

Mana 61

Chapter 61 - An upgrade

The world retained its calmness.

I didn't know how much time had passed, but I came to with my body feeling somewhat lighter than it was before.

I wondered what had changed as I looked around me and saw hunters looking around in a confused manner while my summon continued its rampage.

I observed the blue boxed panel in the corner of my eye to see if there were any changes there. Nearly everything seemed the same, with exactly one simple change that was shining blue at the bottom of the panel

[Skill Combination- Combine skills of the same rank to bring out unknown power. Compatibility is the key. Limited to skills at 100 proficiency.]

I blanked out for a second after reading the description of this newly appearing function. I then looked at the multitude of skills in my panel that had all reached 100 as I began to feel excited

I thought I had grown powerful enough, but with this, I can go even further.

I had been rushing about the entire time this past week and currently felt mentally exhausted, and I was planning to relax the next few days

I didn't get another message or voice after defeating the dragon, making me assume that the system addition of **[Skill Combination]** which the mysterious voice was talking about had taken a toll on it, and it would take some time before it approached me again

I was planning on slowly learning about this new function, which skills were compatible to combine, and what they become after the combination. Ideas were already mixing in my head that I couldn't wait to try

I left my Virulent Abomination to continue clearing the thousands of beasts that had yet to run away as I moved from my position in the air to heal the many injured hunters around the battlefield

I could feel the eyes of the hunter I saved watching me very closely as I moved, but I ignored it for now. I was curious about him too as he was deemed important enough by the mysterious voice to be saved, and I was even more sure of it being him after recalling one of the figures I saw in the three smaller rooms. That smirk on his face very closely resembled what I saw

Clearing the battlefield took a significant amount of time as two hours quickly passed. Hunters that were standing on opposing sides helped one another as squads were made to go clear the remaining countries that the dragon had occupied

With its death, the powerful rank A hunters could easily work together to take down the lower ranked beasts and save their people

The hunter that was watching me closely approached me as I was healing an injured soldier on the ground

"Noah Osmont, right? Thank you for saving my life."

I turned to look at the man with dark hair that had a confident smile on his face.

"Not a problem, it was something I felt obligated to do. You are?"

I was replying as I healed the hunters around us. After a certain point, they just brought more and more injured people where I was, which I found to be easier than running around looking for them myself

"Kazuhiko, or most commonly known as the Dark Sword."

The person and the face clicked as I remembered the famous hunter that stood atop everyone else in the United Federation

"The most powerful hunter in the United Federation huh? Thanks for holding down the beast until I made it in time"

He scoffed as he heard this

"Hah, what most powerful hunter. If I took that title, then what are you supposed to be?"

I smiled when he mentioned this, and Kazuhiko continued

"I admire your strength. I only heard very few things about you, but didn't think you were so overpowered to such an extent. Is it your inherent skill, or is there another secret to your strength?"

He really couldn't hide his aims as he asked this so blatantly, and I replied by telling him it was my inherent skill. His shoulders slumped for a moment before quickly coming up again as he talked to himself

"That's okay, it just means there is someone stronger than me that I can look forward to surpassing!"

The katana by his side seemed to vibrate as he said this, and I just listened while I finished healing the last hunter.

After this, Kazuhiko pulled me aside while boisterously saying that after a hard fought battle, we had to go enjoy ourselves. I was feeling exhausted and hungry after all this time and chose to go along

The Virulent Abomination had finished chasing down all nearby beasts and ripping them apart, so I unsummoned it far in the distance and watched it explode while releasing noxious gas for the last time. I wondered if I would find any compatible S rank skills in the future to combine and make this beast even stronger

High ranking hunters and officials took the lead to clear everything around the battlefield as Kazuhiko took me further inland. We bypassed the walled defenses and arrived to a large military compound not too far off from where the fighting was occurring

Kazuhiko walked in as if he owned the place and said a few things to the soldiers there, and we were soon seated in a dining area with drinks and foods being brought in every minute

An entire half a day of flying on the back of my poisonous summon and the constant fights these past weeks had exhausted me more than I thought as I enjoyed the ever so increasing feast in front of me

Foods that I've never tried before made their way into my mouth. There was a platter of something called Yakitori that I couldn't get enough of. Another one that I truly enjoyed was something that Kazuhiko called Sukiyaki, it was an enormous pot that had the softest stew of beef and vegetables

I enjoyed the food and company to say the least, listening to the boisterous hunter talk about his journey to the peak of rank A. My main focus was the food as I half heartedly listened to the stories

Kazuhiko seemed like a good guy. From the way he talked, he looked like that friend that always seemed to have a screw loose but was holding it in and staying sane. He always took the initiative to talk and ask me questions, making it his goal to try and understand everything about me

Talking to him gave me a reminder of just how drastically my life had changed from just a few weeks ago

When a plate of food called Takoyaki came, my entire attention was stolen away as I found myself devouring the round balls filled with octopus and I don't know what else in a blink and calling out to the soldier delivering the plates to bring out even more of them

The day passed like this as I enjoyed food I hadn't had before.

Chapter 62 - Relaxation

After the many meals came and empty plates left, the food that unceasingly went into my stomach came to a stop.

I was lying on my back staring at the ceiling as I thought about this peace I could really only achieve after having an amazing meal. Worries of the future faded away. The constant anger cooled down, and it felt like a much needed rest period had come

It didn't last long as Kazuhiko shattered this peace in an instant by loudly flinging the door open. He had left a couple of minutes back to I don't even know where, and now he came back as noisy as ever

"We've had the food, now we ought to have some fun!"

The hunter loudly barged in while bringing more than ten barely dressed women inside the room. I groaned at this sight as I really just wanted to sleep after eating so much today. How did he even get these women in this war zone so quickly anyways?

I rose up and watched the figures pouring into the room. Well, as much as I wanted to rest, I would be a good guest and follow the lead of the host.

Night passed and dawn came. I had woken up and walked out to a small courtyard that had a brightly shining pond with a few fish. I sat down in the courtyard as I enjoyed this environment of calmness.

Early that morning, I was able to get in contact with the people back in the Blessed Empire. Elizabeth was the point of contact, and for some odd reason I felt guilty when I read the huge text update she had sent.

Much of the beasts had been taken care of back in the Empire, with many of the people quickly adapting to the new function they saw on their attribute panels

Kazuhiko had spent an entire hour on this yesterday questioning me if I had anything to do with this, as the change had occurred the moment the dragon fell. I denied everything for the time being and waited to hear again from the mysterious being that was taking its time

The main takeaway for the new **[Skill Combination]** function was that it was extremely useful for veteran hunters. Your proficiency had to first reach 100 for any of the skills you wanted to combine, and they had to have compatibility.

