong that when they returned from Nevermore and after hunting down all the so-called "unbeatable" beasts, how couldn't they believe the Prima Guardian would also be easily overcome?

Why would they possibly need some stupid alliance?

Well... Olliandra and her party, as well as all the other elite parties, soon learned they most definitely did need this alliance.

She had entered the Prima Vessel shortly after it landed on her planet to activate the boss and just get the event over with. When she also considered how they had barely killed any Primas during the first part of this Prima Event, with only her and one other having gone to the Seat of the Eternal Prima, she

believed the system wouldn't throw too hard of a challenge at them. At least not one they couldn't handle post-Nevermore with all their newfound power.

Olliandra had been so wrong. It didn't take her more than a few moments to realize just how badly she had fucked up after freeing the Prima Guardian. It had chased her out of the Prima Vessel, and in the ensuing battle, thirty-four of the fifty-seven people who had gone to fight the Guardian died. No... they were slaughtered.

Without any hesitation, she had done the only thing she could... and ran. Her one surviving party member helped her, a space mage, who managed to teleport them some distance away. However, that's when she realized that there was no escape. As the World Leader, she was the living objective of the Prima Guardian. No matter what she did, it would keep chasing her, and to make matters worse, she discovered she couldn't activate the teleporter to take her to another planet that was part of the Prima Guardian Alliance. At least not while the Prima Guardian of her world still lived and roamed free.

Wracking her brain, Olliandra tried to send a distress signal to other members of the Prima Guardian Alliance but got no response. So, she decided to try the absolutely desperate strategy of just opening up the teleporter to anyone who wanted to come. The chances of anyone capable of offering assistance actually choosing to help were incredibly slim, but it was all she could do before she took off and ran once more. With Prima Guardian on her heels and nearly a thousand Primas ravaging the planet, the defenses they had prepared were far from enough... but what choice did she have but to flee?

Over the next many hours, all she could do was run desperately. Her space mage companion tried to teleport them over and over again to make distance from the far faster monster, but it began to adapt. It, too, began to use space magic to follow them through the ripples of space, giving them less and less leeway between every teleport.

They were running out of time... and Olliandra knew it was all down to her own stupidity. In the end, she chose to stop running, knowing they would eventually just be caught, as she sought out the Northern Keep. It was the most isolated of the defensive bases they possessed and the place where she would make her final stand.

Olliandra had already sent messages to the mages there to prepare for her arrival, and the second she arrived, they put up the full defensive barrier.

"My Queen, you shouldn't stay," the mage said in a worried tone after they had a moment. "If I and the others try and delay it here, and you try once more, surely the Celestial Child will hear our pleas and-"

"The alliance has abandoned us, and only I am to blame," Olliandra sighed as a magic circle appeared beneath her, and she began to use enhancement magic on herself. Due to the space mage standing for all the travel, she had nearly fully recovered and was ready to fight again. She just hoped the Guardian was also at least a little tired now.

"It isn't all you... we agreed to face the Guardian. We believed we could," the space mage sighed.

"The responsibility still falls with me," Olliandra sighed, continuing her buffing routine.

As she prepared herself, the final help also arrived. All of those who had fought – and survived – the Prima Guardian the first time arrived teleported in, now having recovered somewhat for a second round. Their faces didn't look good, and Olliandra felt much guilt seeing how none had chosen to abandon her or their world.

With resolve, Olliandra lifted her spear as her aura grew, and she addressed the crowd. "This may be our final battle together, our downfall caused by my own hubris... but do me this final honor, and help me at the very least take down this monster. Let our ends pave a future for our world. And know that even in death, I shall hold no regret, having died alongside the most valiant of warriors."

She barely believed her own words, as she, deep inside, wanted to just run... but she didn't have a choice. She would make her last stand and stay true to her word by at least trying to kill the monster.

"It's here," the space mage said, his face haggard from his low resources and spent mental energy.

On cue, space rippled as the Prima Guardian appeared. It was a creature about four meters tall, with a hunched-over humanoid form, its entire body seemingly made of bone, even if it wasn't undead. On its hands, it had long claws that could extend and retract, while on its back, several spikes poked out, and from the prior fight, they knew these could be released as devastating projectiles at any point. The breath of cold flames it released also wasn't to be trifled with and had been the death of many brave warriors.

At least the damage they did during their first encounter hadn't healed, and several cracks still marred its body, along with dozens of small holes here and there, most of them left by fighters making their final desperate attacks, trading their lives for a small nick. Overall, though...

