

LOA Nobody 171

Chapter 171 Lisa Heartwell - The One Who Left Him To Die

A smile came to his lips as Rio heard the system's voice in his head again, he had been waiting for it since last night. He was curious to talk with the system, ask questions and doubts he had found in these past 8 years, receive the rewards for all his hard work, see how many points he got or just simply discuss his next strategies with the system - but that would all have to wait for a while.

After all, as he said before, today was a day dedicated to the protagonist. It wouldn't be fun if he ignored him and decided to talk with the system instead.

Unlike his past self which bore no hatred or animosity towards the protagonist, and would even want to ignore him, the current Rio had developed a form of wariness against this chosen son of fate, that just wouldn't leave him alone now. The incident from 2 years ago, was simply a slap of reality for him because of taking things too lightly and thinking of himself as untouchable.

He didn't want to repeat his experiences. He only met 2 protagonists till now, one already killed him once and the other's fate influenced the events and he almost died again. If not for his last bit of luck and strong will, he would've been turned into a freaking zombie by now. Roaming around eating other zombies.

So he wanted to be careful around this guy from the very beginning.

Rio looked upwards to the floating panel of rankers, and he could see their faces, the main characters of the academy arcs. The hero, heroines and villains - all on the same stage. Looking at the surprised face of the protagonist, as he tried to make sense of this situation, Rio couldn't help but smile.

'How does it feel, when someone takes everything away from you? When someone just swoops in and steals the things you fought hard for? Do you feel helpless? Irritated? Does it feel annoying - I bet it does. It did for me 2 years ago. This is just the beginning, blame your gods for they started it.'

Rio turned his attention away from him and started walking forward. He was moving towards the first rows of the crowd, where the children of nobility, and the students who were invited to join this academy and didn't participate in the public exams were seated.

[— The entrance exams were divided into 2 parts. The first part, conducted by the World Association, which was mandatory for every aspiring student to pass. This initial examination served as a filtering mechanism, determining the candidates' basic qualifications. Once that was done the students could be given choices to choose the academy where they want to join and study.

After that, the chosen academy would process their application and check their performance. If it satisfies them, they either send you a letter of invitation with which you can directly join the academy. Or they call you to take part in another public entrance exam, done solely by that academy. If you pass that you can join, if not, then you either try to go to some other academy or try again next year.

This second exam done by the academy also dictates the first rankings of the new year students, and those on top get to show off in front of the whole world, like just right now. This is why many nobles and even those who received invitations join this exam to get a better ranking and show their superiority and bolster their reputation and status.

Obviously there are also those who like to keep a low profile or want to keep their abilities to themselves and don't like participating when they're already fixed to join, so they ignore this test and rankings.

Despite the grandeur of the rankings celebration and the immediate fame it brought, these rankings held little practical value within the academy itself. The real difference and real ranking of students gets done after the end of their first semester and 6 month exams. That ranking provides a more accurate reflection of students' academic and practical achievements, effectively distinguishing the cream of the crop from the load of crap. —]

Rio walked through the pathways ignoring everything and everyone, the questions, the rumors, the theories - everything anyone said, went from his one ear to another, as he kept moving.

However his steps came to halt when someone just crashed into his body. Looking down at the girl who hugged him as tightly as she could, her tears staining his attire as her voice trembled with emotion.

"I'm _ I'm sorry. It was all my fault. If I didn't _ then _ I missed you so much."

He wanted to look at her face to see who she was, when he heard her apologizing to him and he realized her identity.

His hands instinctively rose to comfort her trembling back, but stopped midway, when the memories of what happened 2 years ago started playing in his head again.

"Get out of here"

"We don't have any time "

"We can't leave him behind."

"We have no other choice now leave _ "

"Riiioooo _ !! "

The sounds of what he remembered while he was fighting for his life, the scenes when all those so called friends and classmates of his left him to die and ran away from that dungeon. Their running backs as he felt his body getting crushed in a million pieces, the pain that felt like eternity and would never end - as the girl's apologies washed over him, they acted as triggers for the scenes he forgot.

Her cries and sorry's brought out all the memories he buried in his heart. The charade he put around himself as he tried to act normal near his family was broken, as his eyes got a cold glint, now devoid of any emotions, his fists clenched in anger and bloodlust started leaking out from his body.

_ I think you should take a look at

Few minutes ago,

Various students from the student council were talking to each other in their office. Chatting happily as the entire event was progressing smoothly and there was no problem anywhere.

"Hey Lisa, you didn't tell us your brother was that talented?" One of the students suddenly said, as they looked at the big screen focusing on the platform.

"Yeah, he took the first rank. He must be a genius." Another one chimed in.

Hearing their questions, a girl with short red hair smiled and said - "Well, what did you expect, I already knew he'd be talented too, by just looking at Lisa's ranks."

Her logic was simple, since the big sister is so talented, lil bro would be somewhat good too right. The boy from earlier nodded his head too, but in his defense he started saying -

"That's true. But still, he even broke Rio's record, now that was unexpected right?"

He had just finished his words, as the atmosphere in the room shifted subtly, like a breeze turning chilly. Lisa, the older sister of the talented newcomer they were talking about, turned around to address her friends.

pandasnovel.com "You guys can keep watching from here, I'll go check on everyone else."

As she left the room, the gazes of her companions shifted to the boy who had unknowingly ignited a spark. They all had the same expression that was saying - 'seriously dude'.

It took a moment for him to realize what he did or said. But by the time he realized Lisa was already gone. He looked back at his friends who were still staring at him, like looking at a fool. "What? It just slipped out. Not my fault."

His protestations were met with sighs and incredulous looks. The red-haired girl among them stood up, her tone carrying a mix of irritation and concern.

"I'll bring her back. And you, no more slip-ups this time."

The room fell into a lull as the door closed behind her. The boy grumbled to his friends, trying to justify his thoughtless comment.

"What'd I do? She can't keep everyone from mentioning his name, when her brother is literally going to be compared with Rio right from the start."

A chorus of reproachful glances met his explanation. Another boy chimed in, attempting to reason with him.

"You should've been more careful. You know she's been extra on edge ever since those rumors about his return started circulating."

The boy, still defensive, voiced his frustration.

"Well, fuck them girls anyway. She left him to die there, and now she's acting like this. If she was going to be so emotional about it, she should've stayed there with him. I just don't understand girls."

Outside the room in the hallway, Lisa removed the communication crystal that connected every member of the student council. The words of that boy reached her ears, stinging like a lash. An indignant rage surged within her, colliding with the guilt and pain she had felt. She clenched her fist around the crystal, and crushed it.

Anger surged into her, as she couldn't find the words to refute what he said. After all, that was the truth. Guilt, pain, anger - it all crashed into her.

Walking to a nearby window, she leaned against the frame and lit a cigarette, as she kept staring at the crowd that gathered below, cheering for her brother, happily comparing him with Rio.

Chapter 172 Shock To The World - He's Really Back

Lisa sat down on a chair, she took out a pink mask from her rings and kept looking at it. It was the last thing she had that reminded him of her, the last thing of his that she still had.

"If only I listened to you, none of it would've happened. We would've still been friends and you would still be alive." She thought out loud.

She was still sitting there when her friend, Elena came towards her. "So you were here. I was looking everywhere. Come on, let's go back."

"You can go ahead, I'll come after some time." Lisa said.

Hearing her reply, Elena sighed, as she sat near her too. She heard what that idiot said through her intercom too, so she could guess why she was sitting here with the plump look instead of going back. "Come on Beth, you know how those boys are. Just ignore them."

"Why? What he said was the truth. We left him there. We left him to die, when he was the one fighting to protect us." Lisa said.

Elena shook her head, hearing her best friend say that. "We had no choice Beth."

Even she was feeling guilty for what happened back then, but it's not like crying about it now would change anything or bring him back. "I've told you this a million times before Beth, but everyone would've done the same in that situation."

"He wouldn't. He could've but he didn't." Lisa replied as she looked at her friend.

Elena would've retorted or said something else, but her thoughts were stopped, as the phone in her hands started vibrating. Looking at the name of the guy calling him, she wanted to curse out loud. As it was the same idiot who ruined the whole mood because of his blabbermouth "what?" She said irritably

"Both of you back at office now. There's a situation at the entrance." He said hurriedly.

"What happened?" She asked, her tone changing to pure seriousness. Thinking if something like what happened 2 years ago was happening right now.

"It's Rio. He's back at the academy. Bring Lisa back to, the crowd's getting out of hand, we're going ahead."

-he's really alive-

-but did he have to come back today? Damn it, this will ruin the whole event.-

Elena, who was confused at first, heard what others were saying in the background, she stood up in a hurry, and looked outside the window.

"Fucking hell" She muttered, looking at the floating screens that were showing his face.

"What happened?" Lisa asked, as she stood up after seeing her reactions.

"So they weren't just rumors."