Very few hunters were able to even match the first requirement, not to mention finding two skills compatible with each other. So even after half a day passed since this new function was founded, they still didn't have much information on it

I thought about the many skills I had that had already reached 100 proficiency as I wanted to start trying for myself, with the lower ranked skills as the first test

I finished reading the huge bubble of a text, with the major thing I had to take note of being the request of my presence back in the empire to be awarded an influential position and many more things

I didn't become overly excited at this, as I had undergone way too many things these past few weeks that made me have a different outlook on the world.

Life was extremely fleeting. I had watched many people die, and saved countless more, but I still felt that something was missing. Even the anger I felt towards enemies I have yet to ascertain or the revenge the mysterious being had promised didn't fill whatever was missing

Since there was nothing pressing occurring in the Empire, with the dungeons being taken care of by the high ranking hunters and things on the path to being stabilized, I would stay and tour the places in the United Federation for a bit

I was waiting for the next time I would be back in that blank room with the hexagonal prism, where I would no doubt be getting many answers.

Before jumping into the new function, I pulled out the golden skill book that the dragon had dropped. It was **[Rage of the Thunder Monarch- Area of effect skill. Extremely condensed lightning decimates an area of 15 meters]**

The skill seemed to be even more destructive power than **[Volcanic Eruption]** because of its lower effect area, but I would still have to test it to be sure. The book turned into particles of light as it flew to my body and the skill appeared in my panel

I looked through the panel to start assessing possible skills to combine.

To start testing the **[Skill Combination]** function, I wanted to begin with the rank F skills, but I realized that I only learnt 2 after all this time. I had grown so rapidly that I jumped from F to mostly rank D and C skills

This wouldn't be an issue though, as I had been running around taking down many rank of bosses this past week and collected many skill books in my storage rings.

Even after I gave away a vast majority to the destroyed cities I visited and to the military regiments I came across, I still had many to play with.

I let out the collections of skill books in my storage rings and learnt many skills of lower ranks for the purpose of testing. I had to learn them now and spend some time using them and having them active for their proficiency to rise to 100 before I could begin combining

Then for now, the focus would be placed on the rank D and C skills I already had many of that were at 100 proficiency. None of the rank A skills had reached 100 so far, so I'll leave those for now. To start it off, I opened the **[Skill Combination]** function and added two obviously non compatible rank D skills

[Rough Skin + Flames of Torment]

When the two skills were placed on the two slots, there was a red color shining out. The combination was not successful. So red showed bad compatibility that would not work

Next up I tried what I thought to be compatible skills, which was [Safeguard + Rough Skin]

The two slots shined a light green, and the green light expanded as the two skills disappeared, a brand new one appearing on my panel

[Armored Skin]

The skill had a brand new color, in contrast to the skills written in white with the blue background of the panel. It had a purple color, with its rank now upgraded to D+ and its proficiency showing

I activated this new skill in wonder and found that the defense provided by it was more than triple what [Safeguard] and [Rough Skin] provided. It was still a lower ranking skill though, so it didn't drastically change my defenses

Since combining the two of them changed its rank from D to D+, I wondered if combining two D+ skills would give rise to a brand new rank C skill. I didn't have all that many rank D skills that had already risen to 100 though, so I would have to wait for the new ones I just learnt to reach there

I was about to continue my testing by moving on to rank C skills when an annoying voice broke the peace established in courtyard

"Noah! Let's grab some breakfast and then go dungeon diving!"

The guy had become overly friendly over this past day had come out early morning with energy that I could in no way match.

It seemed that his excitement stemmed from the fact that he was able to combine two of his rank A skills and produce a powerful rank A+ skill.

Veteran hunters like him who had been dungeon diving for the past months had collected a multitude of skills that fit their class, so they had many options of compatible skills that had reached the required proficiency for combination

Well, when I start combining my own, I should have even more to work with. And I was currently the only hunter holding the most powerful rank S skills.

Kazuhiko had been able to combine two of his skills called [Blade Dance] and [Dominator's Sword Wave] to bring the result of **[Dominator's Dance of Death]**

I was curious about this rank A+ skill and wanted to test my newly gained skills too, so a dungeon would be perfect right now.

Food came first as I was treated to brand new dishes once again today, with us heading out an hour later.

Chapter 63 - Experimentation

The country we were in was called King's Harbor. After moving away from the military sector and heading inwards, I was able to see groups of people and hunters celebrating their newly found freedom from the threat of beasts that were heading here previously

Kazuhiko was walking besides me while talking about the power structure of countries in the United Federation and their dungeon diving system here.

I recalled a news show I had watched back in Outer Bank X weeks ago that mentioned a similar topic about how hunters were restricted in the United Federation and had to turn half of their loot over to the government

It turns out that this system was placed to raise many peak hunters who were obligated to work for the government and defend the lower ranking hunters that contributed their loot

This was why hunters in the United Federation had much less mortality rates, as a stronger hunter who used up more of the resources was assigned to each of the teams diving in the dungeon.

This built up a system where many strong hunters dived into dungeons with weaker ones. Kazuhiko routinely had to dive into rank B dungeons with rank B hunters while occasionally clearing rank A dungeons with a government created fully rank A team

It was a good system that I applauded, as it produced many strong hunters and a level of responsibility that caused there to be less deaths in the United Federation when Apocalypse 2.0 occurred a week ago. There were many strong hunters spread out all over the countries unlike the cramming of powerful hunters into a few specific cities back in the Empire

Right now, we were heading to a rank A dungeon called [Babadook's Layer], which was a dungeon filled with strange dark furred monsters that had powerful offensive skills

Kazuhiko was very confident in my strength after he watched me take down the Black Dragon, so we dived into the dungeon by ourselves

The first floor was an expansive dark space that contained many of those dark furred monsters, and Kazuhiko moved first, trying his **[Dominator's Dance of Death]** for the first time

His figure flickered in and out on the surroundings, his sword releasing a multitude of dark sword waves that smashed into the dark furred figures and tore through their defenses

There were more than 30 rank A monsters in front of us, but they all received the powerful attacks from this one rank A+ skill and tumbled down like dominoes

Kazuhiko was smiling like a child as he sheathed his sword and watched the destruction he had caused.

On the next floor after that, I tried out the rank S skill, **[Rage of the Thunder Monarch]** on the next group of the dark furred beasts.

BOOM!

On top of their heads, a wide expanse of purple lightning roiled out and then struck down. They seemed like thick pillars of snakes that caused destruction everywhere they touched.