If you encounter this narrative on Amazon, note that it's taken without the author's consent. Report it.

It doesn't look tired at all, Olliandra sighed internally while outwardly displaying courage by pointing her spear toward the Guardian.

"Hold nothing back!"

A dozen spells lit up the air as they all attacked the Prima Guardian at once. The creature easily avoided most of them, but a few explosions managed to scratch it. If it did any damage, there was no way to tell, but the Guardian quickly counterattacked as it released its breath upon the barrier protecting the keep.

The inferno of white flames seemed to consume the entire fort as the mages struggled to keep the barrier intact, many of them falling to their knees, blood dripping from their eyes and ears. Gritting her teeth, Olliandra commanded them all to release another barrage of attacks, hoping to at least do a bit of damage before they had to engage the Guardian in melee.

This continued for a few more times, with the Prima Guardian slowly tearing down the barrier while taking a few ranged attacks in return. Clearly, the Guardian wasn't in a hurry either and was happy with its prey trapped. Perhaps Olliandra's hope that it was at least a little tired was even true... though she doubted it.

Minutes passed, but soon, the barrier began to show cracks. Looking up at the Prima Guardian, Olliandra prepared herself as she used Identify one final time. The response in no way helped ease her mind.

[Honored Prima Guardian – lvl 319]

With the barrier just about to fall, Olliandra pushed her boosting skill beyond full power, further improved by all her enhancement spells, not caring that the backlash, should she somehow survive, would be devastating. She felt the toll on her body but didn't let it show as her body began glowing with power.

"Brave warriors... charge!"

As one, they all took to the air, and flew through the barrier protecting the fort just before it shattered entirely, many of the mages below already dead.

Twenty-three fighters faced off against the Prima Guardian for a second time, Olliandra at the front wielding a spear wrapped in deep red flames. The boss regarded them with no fear as it met their charge with its indestructible claws.

No one held back in the slightest, and even the space mage, who'd been exhausted, did his best to assist. Less than ten seconds into the battle, the first person fell as the Guardian cut him into six pieces with a swipe of its claws. A second fighter fell another eight seconds later, her body shattering to pieces after a breath of white icy flames.

Olliandra's attacks became more and more desperate as her comrades fell one by one. Her spear repeatedly stabbed into the body of the Guardian, leaving small holes but failing to truly penetrate. Many others also managed to land their own blows, but they could only do so much. Their opponent was simply too durable and powerful for them to handle.

More and more died, and soon, they were down to only ten people, with the Prima Guardian not that much worse off than when the fight began. Desperation was building, but soon, they all had to accept that none of them were leaving this battle alive. One person, the one closest to her of everyone there, also realized this.

"My Queen..." the voice of the space mage echoed in Olliandra's head.

She understood immediately and sent a telepathic nod and a smile his way. He also gave her a smile before his body erupted with more power than he could handle.

The Prima Guardian looked surprised for a moment and couldn't react in time as dozens of rings made of pure space energy encircled it and held it still. Every surviving member of the group attacked, and Olliandra also pushed herself to release her most powerful attack.

Wings that seemed to be made up of patches of fire appeared on her back as she pointed her spear toward the Prima Guardian and spoke the Words of Power.

"Trail of Undying Embers."

She flew forward, propelled by an unseen force. Her spear, wrapped in deep red embers, struck the Prima Guardian in the chest... and for the first time, it struck true.

Her spear penetrated deep into the Prima Guardian, piercing out the other side of the large creature and leaving a large burning hole. For a moment, Olliandra smiled, but it was quickly wiped away when the Prima Guardian simply looked down on her.

She tried to retreat, but it was too late. Even after she let go of her spear and tried to shoot back, the claw caught her forearm, forcing Olliandra to take swift and decisive action. Without any hesitation, her arm exploded, releasing a rain of embers on the boss and launching her back. While flying back, she saw the space mage falling toward the ground, unconscious and bleeding from every orifice. Spikes had also shot out of the boss, killing another two of her comrades during their assault.

Olliandra looked at the boss with listless eyes as the smoke cleared, revealing the Prima Guardian still alive and well. It pulled out her spear, the hole in its body healing with visible speed... showing the only reason it hadn't healed the wounds they had caused prior was that they hadn't mattered enough for it to bother to. She saw its almost taunting gaze look back at her, Olliandra barely able to lift her one remaining arm. The Prima Guardian knew it had won, and tha-

The Prima Guardian disappeared from her vision, replaced with a trail of energy that seemed to tear apart space itself.