Elena said, as she turned to look at Lisa, who was looking at the screens without batting an eye. Her face bore a shocked expression as she muttered - "It's him. He's _ he's really back."

Elena snapped into action, recognizing the urgency of the situation.

"We need to go back to the office, Beth. Gather everyone and handle it fast." Elena said and turned around, but soon she felt a gust of air pass by her, she looked at her friend who disappeared from her place.

"Damn it. Now's not the time Beth." Elena shouted, looking at Lisa's leaving back, but getting no answer in return, she could only follow behind her.

Leon, who was enjoying his time at the high podium, looking at the ground below where everyone cheered for him, the gazes of others that looked up to him with admiration, envy and jealousy filled his heart with pride. It was proof that all his hard work wasn't in vain. That the blood, sweat, tears he shed in the past 2 years weren't for nothing. That all his pain meant something, that it all led to this moment - and for God, did it feel good now.

'I did it. I proved myself in front of the whole world.' He thought, as he casted a gaze at hundreds of people standing below. His thoughts had just finished when a voice rang out in his ears -

[Do not feel proud of this little achievement, mortal. They know you today, and they'll forget you tomorrow. This is just the beginning of your journey. Remember your goal, your dream and never give up on chasing it.]

'I know. And I won't. I will become the greatest under the sky. The greatest that ever lived. And make sure that they never forget me. Never again.' I think you should take a look at

Hearing the voice of his God, the one who showed him light, who helped him when no one else did. Leon declared again. His fists clenched as his determination to grow strong beyond limits became evident in his eyes. They had a fire in them, that fueled his determination to reach the zenith of power.

παΠδαςNovel.com 6 years, that's how long he lived his life being labeled as a waste, a worthless weak nobody, a disgrace to the noble bloodline -all that suffering, all that humiliation and hatred is what fueled his anger and determination to be the strongest.

All for the sake that he never has to feel that helpless again, that he never has to hear those disdainful whispers, or feel the gazes of others looking down at him with pity and disgust, never again did he wanted to be like that.

That's why, when he finally got a chance to prove himself, when someone finally showed him the ray of hope, gave him a hand he could hold and stand up again, he took it without hesitation.

The God of Sun, the one true God of Arcadia - Apollo, had chosen him to be his follower. To be his successor, and he would prove it to the world, that those whom it had ignored and looked down upon - can be the ones to shape their own destiny again, given the chance.

'Everyone who looked down upon me, will pay their price'

He thought as he looked at Nexus and Lincoln, the 2 guys responsible for all his misfortune. If it had not been for them fighting with him and their goons stopping his awakening, he would've awakened successfully and never would he have had to suffer 6 years of hell.

No one helped him, believed his words, not even his parents asked for justice after he told them the truth - "we don't have the power" That's what his father told him that day.

Power - that's what he lacked, and that's why he had to live his life with his head bowed down. But not again, now he had power and he would do whatever it takes to grow even more powerful.

Powerlessness was the root of his misery, and power would be the foundation of his redemption.

[These fools aren't your enemies mortal. Do not give into your anger and hatred. Let them fuel your determination to grow, grow into something that they can't even look up to. Grow to the point where they have to look down willingly cause they can't stand your light_]

'Just like a sun.' Leon finished his gods word.

In Leon's eyes both he and his God were similar, both were loved and revered, and yet when they failed once, the whole world forgot about them. Him failing in his awakening and his God failing in killing the demon king - one mistake, and they all cast them aside. And soon enough they will all regret it.

Leon's determination was right in his place, his thoughts praiseworthy, but sadly his happiness was not what a certain someone wanted, as now HE made his entrance.

The atmosphere around Leon shifted suddenly, like a gust of wind that extinguished a blazing fire. The drones that were focusing on him, the gazes that were looking up at him, the cheers that were praising him -were all lost in a matter of moments, as they all now focused on someone new.

Someone who just entered and took everything to himself. It was as if the world's attention had shifted, and Leon's moment of glory was eclipsed in an instant. His moment in the spotlight had transformed into a mere backdrop, overshadowed by this newcomer's arrival.

Surprised Leon looked at the expressions of those at the platform and even they were looking at the screens in a surprised manner too. He tried to remember who that boy was, but he couldn't find any recollection.

Straining his memory, he tried to place the face, to connect it to a name, but it eluded him. An unsettling feeling washed over him, a mixture of curiosity and unease.

So he wanted to ask his God, Apollo, who that boy was, when to his surprise, a sight he never thought possible unfolded right in front of him.

In the floating screens, he saw his sister running towards that boy and hugging him tightly. Tears were scrolling down her eyes nonstop. He never thought he'd ever see his sister crying or breaking down like that, surprise wouldn't even describe what he was feeling right now.

"Who is he?" He wondered aloud.

[Someone who came back from the dead.]

Chapter 173 Bloodlust

Rio looked down at Lisa's figure, hugging him tightly, his hands still frozen midway as the memories of that time came back to his mind.

Lisa, who was too happy after seeing him alive and back, had directly ran towards him earlier. She had heard rumors and read all reports of his return too, but no one confirmed anything and she doubted the validity of the stories too.

She had seen herself how badly wounded he was back then, just surviving with those injuries alone would've been a hard feat, let alone adding along surviving a dungeon crash and then having to live in a failed world of immortal enemies for 2 whole years.

But seeing him here, walking alive, she couldn't hold back herself as she just held him and poured out all the guilt and pain she had kept hidden. She had even forgotten about the people surrounding them or the fact that the whole world was probably watching everything, as she was too lost in her emotions and excitement.

Rio, on the other hand, was swept away by memories that were far from the rosy sentiment of the moment.

He shared no similar feelings for her now. The anger and disappointment he felt towards her, coupled with all the things that incident led to, and all that he suffered in the past 2 years -only fueled his fury. The warmth of Lisa's hug clashed with the cold recollections of his pain and suffering.

The slight bloodlust oozing out from his body only grew more potent over time.

His body was itching all over as the memories of having his skin pierced all over by that damn radiation came back, the feeling of having his body crushed and blasted for a dozen time in a matter of milliseconds, the memories of fighting and getting drowned by all those monsters - it all only fueled his bloodlust, as it kept leaking out from his body.

The atmosphere around him simply turned silent and deathly cold, feeling the heaviness of air and having trouble in breathing - Lisa looked up at Rio's face, only to see 2 black orbs of darkness staring down at her face.

"Rio _ I..\" Lisa stuttered as she her face failed to form proper words. Their eyes kept locked with each other. Showing the opposite reactions they had after seeing the other.

Lisa wanted to say something when she felt lost, her heart was simply too lost in its thoughts to pump up the blood necessary to function her body. She simply stood frozen, as she bore the brunt of his bloodlust, her eyes were getting dull and she was tattering on the verge of losing her consciousness, when someone grabbed her hand and pulled her back some steps.

The sudden jolt awoken mind and body, as she started taking deep breaths to calm herself. Elena looked at Rio whose eyes were staring at her now. One glance at those black orbs was enough to tell her that gone was the light and cheering personality of the friend they used to know, and what stood before them was simply the remnant.

Rio, who was still lost in his thoughts, felt someone pull his hands and called him.

"Brother"

Hearing Amelia's shout and looking at her trembling hands, her sweat-dampened forehead, Rio snapped back to reality.

As the bloodlust permeating his body disappeared. It all only lasted for a few moments and then ended like it was never really real. If not for the shocked faces of Elena, Lisa and Amelia - no one would even know what happened.

The barrier around them had stopped his bloodlust from leaking out, and aside from the guards who walked near him, and these 3 girls no one probably even felt a difference.

The sudden turn of events that happened didn't only surprise Leon and his God, but it was actually a shock for everyone. Rio's return confirmed the rumors and every media or guest at the function was curious about it. But before they could get any answer from him, the scene of the present unfolded in front of the whole world.

Many people identified the girl who suddenly appeared near them, those who didn't started guessing after seeing the uniform she wore - they were surprised by that, when suddenly a new girl came and pulled her away. Even to the reporters it was all so confusing to guess what was happening.

Those with high ranks or relative blessings might've sensed his bloodlust, but no one with that kind of power or useful ability would choose to work as a useless reporter. That was a job mostly fixed for duds(unawakened) and those who have no other option.

Unlike Earth, where journalism was a respected profession, in Arcadia, it was relegated to information guilds and select publications. The dissemination of news and information was far less democratic, and the power dynamics that governed society shaped every aspect of life, including how stories were told and shared.

Here reporters can't just shove their mikes in celebrities' faces and ask them weird questions. This was a world governed with power, where your survival depended on your own. So this kind of work was simply looked down upon and left for duds or weak awakened.

Rio closed his eyes, reeling back all his memories and emotions. After some moments, when he felt he could face them without losing his control, he opened his eyes again. His eyes were devoid of any emotion, his face turned expressionless, no one could tell what he was thinking anymore.