The rank A beasts didn't stand a chance as their bodies were literally blown apart. Kazuhiko didn't want to be outdone and went to the lower floor with even more vigor.

I used **[Summon Virulent Abomination]** as we moved further in, summoning the grotesque but lovable beast that tore through the rank A enemies as if they were nothing. I realized that rank A dungeons would not pose a single threat to me as I watched the beast tear through the defenses of monsters

I let the summon and Kazuhiko do all the work going forwards as I focused on possible skill combinations with the skills that currently met the requirements and were compatible

I was able to combine the rank C skills [Whirlwind] and [Aura of Haste] to produce **[C+ Fevered Rush]**

When activated, my speed sharply rose for an instant as I traveled forward and almost smacked into a wall. The speed still couldn't beat rank A [Flight] though

Further experimentation allowed me to combine the rank B skills, [Shadow Veil] and [Stealth] to bring out **[B+ Dark Assassin]**

This new skill most definitely matched rank A skills, if not surpassing some of them, as my body disappeared and melded into the surroundings as I wished.

I could keep it active at all times to still cover up the colorful skill effects of the many other active skills I had on all the time, while choosing when to become fully hidden that even the powerful rank A peak hunter Kazuhiko had trouble finding me

My experimentations came to an end as we reached the BOSS room, and I watched the hunter and summon shred apart the rank A TITAN as if it was nothing, leaving it as a poisoned mess of bones and flesh after

The hunter was looking indignantly at the summoned creature he didn't seem to be able to fully match yet, and I laughed at this sight.

Since we finished this rank A dungeon so quickly, in less than half an hour at that, we dived back in right after. I had the goal of obtaining more rank A skills to play around with **[Skill Combination]** even more

The process would take time though, as I had to learn the skills and bring them all the way to 100 proficiency before I could combine them

We dived into the rank A dungeon more than 10 times after that, only coming out some time in the afternoon. I was able to pocket five rank A skills for myself, leaving all the cores, three items, and 2 skill books that matched Kazuhiko behind

I had already reached the peak that rank A cores could bring me long ago, and was now absorbing the rank S cores from the three powerful beasts I defeated

I also recalled some time back before I took down the rank S turtle and humanoid mosquito, I had gained a rank A skill book called [Void Slash] that I just tossed in my storage ring and forgot about. I looked at Kazuhiko and his katana, pulling out the skill right after and handing it to him

He looked at the skill description and turned all serious, giving me a heartfelt thanks for the gift.

I shook off the gratitude and turned my attention to the horrendous looking Virulent Abomination to the side, as it had made the dungeon runs as effortless as they could be, and I could almost feel myself sinking into laziness as I watched the beast do all the work

We were heading in further into King's Harbor at the behest of Kazuhiko, it seemed the allied countries of the United Federation were planning an event to honor the great hunter that brought down the dragon

I wasn't into festivities though, and planned to not attend when something occurred that gave me the perfect reason not to. The mysterious voice had returned yet again.

Kazuhiko saw my serious expression and stopped, and I told him that something came up, disappearing from his sight with [Dark Assassin] and flying into the skies

I floated high in the air as I felt my vision sinking and I found myself in that same blank room once more. Three figures were still visible in smaller rooms surrounding this one, with the hexagonal prism slowly rotating in this main room

The voice rang out once more as I closely listened. It was time for answers.

Chapter 64 - The mystery behind dungeons

The explanations began slowly, and soon became huge dumps of information that I had to sift through

To start it off, the being I have been talking to this entire time called itself the Planetary Core. When I first heard this I blanked out a little, I had been talking to the core of this world this entire time?

It went further to further clarify that it was a system of laws congregated together to keep this world alive, so I could also call it this world's Planetary System. I cut it down to System for short just to make it easier when I was addressing it

The System had gained consciousness when dungeons first began appearing on this planet, and could only begin to act a step behind the enemies and play catch up as they began their invasion

Essence of our young world was used to awaken the first groups of hunters, paying an expensive price to grant them inherent skills that enabled them to stand against the onslaught of beasts

This wouldn't be enough to stand against the droves of enemies though, so the System performed its first drastic measure since it gained consciousness

When the beasts died, their essence was lost in the environment and could be re-absorbed by the surrounding world inefficiently

The System took the drastic action of using more than half of its essence to form a system of power that was compatible to the beings in its planet that knew nothing about the new fantastical and magical things they were experiencing

The awakened would now be able to quantify and observe their strength with the advent of an attribute panel, and most of all, the key factor of being able to get stronger by snatching the essence from the beasts they kill.

The System used more than half of its essence to implement this new system of power where the essence of dying beasts would be extracted, and the skills & abilities that were buried deep in the beast's essence would be turned to the source of strength for the hunters. Thus, came the advent of skill books, items, and cores

Some beasts that later came to be called TITANs and BOSSes had a denser collection of essence that allowed for skills and items to be extracted from them, while for other beasts, only cores that reinforced the strength, vitality, and focus of the awakened individuals could be drawn out

This new system of power allowed this world and its inhabitants a unique ability that most likely was not existent anywhere else in the universe that allowed for the extraction and absorbance of the power of your enemies.

The System had to regain the tremendous amount of essence it lost through this , so half of all extracted energy would go towards the planet's core.

The awakened were thus able to make their stand and slowly take back their lands, but much of the world was already decimated by beasts, only giving rise to a collection of countries that later became known as the United Federation and a connection of Cities protected under the banner of an Empire

The System went into a period of hibernation after this to recover its essence, its hunters slowly contributing by clearing the beasts and the dungeons that they came from

This brought us to the subject of dungeons.

The dungeons were lines of connections that our enemy sent down. These lines of connections carried with them the origin of many inhabitants from another world. They were sent down and settled on the planet as monoliths that required time to allow for the physical entry of the beings in the connection line.

Depending on how much essence was used on the dungeons, the rate of release could be accelerated.

But if people came in contact with the monolith and were able to defeat the origins of the beings in it, essence of the monolith would be used up and the release would be delayed.

The enemy that sent these dungeons down would then have to keep providing essence towards these dungeons to replenish the origin of the beings in it. This process repeated back and forth in the months that followed the advent of the apocalypse

Hunters would repeatedly enter dungeons and clear them, using up more and more essence and taking it for themselves. The other side would continue to send down essence to reinforce and maintain the

origins of beings that slowly lost their minds and rationality from being broken and rebuilt so many times

Then came the reason that I was wondering about all this time. If a dungeon was cleared rapidly enough, the in flow of essence from the invading force couldn't keep up with how much essence was being absorbed, and the connection line would be broken, with the beings inside dying completely

This, was the destruction of the monolith that I had caused.