Then, the shockwave hit her.

Olliandra was sent flying back, as her vision was filled with an odd pinkish-purple hue from a massive explosion. She didn't know what was happening... but she knew something had struck the Prima Guardian from above. Something neither she nor it had seen before it was too late.

Directly below where the Prima Guardian had been, a giant impact crater had formed in an instant, soil and rock still filling the air as it was disintegrated in real-time by the odd destructive energies dominating the area from the explosion. She couldn't help but stare at the crater, unable to collect her thoughts for long enough to do anything else.

For a moment, she caught a glimpse of the Prima Guardian amongst the destructive energies in the midst of the crater. Its entire left side was torn apart, its arm nowhere to be seen. It tried to stand up... and then another attack fell.

This time, she saw what it was. It looked like an arrow, wrapped and trailed by powerful energies Olliandra couldn't even begin to understand.

This second attack struck the Prima Guardian, releasing a second blastwave, as Olliandra and everyone else who'd survived thus far were pushed even further back. Before she had a chance to see anything else, a third strike fell, followed by a fourth soon after.

It was as if the gods themselves had chosen to deliver death upon the Prima Guardian. None dared to even try and do anything, and no one even spoke using telepathy. They simply stood frozen as the attacks kept striking down like heavenly tribulation, and the aura of the Prima Guardian kept weakening with every explosion of pure destruction.

Then... a final flash of light, and all became still, as a notification appeared before Olliandra and everyone else who'd participated in the battle.

You have slain [Honored Prima Guardian – lvl 319]– Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level

--

Jake, floating dozens of kilometers above the newly formed crater, had another arrow nocked, and Arcane Powershot charging but stopped as he dispelled the arrow and stopped the attack.

Pretty durable... but not super fast without its space magic. Good idea to make the first arrow disrupt the space mana, Jake quickly nodded to himself as he saw the kill notification as well as the level gained.

'DING!' Class: [Arcane Hunter of Horizon's Edge] has reached level 293 - Stat points allocated, +50 Free Points

Looking down at the battlefield, he confirmed the survivors. He knew quite a few had died because he didn't attack earlier, but honestly... he'd wanted to see what they were capable of. Jake had wanted to respect their final stand, and only when the result was absolutely clear he attacked. Well, alright, he had only really delayed his attack half a minute, as he had arrived a bit late and had to do all his prep work, but he could have struck earlier, saving a few of them.

Seeing the World Leader fight so valiantly against the Prima Guardian, along with all her allies, was honestly... underwhelming. It wasn't even as if her level was that low. In fact, she nearly matched Jake himself, being only three levels lower.

[Human – lvl 282]

Jake was thrown out of his thoughts when he felt a few gazes on him, the people below having spotted him. Seeing no reason not to at least introduce himself to another World Leader – and because he knew Miranda wanted him to play nice with galactic politics - he began floating down, descending using the remnants of the trails left by his Arcane Powershots.

Chapter 950: Jake & Covert Galaxy Politicking

While floating down to meet the battered and beaten World Leader and other survivors, Jake couldn't help but reflect a bit on the fight. More accurately, one aspect of the fight.

It had come as a bit of a surprise, but despite the Prima Guardian being in the middle of a battle against other people, Jake had fully benefitted from Lone Hunter throughout everything. It had been active from the moment Jake decided to kill the Prima Guardian, even as it was actively fighting several others.

This didn't make much sense to Jake. How was it considered a solo hunt with so many people involved? However, when he considered it a bit more... why wouldn't Lone Hunter have been active?

Jake was hunting alone.

He wasn't allied with the World Leader or anyone else on this planet. They were just there. Background noise to his own hunt and – to put it bluntly – just part of the environment. It was no different from if Jake stalked two beasts fighting and decided to get involved in the middle of it to take them both down. If Lone Hunter didn't work in a situation like that, Jake would have found it weird.

Perhaps it also played a role that these people simply weren't strong enough to ever qualify as hunting companions. The final strike of the World Leader had been okay-ish but pretty damn telegraphed, and when Jake held it up against something like the Sword Saint's Glimpse of Spring: Erosion... yeah, it was like comparing stabbing someone with a spear or a toothpick.