The abrupt switch from overwhelming anger to complete neutrality was almost unsettling. I think you should take a look at

He turned towards Amelia, who calmed down herself after suppressing the effects his sudden outburst caused. Though she, Lisa, Elena everyone could protect themselves against something like this, by channeling their mana. But it was simply because Lisa was too lost in her emotions and Amelia simply didn't expect something like this.

Though her mother had warned her that something like this might happen considering what he might've been through in the dungeon. Even though they didn't know what exactly happened inside the dungeon, as the world association was the one who issued all reports, and Artemis didn't trust a single word they or their students said to cover their sorry asses.

So Artemis had told Amelia to stop Rio if he does something in anger or loses his cool.

Unlike Amelia around whom Rio always maintained his peaceful personality, and behaved like the calm and collected big brother. Artemis knew him better. In all these years she had seen him do many things

that even gave her a shock sometimes. She had summarized Rio's personality as best she could, and that's why she could guess that him acting normal all this time was simply a charade. .

She had no problem in helping Rio punish everyone who hurt him, but since he didn't say anything to her himself, she could only hold herself back from pressuring him.

Rio ignored Lisa and Elena or the other students who gathered around them, as he turned towards Amelia - "Sorry."

"It's okay." Amelia smiled and nodded her head, showing she was fine and he shouldn't worry.

Gathering her courage Lisa came forward to speak with him again. "What happened back then.I know it was all our fault and if you want,_"

"It was, wasn't it? Rio said, cutting her off.

παΠdαsNovel.com "Rio , I'm _ " Lisa stood dazed, unable to utter a word, her emotions scattered like autumn leaves in the wind.

"If you're looking for my forgiveness, then you can forget it. You did what you did to survive. I can't blame you guys for that, right Elena?" Rio said, glancing at the red haired girl.

"You're right." Elena said, showing no change of expression on her face at the sudden mention.

"See, she always gets the point." Rio said, while pointing at Elena. "It's only right to leave someone behind, so others can survive. A wise choice."

"I'll be sure to remember it next time." Rio said coldly. His words reminded every student that if not for him, none of them would've walked out of that dungeon alive.

Lisa stood silent through this conversation as his dismissal of blame was like a double-edged sword, both absolving her from guilt and marking the scars of their past and cutting it off now.

Ignoring them, Rio started walking forward "let's go Ames, principal's waiting."

Hearing his voice, Amelia followed behind him too and so did the guards of Blake and Raven family.

They all left, leaving the group of students from the council to deal with the questions, rumors, and implications that his presence had stirred, enmassed crowds and guests and a function which simply lost all its value - all with his arrival.

While Leon just kept staring at his sister, still perplexed by the sudden changes. Apollo on the other hand, was cursing the primordial goddess Nyx in his heart, seeing the aura of darkness surrounding Rio.

(What did you do, Nyx?)

Chapter 174 Arcane Ascendant Tower

Currently Rio along with Artemis was sitting in the office of principal of Zenith academy. The atmosphere was tense as the principal just kept staring at Rio without saying anything.

"So you're alive," the principal finally broke the silence, his voice carrying a mixture of surprise and curiosity.

"I am," Rio replied calmly, his eyes meeting the principal's gaze directly.

"Can you tell me how?" The principal's eyes scanned Rio. He was taken aback when he found no anomalies in Rio. Except for his decreased rank, there seemed to be nothing wrong with him or out of the ordinary.

"Luck, I suppose," Rio answered with a casual shrug, showing little interest in elaborating further.

The principal shifted in his seat, his fingers tapping lightly on the desk. "So, what is the purpose of your visit here?"

"I wish to continue my studies," Rio replied, his tone unwavering.

"Here, at the academy?"

"If you would grant me permission, then yes." Rio responded, still maintaining his calm demeanor.

"And you have no objections?" The principal's gaze shifted to Artemis, seeking her perspective.

"As long as history doesn't repeat itself, I don't," Artemis replied firmly, her voice carrying a hint of warning.

The principal nodded thoughtfully, his fingers stopped as he pondered something. After a moment, he spoke again, "Is that your only purpose for today? Your abrupt appearance has stirred quite a commotion."

"I didn't see my invitation saying I can't bring my son with me." Artemis said, looking at the principal.
"And you already knew he was back."

Principal acknowledged her answer with a nod. He did send invitations to their house, as it was a courtesy to invite all noble houses. Even if he ignored that, he had to send an invitation for Agnus as he owned one of the top guilds. He was also well aware of Rio's survival, having known about it since the day he was brought back. However, he didn't expect Artemis to bring him into the limelight in such a manner.

Artemis, as if reading her thoughts continued saying - "It was inevitable for him to reintroduce himself sooner or later. Doing it now when the whole world was watching, only solved the issue more efficiently."

"The Zenith academy doesn't accept students directly in second years, nor does it accept one to skip years. But since you were already a student of ours, and looking at your results, you can start your studies when second year classes begin next month."

"I'd like to enter the Arcane Tower before then," Rio declared, his words surprising both Artemis and the principal.

Artemis, though taken aback, kept her silence, trusting him.

"I can't grant that request. The rules of the association and the predecessors have been clear, that the key to the entrance of the tower can only be given after one passes the exams of every year and clears the trial grounds."

"And I didn't finish my exams." Rio said, and the principal nodded his head.

"Each year only 100 students can enter the tower, and since you were missing, your place was given to someone else. So I cannot allow you entry." The principal said.

"In that case, I want to repeat my year, instead of continuing directly in the second year." Rio proposed.

"You would like to waste a year of your time learning things you already know." Principal asked, raising an eyebrow skeptically.

"I have no other choice. The only reason the children of noble and elite backgrounds attend any of the top 5 academies is to access the tower. If I can't enter it then the purpose of studying here diminishes." Rio said.

"If someone who didn't attend the academy said this, I might let it slide, as they don't know the difference between the level of learning we have. But you should be fully aware of the disparity in education between us and other institutions." The principal replied.

"I am. And that's precisely why I came here today to attend again. Even after everything that happened, I want to keep studying here. But if you don't allow me the single reward you have then won't that be a loss for me." Rio said.

"But _"

Principal was saying something when Artemis produced 2 letters from her ring and passed them towards the principal. Principal curiously looked at them as Artemis continued her words.

"Sunshine academy has sent an invitation for my children to join. They even agreed to Rio's request to start afresh. And I'm sure other academies would also agree, if they figured that's the only requirement to secure a genius in their ranks. I don't see why you have a problem with that?"

The principal looked at the admission letter which clearly stated that Rio could start from first year's class. But the principal still had his reservations and was hesitant. Allowing someone who's as talented as him, and also knows everything about their entire schedule would be unfair to every other student. So he said his thoughts -

"Rio has finished his studies, even his exams, he knows everything. Putting him in the same room as the freshers would be unfair to them."

"Life isn't fair - That's what you said to the world 2 years ago after that incident. I'm sure you can say that to some students of yours." Artemis interrupted, quoting his words to him. "Plus he was ranked one back then, and at best he'll be ranked one this time too, no difference there."

"I'm not so sure about that." Rio said, glancing at his mother "Didn't you see, someone even broke my record this time, so I might not even take first rank among them. It's the golden generation after all - some of those students might bring surprises, who knows?"

Principal fixed his eyes on Rio, but his expression didn't falter even for a second. He thought for a second, but he had already made his decision.

Now he knew why Rio made his entrance today only and that too, here at this function. If now the news broke out that the zenith academy refused his readmission, after he wanted to forget everything and rejoin the academy— It would only tarnish their name. In normal cases it wouldn't hurt or he wouldn't even care, but his case was different.

What happened 2 years ago, was already a stain on their name, if now another scandal broke out it wouldn't be good. Furthermore, Rio's departure might set off a chain reaction, influencing other students, particularly those he had helped during the incident.

The influence of Blake family, along with his own, couldn't be missed. The scene of Lisa was simply an example of his effect in his class. There were many students he saved back then so some of them might

even follow him. Even those Royal siblings and some other rankers might leave if he left the academy now. Which could even potentially lead to Zenith losing its position as the number one academy.

So he had no choice but to agree. He wanted to smile at himself, for how he was being fooled by a kid. But as he said, there was no other option.

"Welcome back to Zenith academy." He said.

His words brought a subtle smile to Rio's face, as finally everything was back on track. The plot begins.

And living here now, he can finally continue his plans which were stopped because of that incident.

***** After the emergence, there have been many emerging towers and dungeons around the world. Dungeons could be solved after defeating the boss monster or solving the puzzle they possess or just finishing a narrative. After which they become safe to live and harvest profits from -Towers were different.

Unlike dungeons, towers have no goals or clearing conditions. While dungeons are small parts of other worlds, towers encompass entire realms on their various floors. Hell towers where each floor consists of an entire layer of hell.