I looked up to the rotating prism when it got to this point and asked.

"Then, the [Plane Crystal] that I received once the monolith imploded is..."

[It is a direct line of connection that we can use to ascertain the coordinates of their world and send our own forces down.]

...

I was speechless for the first time in a while. I thought about what this implied and then asked something I couldn't bring myself to ask before

"How do I...fit in all of this"

The System took a pause when we go to this point

[When I regained enough essence to become active again, I saw that the situation was not heading in the right direction and that I had to act once more. I felt a level of frustration as I had enough essence and power to even bend some natural laws, but I couldn't make use of it to plainly erase the invaders because much stronger universal laws are in place to prevent such direct intervention]

I felt my mind start pounding as I listen very closely to the next words

[So I calculated countless possibilities, and came to the one with the highest chance of success, while it also posed the greatest danger. But, this path would allow for a truly strong person to rise and protect the planet, so I attempted it.]

I listened with rapt attention while waiting for the voice to continue

[I created a backdoor from the planet's core and connected it to a single human that had the least restrictions, someone who wasn't yet even awakened. This channel would allow the possibility of things that are normally impossible.]

My thoughts were moving rapidly as I heard this...this was why I felt that I had infinite mana to cast whatever skills I wanted without restriction.

This was why my [Focus] was blank. All of that energy...it wasn't just coming from nowhere. This made me recall something I had read about in school years back, that energy couldn't be created nor destroyed, only transformed from one form to another

It felt like lessons finally kicked in when I thought about my mana, and how the skill books and cores came to be. But, could the common laws I knew about even be applicable at this stage we were at now?

As for just how much energy an entire planet contained...could the tremendous essence even be quantified?

My thoughts were interrupted as the System continued

[But...this came at a huge cost and introduced a vulnerability that was not there before. You are connected to the planetary core, and the planetary core is connected to you. If you ever faced destruction...the entire planet will follow.]

...!!!

Chapter 65 - Infinite Mana in the Apocalypse

At a certain point in many people's lives, they come to a moment where they ask themselves, why me?

Why did this tragedy happen to me? Why does everything always go wrong for me? Why do some people make millions a day while I barely make 50? Why me?

I wasn't even sure if there was a clear answer to this, but I still found myself asking the same question to the rotating hexagonal prism

After getting over the bombshell that my little life actually held much more importance than I initially imagined, I found this question swimming at the forefront of my mind

"Why me?"

This was one of the biggest things I wanted to know. There were many other things like how did the System know if I would awaken as a hunter if the channel was set up long before. How could it be sure I wouldn't be just another human casualty and cause everything to collapse. There were many questions I wanted to ask first, but the first and foremost that came out of my mouth was...why me.

A silence followed after as only the rapid rotations of the hexagonal prism could be felt

[You...were chosen randomly. It just so happened that among the many humans who had yet to awaken, you were chosen by chance.]

The reply came unexpectedly, and it might have not been the thing I wanted to hear, but I actually felt relief from it. I wasn't some chosen one who was born to do great things. I just received a monumental gift. A gift...that I would use to the best of my abilities from now on

"Don't tell me that you also didn't know whether I would awaken or not, or even live another day in the case something like a dungeon break occurred and wiped out an entire city?"

[There was no certainty of that either. I mentioned that I undertook this plan because it provided the highest percent chance of survival for us all, but that percentage was still very low. I could only make a shot in the dark, because if I hadn't, we would have faced complete destruction in the future. Something like this is normally impossible, with a near zero percent chance of working out. It is a completely unique situation.]

There was a pause as it let these words sink in before it continued

[All that remains is that it worked, and because it worked, we now stand a chance to go against the enemies plotting against us. The next phase of our actions is for you to head to the world our enemies reside in and disrupt the structure there. If you are able to completely place the inhabitants of that world under your rule, it opens up even more wondrous possibilities that you cannot begin to imagine]

I listened as the System continued to dump a whole lot more information onto me.

From the many beasts that died and had their essence absorbed by the planet, memories of the world they came from and their aims were slowly collected and pieced together. Especially the rank S beasts, their essence held much more crucial information

The first thing to keep in mind was that this invasion of beasts was simply a use of pawns to achieve their aim of domination for young planets. The near infinite reserves of energy that the planet held is what they were after

Just like how countries made up wars to obtain oil, war was now being waged for the countless supplies of energy on a much grander scale.

If they achieved their aims and dominated the inhabitants of the world, they would be able to use them as disposable pawns to invade other worlds first and the mining of the planet's essence using specialized dungeons

Entire worlds that had their people dominated could only watch as their world was turned into a mine for the years to come as it cycled through absorbing essence from the outside world and having it stolen right after. At this stage, the world no longer grew.

Inhabitants in such a world could not dream of obtaining more power and getting stronger. An example is the race of beasts that became stronger with years of accumulating and growing their essence and learning how to cast complex skills and abilities. If the essence of their world was to be taken over by others and exploited for their own uses, their powers would become stagnant

[That, is where you come in. You are a weapon, and a very powerful one at that. If you descend onto their world and become its ruler, besides stopping any future forces from being sent here, we will have the option of annexing an entire world for our own uses]

The words of the System continued to be bombshells every time, but I could feel excitement from them. We first get back at the true culprits who caused so much pain for us, and then obtain an entire...

[From the collection of memories of those beasts, the world they reside in is a large world under the control of mythical races of beasts. It is a flourishing world that suddenly faced an invasion, and even with the tremendous strength of its inhabitants, parts of it have already fallen under the rule of invading enemies. It is those beings that are now continuing their conquest in that world while using its subjugated inhabitants as pawns to also invade smaller worlds.]

More and more information kept on coming. I committed everything to memory the moment the other world began being mentioned

[Our goal is the same thing. To disrupt their plans and take that world for ourselves. We will not be so weak as to be bullied after that. If we have to, we won't even stop just at that world, and extend our reach to the far corners of the universe. Only with sufficient power can we be confident. With you in the

lead, the goal has a large chance of success. For you are someone who is able to tap into a power that is normally constrained by universal laws.]

It felt as if I was getting the biggest pep talk of my life as I listened to the dominating words coming out of the System

[You are someone able to access the unquantifiable reserves of an entire planet. Something sacred that is used to set the order of life, you have it under your fingertips. You can call it endless. You can call it infinite. Never in your lifetime will you feel like you do not have enough energy no matter how high you continue climbing. When you succeed in your conquest and bring the apocalypse that you faced unto other worlds, obtaining their sources of power too, you can factually state...that you have Infinite Mana in this era of apocalypse.]

