

New Eden 791

Chapter 791 Speeding Through The Plains Of James Bay

His skin had turned a dark shade of red, with his clothes suddenly a little tighter on him. Horns rose over his head, a foot high, a ball of black fire hovering right over it.

His body had also grown a couple of inches taller, his legs elongating, as did his arms and feet, making him look an entire size bigger.

Alex could feel the teeth in his mouth had all gone sharp, with canines almost peeking out from the corner of his lips.

His vision had also changed as the world's colours warped into a thermal filter, ranging from shades of blue to shades of light orange.

Spinning on himself, very little orange appeared in his eyes, aside from the trees and critters that populated the northern lands.

This vision was strange to him, and it took a moment for him to get used to it.

"Is this how he always sees? This is like this old movie, where an alien hunts down humans with his super-advanced suit..."

But he couldn't sit around and gawk for too long, either.

He had quite the distance to cover, and the night was already close, given how far north he was.

He had wasted a lot of precious time finding the fauna agent's cabin, and then the rest of his day was also wasted talking, eating, and driving to the village.

He estimated he regained consciousness around ten in the morning, and it was now close to two in the afternoon.

With the sun starting to lower, he wouldn't have much time before sundown.

He needed to get moving.

Lowering his stance, Alex dashed forward.

The dirt kicked up as he did; the ground digging a few inches, the power in his legs too much to handle for the forest ground.

His acceleration was instantaneous, and he ran faster than anyone should. But he wasn't too estranged to the feeling, as he could still run faster in New Eden.

He did have a few trips and close calls, as he was not used to the thermal vision. When the temperature reached the lows that it did up north of Quebec, everything aside from living things turned blue.

But he quickly got over this issue.

Alexander understood how they managed to reach so far in so little time.

He was running at what he estimated to be at least sixty kilometres an hour and knew he could go faster. He wasn't sure how fast and wasn't inclined to try it out in a forest, but fast enough to make record time home.

But the occasion to try it out soon came to him.

About an hour into running, Alex reached an impasse on his travels as a mountain range rose before him and a river closed in on his left.

He wasn't too keen on climbing the ridges, as it would slow him down considerably, but looking across the river, he could see a stretch of flatlands between two other mountain ridges.

The river wasn't too wide, with plenty of small islands in its center, and Alexander knew he could make the jump at the speed he was going.

Without slowing down his gait, Alex hooked left, reaching as close as a foot away from the river bank, before jumping with all his strength. He vaulted through the air, reaching thirty feet up and leaping across the first stretch of water.

He soared through the air for a few hundred feet, landing with both feet in the water, but on solid ground, before hopping a few meters more to be on the island, resuming running and repeating the process.

The second jump was much shorter and barely inconvenienced him as he resumed running.

Following the river bank for a few kilometres, he finally reached the flatlands he had seen in the distance and grinned.

Alexander lowered his center of gravity again, pushing his legs to the maximum and going into a sprint.

The wind across his face accelerated as he picked up speed, and dust kicked up behind him.

Most of the flatlands he ran across for the next two hours were covered with pebbles and patches of tenacious, wild grass. There was also the occasional small pond, which came from the melting snow and different elevations of the ground.

He couldn't maintain a sprinting speed for more than fifteen minutes, which was already more than a human should be capable of, but it helped him cover much ground.

He estimated he reached over a hundred kilometres an hour at sprinting speed.

It might be slow compared to cars of modern times, but no one would dare call him slow.

After all, no man in history had ever run this fast.

Then again, could he still be considered a man?

Alex decided he should stop soon as the sun reached its lowest point. There wasn't much cover to be found where he was, nor any sign of civilization nearby, but he needed to rest.

A fortunate turn of his bodily changes was that the demon body had no issues with the surrounding cold. He wasn't sure if it was because of all the running, but his blood felt like it was boiling inside his veins.

This meant he wasn't in any danger of catching a cold or freezing to death during his high-speed escapade.

But that wouldn't be the same for the night.

Finding a little outcropping of rocks that formed a natural barrier against the plain's winds, Alex stopped there. This little circle would at least keep a part of his heat contained around him.