Towers are bigger, better and more dangerous than dungeons. They can never be finished, solved or emptied. No matter how many times you clear them or kill all the monsters, as long as one doesn't clear the final floor, the monsters can keep respawning over a certain duration. The notion of "finishing" a tower was an immense challenge, given the sheer scale and complexity of each floor.

In dungeons, the number of challenges is limited, where one can learn from other's sacrifice and help, and clearing them is easy. But towers, now that's a different stuff. An entire world, which is ever changing, ever growing - now finishing that would be a challenge.

As not all dungeons are bad, not all towers are filled with monsters too. One such tower which has many profits is Arcane tower. A tower which can help augment one's growth and increase their potential. One which can give enormous benefits with the least amount of risks involved - is Arcane Ascendant tower.

This tower is the pride and prestige of world association. They control this tower, and this is why they are famous and powerful.

What set the Arcane Ascendant Tower apart was its unique feature: death within the tower was not permanent. While other towers spelled true death for those who perished within their confines, the Arcane Tower would simply return the individual to the outside world. This aspect made it particularly attractive, as it allowed for learning, exploration and training without the ultimate risk.

The academies under the world association got famous because they announced the simple requirement of entry in this tower - which is that only students of the top 5 academies can enter it. This tower consists of 5 floors. And each floor is only accessible to students after they have passed their selective years at academy and got into the ranks of top 20 in their academy.

These are the requirements set for centuries. Every year, a batch of 100 students could enter a floor, vying for opportunities and rewards. This stringent selection process ensured that only the most exceptional individuals had access.

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This is why the principal couldn't allow Rio to enter the tower, as it's not in his hands. To give him entry would mean changing the permissions engraved on the floor keys made by the previous heads of world association or creating a separate key for Rio to enter while refusing entry to one of the students from the next batch of 100.

No other academy would leave their slot for Rio, meaning zenith academy would have to send 19 students of first year and Rio, if they allow him. Which might be fair to Rio, but it'll be unfair to the guy who got 20th rank in first year. This is why even this option was scrapped.

Chapter 175 Scary grandma - Patricia Blake

After talking with the principal, Rio came back out. Amelia was staying with Patricia, she didn't participate in the second part of entrance exams anywhere. And was going to join Sunshine academy directly with the invitation, but now that decision has been changed. Patricia had already informed the

principal of sunshine academy about it and he understood it too. There was nothing he could do, since he couldn't just force her to study there. The application where she chose sunshine as the first choice was also dismissed and Artemis already talked about her admission at Zenith academy too.

The principal had no problem with it, as he already anticipated it. Amelia only refused the admission letter from Zenith academy due to Rio's demise and now that he was back and joining here again, she had no reason to go anywhere else.

After coming out from the office, Rio and Amelia, along with Patricia went back to their mansion. While Artemis along with the principal went forward to release a statement to all those reporters and crowd.

Rio wanted to do a press conference himself, so he could answer their questions and mold the truth and rumors in his own way. Knowing that questions about comparison between him and Leon would be asked, he was actually looking forward to fanning the flames of jealousy and pride in the protagonist.

But Artemis didn't want that. She was adamant on keeping Rio away from the media for now. She didn't doubt Rio's ability to handle them, but she didn't want him to come across people who labeled him as a lackey of some evil God or those churchists who believed him to be a chosen one.

Once he joined the academy he couldn't leave or come into contact with the outside world easily, so it wouldn't be a problem for a while and with that much time the people would mostly forget about many things. So she herself went forward to answer the questions of everyone.

After leaving the floating islands through teleportation gates, Rio, Amelia and Patricia were on their way to Blake mansion now. The journey had been a silent one, as Rio fell asleep as soon as he sat down. He didn't sleep a minute last night, as he was busy going through his plans, so he was feeling tired now that it was all over.

The journey from the magic association branch, where the teleportation gates left them, to their mansion was going to take more than an hour, and considering Esme was the one driving the car, it would only take longer.

Finally after getting a short nap when he opened his eyes again, he found Amelia sleeping at the side too. her head gently resting on Patricia's shoulder.

He was looking at Patricia, the grandmother of the original Rio. She had short black hair, tinged with streaks of silver in between. Her face showed signs of subtle wrinkles, while her eyes hidden behind a pair of glasses. Her attire consisted of simple clothes, nothing fancy for her standards. But still no one could judge her, as just her aura and the way she carried herself spoke volumes.

Ignoring them Rio looked at the time, it had already been an hour and half since they left. He looked outside and from the surroundings he could identify they were about to reach their estate.

Rio was planning to summon his system and have a talk with it, when Patricia asked something, that drew his attention

"So who was that girl?"

"One of my previous classmates." Rio replied. Knowing she was probably asking for Lisa. The scene she created did catch the eyes of many. He was trying to imagine the reaction of the protagonist, since at that time he didn't look for him. But it was to no avail, since he didn't know about the relationship between them now. Last he heard from Lisa, Leon was still unawakened and they were close. But now after 2 years, he didn't know if Leon's awakening was the only thing that changed between them or were they still the same.

Patricia looked at him and inquired again "She seemed happy to see you. One of your friends."

"She was." Rio replied.

Hearing his reply she just nodded her head, and started to look outside the window. Rio waited for a cross question but it never came.

He looked at her face and there were no expressions. "You sensed it too, right?" He asked.

"Your mess up in a crowd of hundreds, yes I did." She said, referring to me releasing my bloodlust. If not for that barrier preventing it from leaking out, it could really cause a commotion for him.

"So won't you ask why?" Rio said.

"Would you tell me if I asked?" Patricia looked at his face and replied.

"Maybe not." He said, and she just nodded her head.

"Keep the letters of admissions for me and Amelia as valid and waiting response. I don't trust Zenith." Rio said trying to change the topic. His words catching Patricia by surprise, which ended up in a smile.

"And yet you still want to go there?" She said and continued "You see I never understood why your mother agreed to your requests even after everything that happened last time. But I think I see it now." Patricia asked as she looked at him, her eyes boring into him "Tell me, what lies have you used to fool her into helping you?"

"I'm sure you know it already. She must've told you, didn't she?" Rio said, not clarifying whom he was talking about - her Goddess or his mother.

"And was that the truth?" She asked directly.

"In a way it was." He replied truthfully. He didn't want to continue this conversation, as her innate ability simply made it harder for him to lie and hide things from her. So he just replied in puzzles or indirectly, hoping it would be enough to keep her and her goddess' curiosity in check.

"You know why I wanted to have you join sunshine?" She asked.

"Because you don't trust Zenith and its principal."

"No, it's cause I don't trust you." Patricia said, her gaze getting serious, as Rio had a bad premonition "You were trying to do something way out of your league and you didn't think about the consequences. Thus it led to your death and a whole lot of mess. By joining back here, I think you just want to continue where you left. Isn't that right, my little Rio?"

"I don't know what you mean." Rio said, channeling his mana trying to utilize his blessing that could stop her skills, if she used any.

Looking at his efforts, Patricia just shook her head in dismissal before turning her gaze away "I'll hold on to your letters, but be careful this time. There's a limit to how lucky one can be."

Hearing her words and seeing she had no efforts to ask or say anything else, Rio took a calm breath. 'She's scary.' He thought.

'These 2 are really a perfect pair.'

He thought, remembering that the new grandparents of his were both monsters in their own way, one known for his brain and other for his brawn. He had only met this duo twice or thrice in all his time here and it was enough for him to know that fooling them was out of his league by a million miles.

So he preferred to keep silent as much as he could when he was near them. At first he thought once he was all grown up and wasn't a kid, he could handle them, but even that was impossible looking at Patricia now. These two had skills and gods backing them, that simply made no sense for a normal human to have.

'If only everyone loved me like Artemis or cleaned up for my actions silently like Servirous.' Rio thought, remembering 2 others who were so nice to have around.

Chapter 176 System Online - Calculating +99999

After reaching their house, Rio instantly excused himself from Patricia and left for his room. He didn't want to start another talk and reveal something that could put his plans in peril. After all, even just talking about questions in a roundabout way won't save his secrets, as with her innate ability of color vision and blessing of probability, she can just cut whatever guesses she comes up with, until she finds the real reason and truth.

Color vision, an ability which helps one to see world in a form of different colors. Every emotion, every feelings and expression seems different in colors to the users eyes. Every sentiment and intention were laid bare to her, their true nature displayed in a spectrum of hues.

With this ability, lying to her was a joke. That's why Rio also said, she could perceive his bloodlust just by a glance, despite whatever barrier that separated them.

[She was like Jack the Ripper from the record of Ragnarok, but less criminally insane and more rationally smart.]

Blessing of probability, a skill of goddess of chance Tyche, once learned can allow the one to see possible outcomes of any situations. This blessing wouldn't be that broken but she had perfected it and even managed to merge it with other blessings of similar effects, and upgraded it. The result was an elevated version that not only showed her the possibilities but also lets her take a peek into the cause and effects of certain situations. This upgrade gave her another formidable edge, setting her apart from others who had similar gifts.