Chapter 66 - Preparation

Silence.

Utter and complete silence.

I could feel the beating of my heart and the blood rushing through my body as I finished listening and said

"When do we start?"

A horned being was reading complex data in an unknown location with a furious expression. Something unexplainable had occurred on the same planet that had shown abnormalities some time back

The signals placed on the pathetic beasts that held a level of power had all but disappeared.

This gesticulated a message of failure. They wouldn't be able to start any operations on this planet for the time being. Having diverted many pieces into this one planet so frequently caused them to be restricted towards it. They could not forcefully send more pieces for at least a few months as these restrictions loosened

The being's anger quickly reduced as he changed his mindset. His role was only to pioneer and establish connections to otherworlds in preparation for takeovers in the future. Many of his peers still had their focus on finishing the conquest of the major world they were in now

The only pockets of resistance remaining were the kingdoms where lineages of mythical beasts were ruling, as well as the Frozen Kingdom where the last of the human race on this planet was thriving

A devilish smile appeared on the horned being's face as he thought about his contribution that led to the downfall of the most powerful kingdom in this world and allowed for them to take root fully

The remaining places would all fall in due time, no matter how long it took. He could already see it happening in front of his eyes. For he is the personification of lies and evil, the Prince of Darkness. Ranked 68, he was commonly known as Demon King Belial...

Places all over the world were becoming stabilized as hunters performed their roles and quelled the onslaught of beasts.

Cities in the Blessed Empire and the various countries of the United Federation were discussing the regulation of dungeons across the world.

New knowledge was coming out everyday that ascertained how frequently dungeons had to be cleared in a day in order to completely destroy them.

The number of times differed depending on the ranks, with lower level dungeons requiring to be cleared many more times until their monoliths were destroyed.

The conclusion wasn't fully ascertained by the hunters, but the actual cause was that lower ranked dungeons required less supply of essence to be kept active, and thus could more easily be replenished as they were cleared. High ranking dungeons required significantly more essence in order to replenish the origins of the beasts inside it, thus required a less number of times to be cleared before the outflowing of essence surpassed the inflow and cause the destruction of the dungeon

The discussion taking place was which number of dungeons should safely be left for hunters to regularly clear and become stronger, while putting the effort in clusters where many dungeons appeared and it would be better to destroy them before a dungeon break occurred

The discussion and regulation of this was ongoing, with the different countries and cities deciding for themselves what was best

I had spent a significant amount of time talking to the System in that blank room and learned many more things.

I was currently flying back to the Star City of the Blessed Empire to receive awards and recognition. In the grand scheme of things, it wasn't that important to me right now as my mind was fully filled with dangerous information and I was only thinking about the expansive world I would be descending in soon enough

I left King's Harbor after sharing a few words with Kazuhiko and apologizing for not being able to stay any longer.

The System had mentioned that we wouldn't be getting any mass descents of dungeons like what just occurred any time soon, as it could feel tight restrictions against beings descending down that were covering the planet after the most recent attack. But we didn't know exactly how long this would be

Maybe a few months, or half a year, or the same time span that passed from the first invasion we faced to this second one, we were not completely sure.

So I was moving with the goal of wrapping everything up, before heading to a location specified by the System to start my next journey

The mystery of Kazuhiko and the other figure I saw in the smaller rooms attached to the blank room was not too explosive. The other figure that shone with a golden light was most likely the strongest hunter of the Empire, Steel Mikhail

Both him and Kazuhiko had received more attention and essence from the System when they first awakened, granting them powerful Inherent Skills that allowed them to lead the hunters forward and save many more lives when the apocalypse first began

With the advent of [Skill Combination], their lead from other hunters will continue to get wider as they start combining many of their skills to produce higher ranked ones. The reality of them combining several rank A skills to become A+, and then spend a few weeks to raise those skills up to the required proficiency in order to produce a rank S skill wasn't too far off. I wasn't sure whether hunters holding multiple rank A+ skill could fully match someone with 1 or two rank S skills, but time would tell as things progress

This was something I confirmed with the system, the combination of two "+" skills would almost always give you a powerful skill of the next rank

These two powerful hunters would continue growing their strength here and prepare for any descents that occur in the future. Their power, as well as many of the veteran hunters all over the world, would surely rise to rank S in the months to come and give them the ability to withstand many of the things coming

They would be leading reformations for both powers to make sure lives are not needlessly lost if anything like the mass dungeon descents occur again in the future.

As for the white haired figure on the remaining room, the System mentioned that I would meet her soon enough.

I flew through the skies using [Flight] and observed the many dots of people congregating in the countries I passed. None of them had any idea of the larger forces in play, or where they would be a few months from now

They all felt the momentary peace and calmness that was settling right now while mourning for the many that lost their lives.

After I passed a few countries and continued my reflections, I casted [Summon Virulent Abomination] and got on top of the terrifying beast that was much faster than me. A green streak passed across the clear skies, crossing the border between the two nations

Chapter 67 - Maybes

I made it back to the Empire after another six hours of flying at high speeds atop the Virulent Abomination.

On the way here, I had learned the 5 rank A skill books I gained from [Babadook's Layer]. The five of them were **[Earth Armor]**, **[Recorder]**, **[Permafrost]**, **[Combusting Spears]**, and **[Language Comprehension]**.

Out of all of these, the one I found most interesting was [Recorder], which allowed me to replay anything I saw with my eyes while activated. I could of course keep it active at all times, which meant I could rewatch everything like a film if I chose to do so. I was still finding ways that I could use this skill effectively

I also combined more skills that had high compatibility, putting together the rank B skills [Cold Fire] and [Greater Cold Penetration] to bring out **[B+ Boreal Penetration]**. The fire element rank B skills [Greater Flame Penetration] and [Burning Soul] also combined to bring out **[B+ Blazing Penetration]**.

A few of my rank A skills were nearing 100 proficiency, so I couldn't try fusing any of them yet. I already had a few ideas in mind for when they met the requirements.

My thoughts came to a stop as I flew towards Star City's military sector, where I was met with rows of soldiers and hunters giving me praise. Communications had long since spread from the United Federation, with the allied countries there praising the Empire for the aid and sending forth their top hunter to help

Relations between the two forces were turning for the better after they realized just how deadly their common enemy can be, as well as the strength I showed. There would be more cooperation between the two nations moving forward, and less of the political attacks and spread of propaganda that many of us had been accustomed to

Peace in the world was in no way achieved, but steps were being taken to try and build it. Humans always found new ways to be selfish and stupid, so who knows where we'll be a few months from now

I tried to disburse the regiment of hunters who definitely had better things to be doing as I was led into an old office that gave me nostalgia. It wasn't the rugged man with an impassive expression in it, but a woman with a military uniform going through stacks of papers

The person in front of me was naturally Elizabeth, who was trying to honor the memory of her friend and manage the logistics of Star City while still acting as an active hunter. Much of her time was now stretched between office work and dungeon diving, giving no time for anything else

She wore large round glasses that she pushed up when I walked in and a huge smile bloomed from her face.