Returning his focus to the real world, Jake kept descending as everyone who'd survived just stared at him. It was moments like these he was happy to be wearing a mask, as he would have felt pretty damn awkward without it.

In their gazes, he saw a lot of different emotions, but none seemed outright hostile. One could argue that Jake should have stepped in earlier to see if he could save more of them... but why would he have? He'd only gotten involved once it was absolutely certain they would lose. In his mind, getting involved before that may have been a disservice more than anything.

Scenarios where talents face death were multiversally also recognized as opportunities for tremendous growth. Many of Jake's skill upgrades had come in moments where things weren't looking good, which was far from rare. Jake choosing to attack the Prima earlier may have potentially robbed the World Leader and others of such an opportunity, something he himself would hate others doing to him.

Besides, if he'd really wanted to be fully selfish, he would have waited for the Prima Guardian to kill everyone before attacking. As things were, he barely delayed getting involved as most of the time he'd spent waiting had been prep time for his opening strike.

Anyway, Jake took his time floating down to meet everyone, primarily to give them all a bit of time to gather themselves. Miranda had also talked to Jake about the importance of theatrics at times to leave a more lasting impression. Even Villy was a fan of showing off, though his reasoning was more about the importance of looking cool while doing something.

Some of the survivors had gone to help their more injured comrades, and Jake saw that the space mage had survived. Despite having been close to the epicenter of the crater, he had barely taken any damage but had only been blasted away. Jake's destructive arcane energies had been focused on killing the Prima, meaning he had been spared for the most part, and with some healing, he should be okay.

Probably.

Arriving at the same height as the World Leader, she seemed to finally snap out of her stupor as she bowed her head. "Thank you for saving us. I am Olliandra, the World Leader of this planet. May I know the identity of our savior?"

Jake felt a sense of caution even as she asked, which gave Jake a more positive impression of her. Even under these circumstances, she was level-headed enough to question who or what Jake was, as well as his intentions for helping them. Also, he could admit it was a bit weird for a guy to show up and just kill the Prima Guardian without further elaborating.

"Thayne," Jake just answered, choosing to go with his last name. "World Leader of the planet Earth."

The woman looked like she was searching her memory about who he could be, but she seemed to come up blank. One of the reasons Jake had chosen to not go with his identity as the Chosen of the Malefic Viper was to see if people even knew his name. He had been told that Ell'Hakan had spread some information about Jake but clearly hadn't gone as far as to use his actual name... though he would come to learn in not that long that his brilliant ruse of only using his last name was kind of moronic.

Anyway, Ell'Hakan using Jake's title over his name made sense. From the beginning, he had been trying to frame Jake as more of a symbol rather than a person. Only using his title would help accomplish that.

"I apologize; I do not believe I have heard of you," the World Leader called Olliandra said, keeping her very polite tone. Despite her state, she also tried to keep an aura of dignity, which was pretty hard considering her missing arm and overall bloody appearance.

Jake decided to also be a bit polite as he took a quick look around. "Rather than speak here, you should gather your allies and attend to the wounded. We shouldn't waste more time than needed either. You have a Planetary Core to claim and an army of Primas to address."

Olliandra quickly nodded. "Thank you... would you be willing to follow me to our capital city?"

"Sure," Jake agreed. He was a bit interested in seeing what the other planets of their galaxy looked like, and this one had been pretty average so far. It looked a lot like Earth, except the plants were quite a lot different, and the rocks all had a yellowish tinge to them.

It didn't take those able to move about long to gather the survivors and prepare to head back to the capital. Contrary to before the system, unless people were fully dead, chances are they would naturally stabilize themselves if left alone for a bit. There were circumstances where injuries could be bad enough to still lead to death, but unless harmful energies had been infused into the blows and lingered, this was rare. Okay, if poison was involved, dying after the fact was also pretty normal, but the Prima Guardian hadn't used any poison.

With everyone gathered, Jake saw Olliandra look toward the crater as Jake shook his head.

"The Prima Guardians do not leave anything behind. Any rewards are inside the Prima Vessel and only become available after all the regular Primas are also dead," Jake quickly explained.

She looked at him weirdly for a moment before she cautiously asked to clarify: "Has your planet already killed its Prima Guardian and all Primas?"

"Of course," Jake just said.

"How... how powerful was it compared to this one?" she asked hesitantly. It wasn't a secret that the Prima Guardians scaled based on the planet, and it wasn't a reach either to assume that the one Jake had faced had been quite a bit different.