He was curious about how much of his plans she guessed and confirmed, but he didn't have the guts to go and confirm his doubts. He did learn some skills that can hinder her powers, knowing he would need it someday. But his mastery over them was much less than what he hoped for.

"Don't let anyone in."

Rio ordered Aina, and went inside his room, locking it with the formations he placed himself around the door.

After knowing he was alone, he just lay down on his bed and called for his system. But even after waiting for next 2 minutes he got nothing, no reply.

"Why're you so silent? Don't tell me you died again?" He said.

A familiar voice resonated within his mind this time. [I was just going through your memories of everything you did in the past 8 years.]

A hint of playful sarcasm laced Rio's response. "And, was that too little?"

[Too little, is the time you spent in that dungeon. What were you thinking trying to do that?] System asked in a surprised tone. The audacity of this host to joke, even after everything that happened.

"I was just trying to solve annoying people, before they become annoying problems." Rio defended himself

[And look where that led you, I hate to say I told you so, but I told you so.]

[Luck, fate, heavens - you've read so many novels, so many stories, why the hell did you forget them? Do you know you could've died back then, and no one would've been able to save you.]

"That wasn't my plan. Shit just went haywire with the academy, Warzy and his interference." Rio retorted, his irritation mounting at the system's criticism.

However instead of backing down, system countered back [Of course, he'd interfere. Did you think he was gonna sit back and let you kill all of them? And trusting a heroine, that too the hero's sister - I thought you were smarter than that.]

System's words annoyed him, as it reminded him of all his missteps and mistakes.

"Spare me the lecture, you know what was going to happen if I let everything be. That was the only option. And besides, I've learned my lesson and I'm still alive. So forget it now."

System could only sigh at his words. It really came across a weird one this time. Who the fuck tries to do that? If not for this guy's weird brain and that being's watchful eyes on him, system would've really liked to pry open and see, what's wrong with this guy. It literally went into an error 404 , 2 times before it finally rebooted at level 1.

"Now ignore all this and skip your demo or promo or whatever you got at level 1. Just show me everything that's changed."

Rio asked, changing the topic back to system and other things. Since plot had started now, system was upgraded to level 1 , so he needed to learn everything that changed and plan accordingly.

The students were given a week's time after the celebration, before they have to report back to the academy. After that, they had another week of time, to just live in their dorms and get familiarized with the academy's surroundings and everything else.

For that week, there'd be tours around the academy so new students don't get lost and need a finger to guide them to classes when sessions start. There would also be briefings and demo's of history and basic introctions of rules and laws to follow in the academy.

This one week free time, also allowed new students to get used to living there. And learn about their batchmates.

Since Rio had already been there for a whole year, he didn't need to go through all that. But since Amelia needed too, he couldn't ignore it. Who knows if he let her go there, and protagonist's luck pulled him across her. There are too many weird nonsensical coincidences written in harem dramas - he didn't want any of that shit to happen around her.

So now he only had a week before the academy starts, and he joins the frey with all the characters.

In this time, he needed to utilize his system and all those points he earned, to get some stuff and learn some skills. Since the system boasted that it's shop has everything, he had actually made a bucket list of stuff he could buy and get to make his plans smoother.

[Ding]

[Great villain system bound with the host]

[Congratulations on surviving for all this time. Your perseverance have paid off and now you have your trusted companion ba_]

"I think I told you to skip all this bullshit." Rio said as he slapped the system panel. Obviously his hands passed through empty air, but who cares.

He especially gave that order and here was this dumb AI recounting it's sad cliched lines again.

"You know what, just ignore everything - show me my points." Rio said, knowing this system was too dumb to understand complex commands. I think you should take a look at

(And here I thought he'd miss me. Sigh, these useless hosts. No respect for their system.) System thought and switched the panels.

[Notifications +9999▼]

[Checking world data . . .

[Calculating the changes . . .

[Calculating. . .

[. . .

'Sigh don't tell me, it's gonna go into overload by how much I've changed stuff. Will it need a month or two to count points?' Rio looking at that search button wanted to curse himself for thinking anything from this system. It needed a day to count the points of Noah's death, how long would it take for it to count points for, hundreds of characters he changed fates of.

Even the simple recent massacres his father caused against Warzy, had probably ruined many plotlines. Let alone, all he did in the 6 years before that.

But unlike Rio's thoughts, which drafted to if he should close this panel and sleep , or go and eat something made by the chef heroine. 'She really does make good food. I should just go and get something to eat.'

[Calculations complete]

[Major changes in plotlines +999▼

[Finished plotlines -91▼

[Altered fate of characters -61▼

[Stolen chances -786▼

[Minor changes -5854▼

[Points distribution...

[....

[....

[....

[Total points - 968065

system thought, wanting to cry at all the entertainment it would miss cause it's host ruined so many plotlines already. This was the first time it came across a host as crazy as this, who the hell goes out of his way, just to steal some stuff for fun. (Was he a thief)

Even Rio, who was prepared and estimated quite some points was shocked seeing the numbers. How long would he need to go through all those notifications, no that's too much.

His shock increased even more when he remembered, it was all before plot started. Which means according to Noah's death example, if he did all this after plot started he would've gotten around 4 times that amount.

'Damn I really went all out huh.'

'This world won't just collapse cause I messed up too much right'

'Well, atleast it's all over. Now that plot has begun _ '

Rio was thinking something, when system heard his thoughts and remembered, that it forgot to count the points of today. It only checked the points while it was asleep.

[Calculating. . .

"What now?" Rio asked, surprised, that there was still something more.

[Your points of today. When you showed up and stolen the protagonist's limelight and ruined his entrance moment. Not to forget that hug from his sister and hit to their reputation.]

"..."

Chapter 177 Setting off for the academy

In the blink of an eye, one week had passed. After Rio's appearance in the entrance ceremony everyone knew he was back. With Artemis answering questions about how they found him and how he was now fine.

She also announced that he would be joining Zenith academy again as a fresher, along with Amelia too. This caused quite a stir but after hearing principal's explanation about why that was so, they all understood the reason. But the surprise was still there, as everybody knew how Artemis blamed the academy for the incident 2 years ago.

They even remembered the rumors about how she had stormed into the academy and even fought and nearly killed their staff who were watching over the tournament and the dungeon. If not for the principal's timely intervention, she would've killed them for sure.

Some bold reporters even questioned her about them but her cold gaze was the answer they got. And that was enough to shut them up.

When asked about how he survived, if some God helped him or not, she gave the answer Rio had told her "He became the avatar of Nyx and she protected him."

This was another shocking news, but with this reveal the theories about some new evil God popping up to help him were lost, as no one wanted to question a primordial's choice and power. Obviously this created another debate, and people who were claiming to be the followers of Nyx started lining up in front of their manor to meet the chosen one of their goddess. But just like the previous month, no one was allowed entry and they could all just sigh in wait.

After the first few days all these storming reveals calmed down. As the day of academy sessions came near, the news of comparisons between Rio and Leon started spreading across the whole continent. No one knew about Leon being Apollo's avatar, so many praised him to be superior, since he even broke the record set by Rio.

This only fueled more competition to start as literally their names were spoken everywhere. Since the invention of mobile phones was a new discovery here, there weren't any social entertainment sites or options like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc, but still something similar to WhatsApp, where conversation between friends or a group, could happen were easily made. This app was called Whisper.

And currently, on Whisper, everyone was only chatting and talking either about the entrance ceremony or him.

Many people and companies have been working on technology similar sites and stuff, after learning stuff from the people of modern and sci-fi world dungeons. But implementing them was still hard.

While the people in his family didn't care about any comparison or record, Rio had paid special attention to everything. Especially the interview of Leon after the entrance ceremony, where he was asked questions about Rio.

Till that point Leon had heard some stuff about Rio, and remembered him. When asked what he thinks about his reappearance and joining the same classes as him, his reply was simple that he was happy for him. Answering about who was superior in talent or who would rank higher among them his reply was even simpler - "He can't be sure and that they'd know the answer when the first semester ends."

Rio had watched the clips of Leon's face filled with confusion when he first entered the ceremony, and from that he could guess, the guy had no idea who he was.

He didn't even remember the guy who saved his mother's life now, but in the novel, he remembered Amelia who only showed him the way to princess, who saved his mother.

He couldn't help but laugh at that fact - were the feelings of gratitude only for the heroines? And he who did the same thing got nothing, not even a recognition.

It was really funny. Was it plot or just Leon being horny for girls - Rio wasn't sure, but ohh well, not like he cared about that.

'Lisa's reaction was enough of a blow for Leon and the more he learns about me, the more he'll feel stressed and be wary of me.' Rio thought.