The next few minutes were spent talking about the events in the United Federation and all intricacies that went with it. She also let me know how my presence was requested at the Empire's capital so that I could be properly rewarded

When we got to this point, I thought about the stage I currently stood at and realized there wasn't really anything that I wanted or needed that the hunters here could provide. My only goal currently was to let them know that I would be disappearing, with only a few selected higher ups knowing that I was heading into the enemy's den

I had already told this to Kazuhiko before leaving, and I left the decision of who he would tell in the United Federation in his hands. My secrets were too grand to share with everyone else, so I used the same excuse I told Kazuhiko to Elizabeth- I had found a way to use the [Plane Crystal] that comes out from destroyed dungeons to go where they came from

That I had grown powerful enough to try and disrupt the enemy's plans on their own turf. When I first told Kazuhiko this, he had stared at me silently for more than five minutes before he nodded with an unreadable expression

The hunters of this world were no doubt about to become explosively more powerful, but they weren't at the level of withstanding the enemies I would be facing. The System wanted to conduct a covert take over, where I would rise to power in that world as a native, and not as an invader

A similar difficult to read expression appeared on Elizabeth's face after I finished talking, and she looked at me hesitantly, as if she wanted to bring herself to say something but couldn't

I looked at this woman that I hadn't spent too much time with to really get to know her and thought about things that could have been if events were playing out differently. Maybe there was a possibility of something to grow and be nurtured under different circumstances...but not now

I quickly changed the subject before that hesitation of hers turned into something else, and we wistfully moved on to other matters

Over the next few days, many things occurred as I travelled around the Empire and lent a hand where it was needed. If dungeons needed to be destroyed, I would be there to do it much quicker than the groups of hunters that were required to do it.

Something of interest to note was me finally getting a rank A skill that was a bit stronger in its usefulness when compared to [Dark Assassin]. It was a rank A skill called **[Obscure]** that covered my body with a dark smoke which quickly turned me transparent.

I actively looked for more covert skills of rank A and even B so that I would be able to produce compatible skills to quickly bring out a powerful rank S hiding skill.

When the time was ripe, I visited the capital of the Empire where I was received by a hunter that I had only seen on TV a couple of times. Steel Mikhail was standing like a sharp spear in the large hall I was brought into

"You are really going to jump into the enemy's den?"

These were the first words I heard from the man that seemed to give off a strong sense of strength and righteousness.

He was among the few higher ups that would know that I would be disappearing soon. He was one of the defenders of the world that the System chose. With his vast amount of time active as a rank A hunter, I wouldn't be surprised if he already held multiple rank A skills that had reached 100 proficiency and had high compatibility that were already fused, boosting his power by a large amount

When I nodded to his question, he spent a few seconds looking at me before he spoke again.

"We will be placing our hopes on you for the future then. I want to thank you in advance."

The future, huh. I thought about the things to come as I spent some time talking with Mikhail. The guy was very straightforward, asking me what information I had on the enemies we were facing. The extent of my strength was known, with my power suppressing beasts that hunters at this stage had trouble dealing with, so he didn't question my confidence when I discussed my goal of disrupting the enemy's power in the world they were in

I gave out the basic information without delving too deep to even get near my secrets, spending a significant time talking to him before he was content. I didn't want to frolic around with too many

people in the Empire as there were much bigger things I had to think about, so I disregarded most of the other requests of officials who wanted to meet me and prepared to move out to the location specified by the System. The time was quickly approaching.

Chapter 68 - Entrance

In that serene village of less than a hundred people, the white haired girl with glistening blue eyes was doing her daily routine. Currently, she was combining a white flour mix and milk in preparation of a cake for one the kids' birthdays

She was humming a tune as she moved back and forth, her hair sparkling in the bright sunlight that passed through the windows. She was absorbed in her work as she abruptly looked up and felt something, standing up and cleaning herself up before she moved out of the small house

She smiled at the kids that were already running about early in the morning and the old ladies that were rocking on their chairs. She made her way from the collection of houses in the small village and neared the blue transparent barrier that was surrounding it

With a movement of her hand, the blue barrier opened up a wide area, and a dark haired man with a calm expression could be seen standing outside.

I finished all my preparations and goodbyes in the Empire, and I soon arrived at the specified coordinates given by the System. It wasn't like I was leaving this place forever, so I didn't feel a huge sense of loss as I knew I would be coming back

As for why I came to this specific location, it was because this was one of the most important places on this planet with a congregation of essence where a transfer to another world could be done most efficiently

I twirled the [Plane Crystal]s I had in hand as I flew down towards an empty clearing that only seemed to hold trees. There was a specific way these crystals could be used, so no matter how hunters played around with them, they wouldn't find any results

From the words of the System, specific regulation of essence was required to send anything across worlds, and the people on this planet were nowhere close to having that level of control to allow them to do this without the help of something else

Beings that were born in larger worlds that had more experience with mana had much better ways to utilize it, with them requiring only a large amount of essence to be expanded before they sent down hundreds of thousands of beasts across worlds

I reached the ground of the forest clearing and waited a few seconds before a wondrous sight opened itself in front of me. A few feet away, I saw the appearance and dissolution of a transparent dome as a small pathway opened up, showing the figure of one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen

Glowing white hair and striking blue eyes, the figure sweetly smiled at me and said

"Come in!"

I shook myself and walked through the pathways as the dome began to close, following behind the figure that was skipping towards the center of what seemed like a village. Small houses that you would see in olden times were widespread, with plots of land growing a multitude of crops and a few barns present here and there

My entrance was garnering attention from the people in this village, but the moment they saw the girl walking with me, their apprehensions seemed to have faded and they went back to their work

I followed the figure of the girl while looking curiously around this new place that seemed like a mini paradise that would forever remain untainted. We arrived at a small house that we went into, and passed the simple rooms while heading out to a small courtyard behind the house

The place seemed to emanate peace as the girl sat herself down on the green grass in the courtyard and looked towards me.

"Big brother, do you have everything prepared?"