"I see little meaning in comparing them," Jake simply shook his head. The levels and the sheer difference in power between the two variants did make them difficult to compare. In fact, the only real thing they had in common was their durability and their ability to somewhat adapt, though the level of adaption of the Exalted Prima Guardian had been insane. This one seemed to just absorb some magical concepts from others.

If you come across this story on Amazon, it's taken without permission from the author. Report it.

Which proved to be a good thing, as it had no counters to when Jake struck. It had also helped a bit that it was already damaged and had spent a fair amount of energy. Of course, the primary reason it had been so easy to kill was due to Jake landing a Protean Arrow from stealth. With Lone Hunter improving the effects of Stealth Skills further, along with his Big Game Hunter, it felt like the skill gave double the benefits when using Stealth Attack.

"I see," Olliandra just nodded, not pressing further. From the look in her eyes, she seemed to get what Jake was getting at, though.

Their group flew down toward the small ruined fort, where a teleportation circle remained intact. Jake saw Olliandra clearly struggling just moving around, her boosting skill having done quite a number on her internals. Still, she hadn't asked anyone for help, so neither would Jake offer. It wouldn't look good for her either if another World Leader assisted her just with walking.

Returning to the capital city through the teleportation circle, Jake found himself within a massive and pretty damn impressive city. Tall and mostly rectangular towers were erected everywhere, the yellow-tinged stone really shining through. Quite literally, as the stone apparently became golden and reflective when polished.

Technology-wise, Jake guessed this planet had been pretty medieval pre-system. It was a bit weird how most planets seemed to have been, considering how quickly civilizations usually developed, but perhaps Earth had just been weird in that regard. Thinking on it further, the benefits of having been technologically advanced before the system were pretty much non-existent, while if you lived in a medieval world where things like swords and spears were normal, you would have an advantage.

The World Leader quickly escorted Jake to a large cathedral-looking building, which Jake later came to learn also served as the royal palace. Scouting the capital city, it was quite clear no Primas had reached it yet, but people were on high alert, and there weren't as many around as Jake would expect.

After quickly cleaning herself up to look somewhat representable, Olliandra went to meet Jake, who hadn't bothered staying in the proposed meeting room but had gone to the clocktower that overlooked the city. He saw that she was joined by the space mage who'd recovered enough to walk, though, from his aura, it was clear he could do little more than walk around. Jake guessed he'd only joined out of worry for his World Leader.

"I apologize for making you wait," Olliandra said as she joined Jake, taking out two chairs for her and the mage to sit alongside Jake.

"I was the one who proposed postponing our talk," Jake said. It was already enough that she prioritized meeting with him over going to claim the Planetary Pylon. Then again, maybe she was unsure if Jake truly would allow her to claim it.

"And for that, I thank you," she bowed her head, something the space mage clearly didn't like, but he tried to not let it show. He was pretty bad at being sneaky, though. Jake would really recommend the guy to buy a mask, they did wonders at hiding your actual emotions.

"If I may," the space mage began. "You are from the Prima Guardian Alliance, correct?"

"Technically, everyone who can teleport here from other planets is," Jake answered. "But I guess that isn't what you are asking."

"Were you sent here by them?" he followed up, his eyes glowing with reverence for a moment. "Did the Celestial Child not turn his back on us after all?"

Jake would lie if he said the question surprised him. He would also lie if he said it didn't offend him.

"Celestial Child, huh," Jake said, smiling beneath his mask. "What makes you think someone like him could order me to go anywhere?"

He wanted to call Ell'Hakan something far worse but restrained himself. Being openly hostile toward the orange fuck would only play into the guy's plans. Better to just take the approach of finding it offensive that Ell'Hakan even dared try to compare himself to Jake.

"I thought he was the leader of the Prima Guardian Alliance?" Olliandra asked, a bit confused. "He is the Chosen of Yip of Yore, a god comparable or even superior to the twelve Primordials. If he didn't send you... why did you come here?"

"I came here to hunt down the Prima Guardian," Jake answered. "As for the other nonsense you said... let me just give you some kind advice: don't believe everything you hear, especially not when it comes out of the mouth of someone like Ell'Hakan."

"What do you mean by that?" the space mage asked in an offended tone, not even trying to hide it anywhere.

"Exactly what I said," Jake answered. "I'm not even telling you to trust me either. Just to show caution and to watch yourselves. Ell'Hakan can manipulate the emotions of others, often without them even noticing. Simply being aware of this is the best defense and you should continually question yourselves while in his presence if what you are feeling is genuine. That's the only advice regarding him I'm going to give you."