'He actually hasn't suffered anything yet, so he's still gonna be arrogant and would act as a high horse for a while. Obviously that only lasts until he gets a taste of the bullying and the different treatment of nobility and elite families. That would've kept him busy for the whole semester, but now Rio wasn't sure because of 2 things - Lisa's behavior. And Apollo's blabber.'

Thinking about Apollo, Rio couldn't help but smile and mutter "That guy knows about me well enough, to warn his chic to be on his alerts. And now Rio just needed to see what the protagonist would do Or how he'd act with that knowledge.

[You're overthinking about him, host.] System who was hearing all his thoughts, came out and said- [Protagonist isn't the only problem you got in the academy. Don't forget about your mess ups of last time. Some staff and students already hate you to the bone.]

"Those bitches can't do shit to me. They're too scared to act in light, and I'm practically the blinding sun out there. And besides, with my current power, I can handle them even if they come for me." Rio said, glancing at his status window.

[Hehe now you know the true extent of my powers. Do you still dare to take me for a joke.] System said haughtily.

This host always liked to make fun of it before, calling it useless, and a tenant, who lived in his head but didn't pay rent - but after he looked at the items in its shop, he couldn't even close his mouth for a while.

(Ohh how funny that sight was) system thought and smiled again.

Rio too this time said nothing, as this system really was too much. He wasn't surprised by the items in shop, as he read ton of novels and knew that it would have all kinds of stuff there. He got surprised when he saw the list of skill section, which recorded the skills of the protagonist. Along with every skill, ability, artifact written in the whole novel, no matter the rank, ownership or origin, this system had a copy of everything.

So he did what every villain who had a ton of points to spend could do, he copied everything.E

Every skill and blessing Leon got from Apollo or his gang of minions, Rio had it too. Obviously he also bought skills which could perfectly counter those things too.

So now he was someone who could even act as Leon, based on skills and perfectly oppose him too.

Rio even wanted to buy the skills of Gods, but sadly he couldn't. He could only buy skills of mortal characters for now. To get the skills/items of gods, which they didn't even give to their avatars, he would have to upgrade the system to level 3.

(It would be nice to buy some reassurance before emergence phase 2 starts. I'll be more prepared to face them that way.) Rio thought.

In the shop, there wasn't any limitations, like he could only buy stuff which would suit his rank or something according to his level, so he even got some skill slips and artifacts for this new family of his.

This dungeon death, might have thwarted some of his plans but it also made some things easy, like now Amelia doesn't question him much about where he gets all the free stuff he gives her. After the last time she asked too many questions and fought with him, he ended up dead in a dungeon, so now whatever questions she gets, she ignores them, instead of bothering him.

Unlike her, whatever he gave to Artemis, she took it thinking he got it with the knowledge of his blessing. She would've doubted some items origins and the risk he had to take in acquiring them -but after she saw Rio actually pulling out skills from a tree trunk, or buying pills from a roadside, and mythical artifacts at a sloppy auction houses- she gave up on common sense.

In her mind, she always thought good things will be hidden and only gotten after clearing some trials and through risks, but whenever she took Rio out to roam around the city, he would do something like this, just to spite her and then laugh at her surprised reactions.

So she now even stops questioning him, she just takes whatever he gets for her and his father. Yes, he doesn't give his gifts to Agnus himself, he can't fool his father or tell him about his blessing of fate. So he just hands them over to Artemis, who in turn passes them over to her husband.

Myra, Esme and Erza looks at him in doubts sometimes, but he just starts to flaunt his status as heir of a duchy, and they stops asking anything.

Ohhh i almost forgot about our alchemist, Ayla, he had wrote down some recipes of potions for her and she had successfully learned them now.

As he guessed years ago when he saved her, she didn't have the drive to learn alchemy as in the novel. She wasn't desperate or dedicated enough to try everything, so her talents sucked. But with his subtle hints and her father's guidance, she was still average.

Thus Rio wrote down some recipes for her in a book and passed them to her as a gift on her birthday. That was the last he remembered of her, as after that he got trapped in the dungeon, yet looking at the message on his phone which said, "She had mastered everything, and couldn't wait to show him the results." he couldn't help but smile.

It seems him being away, could also motivate her a little to try harder.

'Everything is prepared and?so am I. So let's leave.'

Chapter 178 Status And Growth

[Status]

Name - Rio Blake / Shiva Kumar

Age - 18 / 30

World - Arcadia/???

Title - ???

Chosen Gods - Hel

----Rank ~ Mortal C+ rank

– Aura manifestation rank

----- Element ~ Darkness, Fire, Ice, Water, Wind, Nature, Blood, Light, Space

----- Stats▼-

Strength: 46

Agility: 48

Endurance: 53

Intelligence: 49

Mana: 36

Perception: 51

Resilience: 35

... ..

---- Spells▼ - 61

Dark miasma

Shadow control

Curtain

Reflection

Mirage

Mind Break

Sunshine

Frostbite

Hellfire

... ..

---- Techniques▼- 11

Foundation art (5*

Silence star (4*

Void slash (5*

Morfid mana (4*

Blood art (3*

Rebound art (4*

Elemental order (7*

Druidic Dance(6*

... ..

---- Blessing▼ 69

Dark manipulation - 83% (Nyx)

Threads of mana level 2 - 39% (Skuld)

Sword heart - 31% (Bellona)

Chaotic karma (Themis + Anubis)

Gaze of hatred - 21% (Shani)

Laughing Joker (Anansi + Caign)

Devour - 11% (Beelzebub)

Judgment - 9% (Dike)

Whispering villain (Eris + Apate + Kali)

Call of chaos 37% (Goddess Kali)

Sight of a seer 12% (Cassandra)

Eyes of archer 48% (Artemis)

Master of magic (Hecate + Freyja)

Copycat (Erato + Dolos)

Blink of brilliance (Aphrodite)

... ..

----Quests -nil

----Shop▼-I think you should take a look at

----Gifts - 3(sealed)

----Inventory - 980

----Points - 357060

---- work in progress- Project Gemini

Project Deicide

Taking a look at his status after he was done spending his points, Rio couldn't help but grin. It cost a little but just in one night, he was back to the rank where he was. His stats too were now somewhat what he had back then.

The only thing that changed was the amount of mana he had, which is almost half of what he previously had. But he couldn't hurry that now, since the aftereffects of EMMSY had still weakened him a little.

He didn't want to boost his strength back with the system's help, he wanted to train himself for that and after that get his mana back.

His resilience had fallen down a little too. Which is also because of the corrosive energy of that red sun in the dungeon. The sunlight there attacked one's mind and senses, slowly making them dull and turning one into undead creatures.

He could buy pills or potions from the system which could cure it, but they were a little pricey. Though he had points, he didn't want to splurge them for free. And Rio already knew the recipe of a potion to heal himself, he just needed to wait until Ayla masters that and makes one for him. Which with her talent, shouldn't be long.

Putting aside his rank and strength, he looked at his mastery of all the elements. Now other than Darkness which was his main element and reached proficient level, he had mastered some other elements too.

Fire, ice, water and wind were at intermediate level. While nature and blood were at apprentice level. Leveling up Light and Space elements was hard, so he left them alone at the limit of amateur level, since he knew some of the protagonist's ways to master them.

Due to his blessings of 'master of magic' and the protagonist's technique 'Elemental order' , he could easily learn them further now.

He then spent his points on learning and mastering the skills of ice and water elements. After all, countering the protagonist was the most important thing. He also bought other useful spells of some characters and some new ones he found in the system shop.

Though he could master them with points too, he decided to train them himself. Same was the case with techniques, he just bought some and kept them.

Since he already mostly knew everything the academy will teach to the first year students, he'd have enough time to train them there.

After the skills came the part about blessings. Over the years, he had gotten the attention of many gods and managed to acquire their blessings too. If not for the dungeon crash, by now he might've gotten a hell of a lot more, considering he was getting highlighted all over the world as a genius.

But ohh well, he still has a chance.

After all, showing himself superior in a batch of superior talents would attract more attention from gods.

Instead of buying new blessings, Rio chose to spend his points on merging the similar blessings and unlocking their new upgraded version. Though this diminished his mastery over them, but it improved their effects, so he had no complaints.

Talking about gods, he had managed to become the avatar of Hel, due to Loki's interest in watching him. Yet Loki himself hasn't even given him a single blessing, that slippery bastard.

'He's just watching free drama.'

Rio thought, remembering all the notifications he got from Loki. He's always either laughing or trying to throw suggestions to fool him. Even his artifacts he got himself are tricky ones.

He had already fooled Cassandra too, and if not for that incident back then, he would've already become her avatar.

After Noah's death, Cassandra's all other prophecies have failed too, reducing her reputation and impact of her church in the world. Obviously he played a little part in that. Turns out having a family who runs their guild, companies and connections everywhere, makes things so smooth.

He had promised her what she desired and that was enough to give her the hope to rise again.

Maybe soon enough, both Skuld and Cassandra, 2 goddesses who play a important role in protagonist's camp -would be the backers of the main villain.