I nodded at this girl as I thought about all the foods and essentials I had packed into my rings after I reduced the number of skill books in it. I had learned so many skills that my panel was a pain to look at. I only chose to learn lower ranking skills that I could keep active at all times to build up the proficiency, as too much time would have to be put in to bring them up

The goal was to combine these many lower ranking skills and slowly advance them to higher grades until I had many high ranking skills that were compatible to work with. A few of my rank A skills were only a few points from reaching 100 as it took a longer period of time for higher ranking skills to rise in proficiency. I was excited to combine some of them when the time came

I pulled out one of the [Plane Crystal]s I held and transferred it to the girl while asking

"Who are you?"

She smiled sweetly as she twirled with the crystal in her hands and replied

"You can call me Sophia. I am...a sort of a Guide I guess?"

Laughter came out of her fair lips as she hesitatingly said this. She was one of the figures I saw in the attached rooms that were present when I talked to the planetary core. She had her own part to play in this, the same as Mikhail and Kazuhiko. I had my own, much important part that would start right now.

I nodded to the girl as the crystal in her hands shone a blinding blue light. I couldn't activate it no matter how much I tried before, but a simple touch from her had done something to it.

"Big brother, are you ready?"

I rose up while looking at the surroundings of the courtyard and the blue skies all around us. I enjoyed the surroundings around me as I could feel my heartbeat increasing as the time neared. I nodded at the girl whose body began shining blue just like the crystal in her hands

The blue light expanded and became a square box as it covered the area I was standing on and became brighter. I could feel transparent lines of energy wrapping around me as the light became more and more condensed.

After it wrapped all around me, a blue beam that seemed to reach the ends of the sky shot out, and I...disappeared.

The white haired girl watched the energy settling down as a wide square crystal materialized near her at a high speed. She grabbed the crystal the moment it finished forming and took it with her into the small house

She placed it on top of the table as she looked at the complex lines of data that began showing. Her crystal blue eyes changed to become blank for a few seconds as a blank voice escaped her lips

[Just like they brought the apocalypse to us, rain down decimation and destruction upon them.]

There was no one to reply or hear this voice, and the girl's eyes quickly changed to become clear blue again. She kept her attention on the square crystal as she washed her hands and continued to mix the milk into the floury mix, a sweet smile settling back on her face as she hummed back and forth

Chapter 69 - A dungeon appears on a snowy field

I couldn't really describe the weird feeling I was currently experiencing as I travelled with dense blue energy all around me. My vision was fully obscured as this process continued

I didn't know how much time had passed before I felt a change, and then an impact occurred.

BOOM!

It felt as if I had made a landing as my vision cleared and I found myself on a grassy clearing with walls all around me. Information came into my head as an image built itself in my mind and I realized where I was

I was on the only floor of a rank S dungeon that had appeared on a snowy plain. My eye sight stretched out as I saw the hazy appearance of a dungeon monolith that was shining a bright red, showing an imminent dungeon break would be occurring at any moment

A significant amount of energy was used for my descent that would allow for me to break out of the dungeon with the quickest time possible without allowing any possible intrusions from others

In the dungeon floor, It felt like I was looking down at the figure that seemed to be my body, but at the same time it wasn't. This was my origin, and if people actually neared and entered the dungeon, it would be what they fought against.

If my origin lost, a significant amount of essence would be lost with it and energy would be used to reconstruct it. If it faced destruction multiple times in short time span, the in flow of energy would not be able to keep up and my origin would face complete destruction, along with me

None of that would be happening though, as the blinking red light of the monolith intensified, and a dungeon break occurred. I had finally arrived in the Beast World.

BOOM!

The dungeon break caused an entirely new feeling to appear as I felt my vision returning to normal and I began to feel the slight cold winds around me.

I opened my eyes to a vast plain of white snow, with very few vegetation around me. Only large white trees could be seen around me as I felt the air of this world for the first time

The first noticeable change that I noticed was the abundance of essence that could be felt in the air. The energy seemed palpable as I stretched my hands out and felt everything around me

The air on this cold and windy night felt like the most refreshing breeze I had ever had the chance of taking in, making me enjoy the feeling for a few seconds. I reveled in this feeling as I casted [Flight] and rose into the air

The winds became more furious the higher I went as I began to observe the fantastical sight around me.

In the skies not too far away, something I never thought I would be seeing in my lifetime could be seen. A huge landmass was somehow floating in the sky, the size of it no less than the cities I had become used to seeing while flying over the skies of the Blessed Empire. I didn't know how the landmass remained so securely in the skies as it towered above the ground magnificently.

I activated all of my stealth skills and used [Eagle Eyes] to further check these unbelievable sights I was seeing. Flying closer and closer to the landmass, I had to come to a stop far from it as the closer I neared, I began to feel dangerous auras on the landmass that were in no way less powerful than the strongest beings I had faced so far

Staying more than a mile away and using [Eagle Eyes], I was able to see the outline of the huge landmass that took my breath away. I could only see a tiny bit of the land, which held white trees larger than me by more than ten times, and droves of white furred beasts running around without any reservations

I observed the piece of land in front of me for a few more minutes before I moved away and flew even higher to get a better look of everything around me. The higher I flew, the more dangerous and cold the winds became, nearly making me feel the cold even with the many defensive skills and attributes that have already reached rank 5

Once I rose at a high enough distance, I looked beneath me as I saw even more of those landmasses that seemed to be floating in the skies. Far off in the distance, there was a large collection of these land masses near one another, with lines of connections apparent among them

On these land masses could be seen twinklings of light, as the land that was actually on the ground beneath them held grand buildings that were surrounded by an expansive walled fortress.

The fortress was a work of art as it sn.a.k.e.d around the huge mountain these buildings were in. Three large mountain peaks surrounded the large kingdom on the ground as more than four expansive land masses floated in the periphery around it

The sheer size of the place took my breath away as I could only observe a portion of it. This was the location that the System said I would begin my journey on. This was the only place where humans held supremacy in this world, this was the Frozen Kingdom.

I moved across the snowy skies filled with sharp winds as I continued to fly even lower and neared one of the doors of the huge walled entrances of the fortified kingdom

I didn't come too close before I could feel movement from the top of the wall. Multiple white winged beasts rose up and met me in the skies. On top of them, figures wearing glistening white armors stood with sharp weapons pointing towards me

"HOLD!"