There was nothing to make a fire out of, but that wouldn't matter.

In the center of his makeshift shelter, Alex used his mana to light a magical fire to keep himself warm as he contemplated the sunset.

When the sun had gone down completely and the stars started lighting the night sky, Alex sighed at the view.

"I wish the stars were this visible in the city. I'll never get tired of this sky..."

Memories of him and Kary watching the starry skies of New Eden, sitting on a high branch of the Tree Palace, came to his mind, making him smile.

He realized during the day that his thoughts rarely went toward her as a demon. But as soon as he returned to his human form, images of her and her lovely smile flooded his mind.

He missed her.

"I'll be home by tomorrow afternoon. I hope she hasn't gone back to her house..."

He fell asleep thinking about what to tell her when he finally met her again after a month of being AWOL.

Chapter 792 Monster In The Bay

In the middle of the night, while Alexander was sleeping tightly, his mana constantly feeding the small fire beside him, a slight buzzing sound started echoing.

It gradually grew louder, as a pair of lights appeared in the sky.

"Kuujjuaq Tower, this is Cessna two-nine-two. Calling in to inquire about a light in the bay, over," the small aircraft pilot called out.

He was flying over the wild expanse, where no one should be around, and had caught a flicker of light in the middle of the mostly empty James Bay. Usually, when one saw a light, they would inquire if there was a lost plane, or person, a possible land to rescue.

"Cessna two-nine-two, this is Kuujjuaq Tower. There are no reports of a missing plane or person. Are you sure it's not just your lights reflecting on a pond? Over," the tower controller called back.

The pilot clicked his tongue loudly before pressing the comms again.

"Kuujjuaq Tower, this is Cessna two-nine-two. Negative. I have been flying this path for five years; I would recognize a reflection from a fire. This is a fire. Requesting permission to land and investigate. Over."

Usually, the pilots wouldn't overthink about this. But September was rolling around, and the rain had been pretty scarce in the last two months.

The grass was extremely dry in the cold weather, and even the smallest of uncontrolled fires could cause a plain fire. This was not something anyone would want.

The control tower flagged him for landing, and when he did, the flicker of flames on the ground vanished.

"What the..." the pilot said, looking through his side window.

As he circled around, trying to see if it was maybe a rock hiding the flame from him, a loud crash echoed, and the sound of metal shearing resounded.

Looking in front of him, the pilot realized what had made that sound.

His engine was gone. Something had torn away the entire front of his plane, ripped it off.

With no engine and already not flying fast, since he was looking at something, the airplane quickly started losing speed and dropping.

Smacking the comms button again, the pilot shouted out in panic.

"Mayday! Mayday! Cessna two-nine-two engine loss! Crashing into the Bay! Mayday! Mayday!"

He didn't have much more time and never heard if there was a reply as his plane crashed into the ground, gouging out a large swath of dirt and stone before coming to a stop.

His fuel tank ruptured, spreading its contents all over the rocky ground, but luckily for him, there was no more engine to spark a flame. He was safe, for now.

The problem was that he was hundreds of kilometres away from any other village, and he was now wounded.

Looking down at his abdomen, the pilot cursed.

"Mm! Fuck!"

As the plane had smacked into the ground, now that the entire front part of it was missing, the cockpit had taken the brunt of the hit. This had caused one of the transversal bars to tear and pry, and it was now jammed into his stomach.

Luckily for him, there was almost no blood, and what little there was, it was clear. This meant he hadn't hit a vital organ.

But his situation was not good.

"What the fuck hit my plane? It was clear skies, I swear..."

As he started looking around to see if any of his tools were nearby to help extricate himself from the wreck, a rumbling growl echoed near him, freezing his blood over.

Turning his head back to the front slowly, he saw something that would cause him nightmares for the rest of his life, however short this would turn out to be.

Standing before the plane, with horns a foot high, a body already reaching over six feet high without them, and bat-like wings stretching out its back, a tall humanoid figure was looking at him.

The moon was barely lighting up the plains, as it was close to a new moon, but it still gave enough light to see the silhouette.

However, one thing was glowing brightly.

The red irises of the thing.

They looked at him with hunger.