'I also need to get Urd too. I don't know what she saw and why she chose to side with him in the novel. But he has to get her too. Lest like he's stealing the protagonist's chances, someone else steals his.'

[You're forgetting about your main back up.]

[Nyx still hasn't chosen you as her avatar, and you've already boasted about it to the whole world. If she comes out and says that you're lying, all your reputation would be gone to shit.]

"She won't. She would've done it the moment I said that to mother. She didn't, since she doesn't care."

"And she's just dragging it out, like in the novel. She chose Rio on a whim one day too. And she'll choose me too. That's just her moodswings."

[And your sister being the avatar of her rival has nothing to do with that.]

"That's true too. With both their nature, they would've preferred a fight between their avatars, but since that won't be possible between us. Nyx is taking her time too."

'But I don't need to be worried about her. She's not gonna choose anyone else besides me and that's certain. She can drag it out as long as she wants. Worse comes to worse, I'll just buy all her blessings from system and show her that I don't need her. That oughta tick her off.'

[That's a really really bad idea, host.] System said Worriedly. This is why the skills of gods were locked for now. So it's host doesn't get the attention of gods, about how he got their original skills.

Other skills can be explained saying that he copied them from their avatars. But if he bought and showed off skills that gods didn't even give to their avatars, he'd be caught by them. It might even arouse the suspicion of world system too. Since it watches over the gods. Even if we ignore everything, messing with a primordial, is never a good idea.

Rio also understood all those points. He wasn't an idiot show off after all. "It's just an idea. I'll wait until phase 2 begins before doing that."

The items of shop which were given by 'the being' were still locked, and he hasn't managed to open them yet. But he wasn't worried about them.

He also plans to meet with his alchemist too, since he brought some interesting potion recipes from the system.

His inventory was filled with stuff he hoarded till now. Since the academy didn't allow extra artifacts inside to anybody. And whatever he takes inside would be recorded in their data, this inventory of his had become his secret space to bring everything inside.

He can even open a black market inside the academy, and become the sole supplier of everything.

Hell he could even bring in nether cards or buy a fucking nuke and kaboom the academy, and no one could stop him.

'Wonder why no other protagonist's who has a system in the novels I read ever did that.'

[Because they aren't as crazy as you, host. And why do you even want to blast the academy anyway.] System asked, a little worried that it's host might really do that someday. So it needed it's clarity now, so it doesn't get another shock later on. [And don't tell me, just cause you can.]

Rio, who was about to answer just that, coughed and changed his answer "It's because of them that I suffered in the dungeon. Of course I deserve a little payback."

[.....] system just kept silent, as it read his thoughts.

(RIP to the academy)

Aside from all these, Rio's gaze landed on 2 projects the system was still working on. Those were his Trump cards that he came up with, against the fate and future of this novel.

They're also the ones which cost him the most of his points.

From a whopping 1 million points, now he had wasted more than half those points already.

'Well I'll earn a lot, once I join the academy. Since that's a treasure trove of points waiting for me.'

Thinking about that, he smiled and walked out of his room. Myra was waiting outside, as everyone else was in the hall, saying their goodbyes to Amelia now. It'll be a while since they could leave their academy and come back.

Chapter 179 Security Checks Of The Academy

Exiting the portal, Rio stepped onto the ground, Amelia following suit. He surveyed his surroundings and noticed a steady stream of people emerging from the similar magic portals nearby.

The current location they were in was an open expanse within the branch of the World Association. The direct teleportation to the academies was barred due to spatial magic limitations enforced by the protective barriers surrounding the academies. This was why branches of the World Association were established on each floating island. All transportation and teleportation converged at these branches, subjecting individuals to thorough inspections and registrations before they could proceed to the academies.

The portals nearby were opening and closing on a regular basis. As once someone used a portal and stepped out, a staff member would come forward to take them away for the security check and their registration. No matter the status, everyone had to go through this process.

Since the academy was going to start from tomorrow, many other students from everywhere were coming to the islands. Ignoring the curious gazes and hushed whispers of others, Rio and Amelia followed the staff towards the section of the area reserved for the new students.

Since no one other than the academy staff, students, and people authorized by the world association - lived on the floating islands, there wasn't any crowd or lines to wait around.

In the security check even the storage rings and other storage items were given a scan too.

The magic artifacts students brought with them had to be recorded down too. And if they were considered a threat they were confiscated and not allowed inside.

All these details were basically known by everyone, as the world association and the academy sent them in the brochures along with the admission letters to every student. The guidance to follow was clearly written there.

These protocols were applicable solely to new students. As students progressed through the academy, their permissions and freedoms expanded annually. The staff adhered to the same hierarchy, with increasing influence and authority corresponding to each grade. These protocols were tightened following the incident that occurred two years ago, stemming from the security breaches that culminated in Warzy's attack and multiple casualties of both staff and students. Something like that doesn't happen again, that's why extra precautions were employed.

'All this reminds me of going to some airports.' Rio thought and smiled. All these checks and procedures were really similar to earth's way of doing check in, visa check, baggage checks.

[Maybe whoever came up with this idea took some inspiration from a modern world dungeon. Arcadia does have a habit of copying stuff from everywhere.] System spoke, agreeing with its host's thoughts.

Seeing all this timepass efforts, even the system found it amusing and wanted to laugh, especially as it glanced at its well-stocked inventory. There really were too many things kept inside.

"How long will it take?" Amelia said, already getting tired from all this. Her words prompted a smile from some other students who were near them.

Following the submission of their storage rings, defensive artifacts, and weapons, they were required to wait as their contents were scanned and their mana signatures recorded.

Each magical artifact and tool possessed a unique mana signature, similar to the distinct signature of each living individual. The staff maintained a database of these signatures, determining the safety and compliance of the items within the allowance rules.

Since stripping every artifact wasn't fair, as nobility and elite families prided themselves in them. And some artifacts were known to be helpful in their practice and training, so taking them away wasn't fair. But also letting rich kids have a surplus of artifacts, had a risk of increasing incidents like bullying and disparity. And that goes against the world association's slogans of impartiality and equal treatment. So only selected artifacts were allowed.

Classifying artifacts according to their rank was a complex task. A divine artifact crafted by trickster gods might be virtually useless, while a lower-ranked artifact bound by a blessing could pose considerable danger. To ascertain the nature, effects, and applications of each artifact, individuals with blessings similar to appraisal or all-seeing eyes were appointed. These awakeners had the sole responsibility for this meticulous assessment process.

It took around half an hour to finish everything, and Rio and Amelia could finally step out of that building.

"Do we have to do this every time we come and go?" Amelia asked, her voice sounding a little tired.

Rio just shook his head and replied "Not every time. Since the artifacts have been recorded in their database, along with all the other details, we won't need to wait that long next time. You just need to show them your id and they'd just do a small scan and let you go."

Amelia's stomach growled, and she rubbed her abdomen. "Let's go get something to eat. I'm hungry," she suggested with a hopeful look.

Hearing her asking for food again, when she had just come here after eating a ton of food made by Artemis. Rio glanced at her skeptically. He looked at her, she was still a slim and flat stomach, just where does all the food she eats goes. He was really curious.

Noticing her brother's gaze, Amelia rolled her eyes and playfully hit his shoulder. "I ate real food at home. What I want now is dessert. Let's go try something new." she insisted.

She had long heard the food of the floating islands was a delicacy. How can she miss this chance when she's here? Once they report to the academy, who knows when they'll be free to come out or roam around freely like this.

Since every thing any student needs is already present in the academy's shopping malls and shops, how can they visit outside. Even if someday they got some time from their free schedule, knowing her brother's lazy habits, he'd just sleep in his room, instead of going out to visit anything. I think you should take a look at

Even though the entry of general public was restricted on the islands, one can't just ignore the things of daily necessities and some entertainment for the students. Otherwise they'd simply be too stressed living in the academy walls. That's why world association had made everything here only.

Obviously they didn't forget the business aspect of it. So every 5 years, they'd open a quota for famous shops, restaurants, hotels, entertainment sites and other businesses to compete for the positions to open their branches on these islands.

Since all types of talented students from every race and kind were studying in these academies, this competition would become extra hard, as the businesses not only can earn profits and recognition of the world, but also get a chance to come into contact with new leaders of the next generation. This chance of getting close or forming a connection with the nobility, royalty or simply geniuses is a bait everyone jumped at. Thus this became another source of income for the world academy.

To ensure that no one betrays the academy and world association, or does anything to harm the islands, they had to swear and sign mana oaths. So the safety of the place could still be guaranteed.

"You studied here, what's the best dessert?" Amelia asked curiously. Since her brother knew her tastes and what she likes, he'll definitely know the best place to eat.

Rio looked at the time, and sighed. "We're running late, Amy. I promised Bernhardt, Rebecca, and Ayla that we'd meet them at the academy. They've been waiting since morning."