There were multiple figures on each of the winged beasts, with many of them letting out power similar to rank A or lower, and I could feel at least three that seemed to be rank S. I did as they asked stopped abruptly in the air as I expected this type of welcome

I had spent too much time lectured by the System on the few sparse memories it obtained from the absorbed beasts, and knew how to act when I approached any of the kingdoms in this world

I remained quiet as we all floated in the skies, the humans on the winged beasts checking me out closely as the seconds passed. A thorough evaluation followed in the next few minutes with a few lights landing on my body. Once they confirmed my figure and used specific skills that most likely checked to see if I had any semblance of an aura of a dangerous demon or beast, they lowered the sharp spears they were pointing towards me. A snort was heard from the lead guard

"Mercenaries these days think they can come and go as they please because of their increasing demand."

The leader was speaking with a disdainful expression as he looked towards me, motioning for the rest of the guards on the winged beasts to fly down. This was the environment I was betting on. Due to increased tensions and conflicts, powerful beings acting as mercenaries were more active than ever in this world. Kingdoms continued to look for powerful forces to reinforce their safety. I remained quiet and the guard spoke once more

"Haven't seen you pass by here before so I'm assuming you're a new recruit. Use this badge to confirm your identity when you leave in and out again."

A red badge which had the face of a stern man appeared on the guard's hands and flew towards me.

"Be sure to not cause any trouble, or we won't hesitate to take you down."

His spear was sheathed as I nodded at his words, and at his signal, followed the winged beast he was on to fly over the huge fortress, and step into the Frozen Kingdom for the first time

Chapter 70 - Covert Beginnings

Passing over the tall walls, we went down towards the road that led to the buildings that shined with lights further in. The guards warned me once again before telling me not to break even more rules like flying over the lands. Only people given specific recognition could do this and go from one place to another

If you didn't have that recognition, then even if you were allowed permission to enter the four land masses floating in the sky that people in higher positions resided in, you would have to walk on the long bridges leading towards them

I watched the environment around me as I walked further in, noticing many guards patrolling at every point. My power that only seemed to give off the vibes of rank S did not raise any eyebrows, as there were many guards at rank A and the captains leading them seemed to be rank S

I soon reached the buildings where even this late at night, there was a bustle of activities going on. The buildings were built in a medieval style, looking like grand ancient architecture that shone with the balls of light that were lined up across the streets

I could see various pubs and restaurants, with a few larger buildings that seemed like hotels apparent at every corner. The people walking around looked no different than the humans I have known all my life.

Some had fair complexions and others had dark complexions. Hair colors of all sorts were abundant though, as I had seen a few people sporting radiant red hair, some blue, and others extremely dark shining hair. There were even a few mixtures of humans and beasts, where some people were walking around with tails or others had ears or other facial characteristics of beasts. I marveled at the sight of all these new faces

Many of the people I met seemed to be rank F or E awakened individuals as they let off weak levels of power while the large percentage remained as normal humans. But the number of people that would be considered awakened definitely exceeded the numbers you would commonly see in the Empire or United Federation

I continued walking around and taking in the new sights as I went further in. At the center of this entrance town was a building standing out amongst the many that surrounded it. It had a striking set of words plastered at the front, it was [Mercenary's Hideout]

It seemed like I had found the place to begin my journey in this world as I opened the wide doors into the boisterously loud building. It was a busy scene as people moved in and out

There were seats and tables in one section where people were eating and conversing, and there was another section that looked like a place where official business took place with workers standing behind a counter

The conversations were fairly interesting as I listened in while observing everything around me

"Hey hey hey, how can you drink so comfortably when demons are building their forces to come kill all of us huh?!"

"Bah you worry too much! The Frozen Kingdom has never fallen in the millenium of its creation, you think some ugly mugs would swoop down and do it in a few years?"

"Ugly mugs? You obviously haven't fought against them before, they're relentless and fight with everything they have. Trash like you wouldn't stand a chance!"

A few drunks were trading insults back and forth at the state of affairs, talking about heavy topic with a light hearted tone. From the information I received from the System, the demons they mentioned were the same ones that targeted my world. They were able to set a foothold in the Beast World and are now expanding their forces to conquer every corner of the world

The Frozen Kingdom was one of the remaining kingdoms that stood strong against them. I had found out the identity of the enemies that caused a tremendous amount of pain and death, and I was ready to begin rising up in this world by taking everything I could

So how would I go about it? Nearly infinite mana to play with, but currently only at rank S, and only holding a few rank S skills at that. I haven't even been able to max my attributes while absorbing rank S cores.

From the possible pathways discussed with the System, becoming a mercenary in this world was the fastest way to do this. Mercenaries commissioned by the kingdoms took the role of defending it in the front lines whenever rogue beasts or demons threatened them, and were routinely tasked with forming groups and reducing the size of the beasts populating Nests.

An example of a Nest was one the large landmasses floating in the air that I had seen while flying over here. Nests were a place where large amounts of essence congregated, giving birth to a multitude of beasts continuously

Were these nests left alone, mindless beasts would overflow and eventually a large amount can rise up to threaten the safety of the surrounding Kingdoms.

From piecing together the memories of the three fairly knowledgeable rank S beasts that I took down which the System absorbed half of their essence, the Frozen Kingdom currently had three Nests in its nearby surroundings that were monitored and routinely cleared if needed. I could only imagine the beasts congregating in those nest, as even while observing one more than a mile away, I could already feel powerful presences that I hadn't come across before

They posed high levels of danger, but to me, they were also huge opportunities to rapidly gain more rank A and S skillbooks, as well as skills of the next rank. They were one of the main ways I would be increasing my power rapidly before I found a way to grow my influence and work to limit the expansion of the demon forces until I can move on to the next stage

But currently, I was in a different world that had an entirely different way of living, with no money for anything.

I looked through the many cores I had farmed the few days that I spent in the Blessed Empire before coming over here. The cores that condensed from the beasts that hunters killed under the system of strength that the planetary core instituted were a broken down collection of essences that were more easily absorbable by the newly awakening hunters

Beasts normally had their own essence cores in their bodies, but when killed by the hunters with the system these essence cores would be extracted and changed to smaller cores if they were normal beasts, or into either cores and skill books or items if they were powerful beasts considered as a BOSS or TITAN

The inhabitants of this world were all born differently, with some like the dragons receiving innate skills and energy from its powerful bloodline, or humans training for years taking in the essence of the world while also killing and absorbing the cores of beasts and honing their usage of essence to create deadly and destructive ways of using their energy. People and beastfolk like these usually took the role of mercenaries, adventures, or as soldiers that defended their respective kingdoms.

But the fact that cores were widespread and used universally meant that I had the currency of this world, albeit it was broken down into small portions.

I approached one of the desks that held a stern woman with a business demeanor and pulled out a few cores to exchange for the common currency as the gears in my mind continued to churn while absorbing and learning everything about this new world.