"Could you elaborate on what you mean by manipulating emotions?" Olliandra asked skeptically. "I'm confident I would have noticed if he ever did anything. Most World Leaders or politically inclined would, considering the plethora of skills we have to defend against or at least detect such things."

"Skills can't block Bloodlines," Jake just shook his head.

Olliandra looked like she was about to say something but stopped herself as she looked deep in thought. The space mage also kept quiet, as he seemed to have some internal debate going on.

After a few seconds of silence, the other World Leader seemed to have reached some conclusion as she bowed once more. "I thank you for your warning, Lord Thayne. It has given me much food for thought. We haven't had many interactions with the Celestial Child, and I do not believe we are in his good graces in the first place after we didn't go along with his plan for this event."

"What did you just call him?" the space mage asked as his head perked up.

Olliandra gave the mage a look of disapproval due to his sudden outburst. He didn't even seem to notice, though, as he just stared at Jake.

"You... you're the Chosen of the Malefic Viper?"

See, this was why calling himself Thayne was a pretty damn useless and dumb thing to do if he didn't want people to instantly recognize who he was, considering there was a Leaderboard available with his full name at the top, placed right at the entrance to the most visited World Wonder in the multiverse.

With the cat out of the bag, Jake nodded. "Among other things, yes."

The mood in the clocktower changed as Olliandra now stared at Jake with much concern... proving that the propaganda from El'Hakan definitely had hurt his reputation. Or maybe the Viper's reputation had hurt his reputation. Either way, her knowing he was the Chosen of the Malefic Viper didn't seem to give her a more positive impression.

"I... I fail to understand why the Chosen of the Malefic Viper has decided to visit this planet," Olliandra said after a bit.

"To kill your Prima Guardian," Jake just answered, not changing his own tone. "The system event will give rewards based on your overall performance during the entire event. This includes what you do on other planets."

"But... why here?" she continued questioning.

"You were the first planet to accept my application," Jake responded in a deadpan tone.

"That can't have been the only reason..."

"Turns out it can," Jake shook his head and couldn't help but smile. "That truly is the only reason I came here. You were the first planet to accept my request, and I only came here to kill the Prima Guardian. Everything happening now is just me trying to be polite as a fellow World Leader."

"Is it true you are in a conflict with the Celestial Child?" the space mage finally also asked, his look quite complicated.

"That is what people say," Jake just answered. "Personally, I feel like he's a far more significant threat to the ones who sided with him in the Prima Guardian Alliance than he is a problem for me."

The clocktower was silent once more as the two of them digested Jake's answer. In the end, Jake was the one who broke the silence.

"Well, I guess I have lingered here long enough," Jake sighed as he stood up. "I also believe you have plenty of matters to attend to, including claiming your Planetary Pylons and handling the Primas still roaming your world."

Olliandra looked at Jake a bit weirdly, as she couldn't help but ask. "What happens from here? What is expected of us?"

"Haven't I told you already? I came here to kill the Prima Guardian. That's done. I didn't come here expecting anything. With that, I'm not saying you can't reach out to Earth for diplomatic purposes. Just that there are no requirements for you to do so."

The other World Leader still seemed doubtful about Jake's words, but he didn't try to convince her further. Trying to prove he didn't have some ulterior motive was borderline impossible, as proving a negative wasn't a thing. Besides, he did kind of have an ulterior motive for coming, in wanting to at least mess with Ell'Hakan's plans a little.

"Anyway, it was a pleasure to meet you, Olliandra. I wish you a happy hunt of the remaining Primas. I myself have more Guardians to slay and will not stick around longer than necessary," Jake said as he prepared to leave.

"One last time, thank you for saving not just my life but likely this entire planet," Olliandra bowed deeply. "I hope to repay such favor one day."

Jake just smiled as he stood at the edge of the tower, but before he teleported, he turned for one last comment.

"Actually, I will say one more thing regarding the Ell'Hakan matter. Say there was a conflict between us, one leading to outright hostilities. If I were you, I would heavily consider where you would wish to stand in such a conflict. Because if it becomes a battle with only one side left standing at the end... I don't think I need to elaborate further."

With that, Jake stepped down and teleported away from the clock tower, preparing to head back to Earth.

Second Prima Guardian down... and hopefully, some good politicking done, too.