Amelia pouted, "I'm really hungry though,"

Rio gave her a pointed look. "You have a ring full of food that Amber made. You can eat that. Come on, we're running late."

He had seen how hard his little chef heroine had to work for the past few days, to prepare everything that Amelia liked and take her with.

"But..." Amelia started to protest.

"No more 'buts.' You're at C-rank now. How can you still be hungry?" Rio questioned, amused and genuinely puzzled.

Sometimes he even doubted if she really ate some storage rings like Artemis said, and now all her food gets stored in them. If he didn't know about her antics from childhood, he might've really asked the system to do a scan on her body and see if there's something wrong with her tummy.

"Humph. What about my rank? Is that even a big thing - You jumped back 4 ranks overnight like a rocket." Amelia said, remembering about the rockus their family had, when Rio's rank spontaneously restored after he woke up one morning.

Even her mother, who always sided with brother, had a beyond belief expression. At first she thought she trained hard day and night for these 2 years, and would even protect her brother and beat him up if he didn't do as she says. But then one day, he just crosses all ranks and gets his old rank back, leaving her behind.

Her brother said it was because of Nyx's help, but still, was a primordial's powers that big. Remembering her own goddess, who's also a primordial she really couldn't help but compare.

[Nyx laughs at her rival.]

[She's pleased with your performance and praises. She says she forgives you for using her name.]

Rio looked at these notifications confused, what was going on with her now. When he looked at Amelia, who was staring at air with a sour mood, probably talking with her contracted goddess. Even he wanted to smile at her now, since knowing Amy she's probably comparing them badly now.

'Who knew Amelia would one day side with Nyx over Gauri and call her superior?' Rio thought and smiled.

Chapter 180 Pawn And The Princess

The sun's golden rays draped over the enchanting scene in front of the academy gates. A young woman with flowing golden hair stood there, her hair shining even brighter in the sunlight. Her eyes, a captivating shade of pearl blue, darted around excitedly, scanning the vehicles approaching the academy. Her face would light up whenever she spotted a black car turning the corner, but that sparkle would fade as the vehicle came closer and it wasn't the one she was waiting for. This was Rebecca, the princess of Schilla, a dignified figure now reduced to an impatient girl. If the people in Haven knew that their princess had been standing at the gate, waiting for someone else since morning they'd laugh and simply call it a joke, but here it was happening right now.

"Where are they?" she muttered in frustration, her gaze following each car that passed her.

"I told you, that you came early," a girl with rich brunette hair next to her chided, glancing at her watch. "Knowing him, he was probably still sleeping by that time."

Ayla's words only fueled Rebecca's annoyance. She was eagerly waiting to meet him, yet he seemed to be casually lazing around at his home like always.

"Got a message from him. They're done with their checks. They'll be here soon," Bernhardt, who stood nearby, reassured them.

Rebecca's heart raced at the prospect of finally seeing him. She observed the approaching cars with even more intensity. The teleportation branch wasn't far from the academy, and with the academy's transportation, it would take around 5 to 10 minutes at most.

"You know, Amelia is with him," Ayla mentioned nonchalantly after another few minutes of waiting.

Rebecca shot her a puzzled look, but after a moment's thought, understanding dawned on her. They weren't about to arrive any time soon. No way, that foodie friend of hers would come here directly, and knowing that idiot, he'd simply nod his head at her requests.

"Alright, that's it. I'm going back," Rebecca declared, her impatience getting the better of her. "He clearly has no concept of time."

She had been standing here for so long, that even many students were coming out and staring at her.

'He really has no value for anyone.' She thought and turned around to go back inside.

They had known each other since childhood and after her awakening, they had only grown to be best friends. After her birthday, she wasn't even angry at him for breaking the engagement or insulting her, she was happy that he was there.

So 2 years ago, when the news that he was dead, and that too because he was trying to save her brothers reached her ears, she had been heartbroken about it.

That's why when she heard that he was back, she had been eager to meet him. But since she was away from home at that time, she couldn't come rushing back. Even after a month since then, this was going to be the first time she would see him face to face. No more projections on screens or photos; this was real. Hence her impatience from morning until now.

But who knew, it was only her feeling this way, that guy probably didn't even miss her or care about her at all. That's why instead of coming here, he's out there roaming around the city with his sister.

Her thoughts spiraled, and disappointment clawed at her. 'And my mother was suggesting that I feign interest in the engagement. This guy can't even spare a thought for me.' Irritated and feeling her time had been wasted, she quickened her pace, her footsteps echoing her frustration. She didn't even unpack her stuff and came here. But What a waste of time.' She thought.

"He's here." Bernhardt muttered. As he saw a car coming towards them. He was happy, as he could faintly hear Amelia's voice. He was about to move towards the side for parking when he noticed the car swerving oddly.

Bernhardt's heart raced as he realized something was off. Instead of slowing down, the car seemed to accelerate towards him in a zigzag pattern. His confusion cleared when he heard a girl's voice shouting warnings - "look out" or "move away"..

'Doesn't she know how to drive?' Bernhardt wondered incredulously as he quickly stepped aside to avoid the erratic vehicle. His heart thumped a little, as he felt the swish of air moving past him.

He turned and saw it going straight towards Rebecca, who was still walking without looking back. He shouted to call her, to move out of the way too. But Rebecca seemed lost in her thoughts, as she kept walking forwards. Finally some honking of sounds started coming behind her, bringing her back. She turned around, annoyed at who the hell was honking horns when she was already out of the way.

However, her annoyance turned to shock as she found a car hurtling directly towards her. She was about to shout at who was this idiot driving out from the road, when instead of the car slowing down, it started speeding towards her even more. She was about to unleash her mana to leap to safety when the car abruptly screeched to a stop, barely a foot away from her.

The heat and smell of the engine assaulted her senses, and she could only stare at the car in shock. She looked down at herself and after being sure she was fine. She turned her attention back to the car, hoping to take her anger out on this blind driver.

Amelia stepped out of the car, and started shouting. "What the hell was that, brother? You nearly crashed us."

Rio stepped out of the driver's seat and looked at the car weirdly. "How would I know? There's something wrong with this car."

"Hah" Amelia made a shocked expression "Wrong is with you liar. You told me you knew how to drive!"

"I did, once." Rio said, "I just forgot a little since it's been so long."

Amelia wasn't about to let him off the hook. "Don't blame your dungeon for this. You didn't even know where the brake and accelerator were." This shameless brother, instead of accepting he doesn't know anything, is blaming the car first, and is now using the excuse of being trapped in the dungeon.

Rio wanted to smile. It wasn't his fault at all. Whoever made these cars, switched the positions of brake and accelerator. This was also his first time driving; Artemis had never allowed him near the steering wheel, deeming him too young. And then at the academy he never learned it himself, as he was too busy training and doing other things to change his fate.

I mean, he already knew how to drive cars back on earth, as it was a stupid little hobby of his. so he never thought it'd be any different here and never learned it. But this stupid author never mentioned he spiced some things in these magic cars. They look the same as back on earth, but half the stuff is mixed up.

"Accept it brother. You know nothing about cars." Amelia said proudly. She finally found something where she was better than her brother.

"Hey, it wasn't that bad, right? I still didn't hit anyone this time." Rio defended himself.

Rebecca, all this time just kept staring at this brother - sister duo , who instead of looking around or apologizing to anyone, started fighting amongst themselves. When she heard Rio's proud tone that he didn't hit anyone, she finally had enough. 'This guy _ . It is okay to not apologize, but this one didn't even notice that he almost killed someone.'

"Well, for a first-timer, I suppose it wasn't bad," Amelia conceded, still clearly annoyed.

Feeling angry, Rebecca went forward and slapped her head "Wasn't bad? Say that after seeing where your car ended up?" She looked at Rio "and you, did you sleep on the steering wheel or what?"

Rio looked at her, his eyes surprised at the sight of her face, which then broke into a familiar smile. He playfully waved his hand at her, his voice teasing. "Well, hello there, princess. Didn't see you there."

"Tsk" Rebecca just clicked her tongue at his jokes. Without further ado, she closed the gap between them and wrapped her arms around Rio in a tight hug. "You're such a jerk, you know that? Scared the hell out of me."

"What? Don't worry, you won't die from a car's hit." Rio smiled and hugged her back. Over the years, he did indeed change this princess' perception of everything quite a bit. One of them, being her cursing language.

"I missed you," Rebecca whispered, her voice choked with emotion, barely above a whisper.

"Missed you too, princess," Rio replied, his sincerity evident. Unlike some years ago, she wasn't his pawn to play points or pranks anymore. She was a friend now.

"Welcome back to the academy, buddy." Bernhardt came forward, as he patted his shoulder. "It's been dull without you."

"Don't worry. It won't be dull anymore." Rio turned around and shook his hands, as he hugged him too. "The fun's just gonna start now."