Taking slow, measured steps toward the plane, the growl echoed again.

The pilot looked at the thing, fear gripping his heart.

He was still inside his cockpit, which should protect him, but with how long the limbs on this thing seemed to be, he knew it would still reach him. It could tear him to pieces, anyway.

As the thing reached the plane, it gripped the front of the aircraft and pulled.

With another resounding screech, the side of the cockpit ripped open, like tearing tin foil, exposing the scared pilot.

"What in the fuck?!" the man exclaimed, realizing it was useless to stay calm anymore.

With how easily this thing had opened his aircraft, he could only assume that it was also responsible for ripping his engine away.

And now, it was going to eat him.

"Stay back!" the man shouted, hoping the loud voice would scare the thing away.

But who was he kidding?

Stepping closer again, the thing straight out of Edgar Allan Poe's nightmares looked him dead in the eye as it licked its lips.

It plunged one finger next to the transversal bar, making the pilot scream in pain.

Pulling the finger back, it licked the blood off of it, grinning in satisfaction.

"God almighty, if you hear me, now would be the time for a miracle! Banish this hellspawn so that I may live another day!" he screamed, tears rolling off the side of his face.

A guttural laugh left the creature's mouth.

"Your god can't hear you," it whispered with its reverberating voice as it closed its face with the pilots.

"Your god has never cared anyway," it added before laughing maniacally.

"Rhakhakhakha! It's so easy to control now that he is getting used to using my body! How liberating!"

The pilot pissed himself, thinking this was it. His life was over.

As the creature suddenly jerked forward, maw open, aimed at his throat, the pilot whimpered.

Then silence followed.

Chapter 793 Rocky Awakening

Waiting for his death to come, the pilot closed his eyes and shook in fear. But death never came.

No pain, no blood, no cracking bones. Nothing.

Opening one eye tentatively, he realized the creature was still right before him, maw wide open, but something wasn't right.

It was shaking in place, almost like it couldn't go further.

One of its eyes had gone from pitch black with a vivid red iris to a regular white eye, but with a bright golden iris.

"NO!" another trilling voice left its mouth, this one more high-pitched.

The creature jumped back, suddenly grabbing its head and screeching.

The pilot felt something pull in his chest, like a part of him was being torn away. It hurt like crazy; the pain sending him into shock and passing out.

The creature shrieked several times before its head snapped away from the plane.

In its almost all-blue vision, another red spot had appeared.

Far away in the distance, a pack of something had started moving, most likely reacting to his shrieking, and they were exuding a lot of heat.

Dashing forward without a second thought, the creature reached the pack of unsuspecting beasts in mere seconds. And the next second, one of them fell, its head falling further away.

Ripping and snapping echoed as the corpse of the animal shook.

The following day, Alex woke up feeling mentally rested, but his body ached for some reason.

Feeling the wind on his face, he frowned as he opened his eyes.

"Where is that wind coming from?" he wondered as he sat up.

That was when he noticed the massive brown corpse next to him. Or rather, what was left of it.

Looking down at his hand, he saw blood on them, as well as all over him. He could even feel the sticky feeling of it drying on his face.

"What in God's name happened here?!" he exclaimed.

He started looking around, noticing he was no longer in his little stone shelter, and nothing was around him besides this corpse.

By the size of it, as well as the fur, he surmised it was a Musk Ox. But it got there, or even how he got there, he had no idea.

'Ahem,' Geminae's voice echoed in his head.

Stopping his visual scan, Alex immediately plunged inward into the white room that was his soul.

As he reopened his eyes, he saw Geminae standing in front of the orb and its prison, and next to him, a tied-up imp.

"What the fuck happened?" Alex growled.

"We had a little... incident," Geminae replied.

"Rhakhakhakha! That'll teach you, you fucking human! Use my body, and you make it easier for me!" the imp shouted as it laughed loudly.

Geminae punched it in the head, silencing it.

"Quiet, you despicable thing! You keep dirtying our hands! If you were expendable, I would have already killed you!"

Alex looked at them, and suddenly, memories flashed in his mind.

They weren't his, but they were as clear as day, well, as night in infrared, and from a first-person point of view.

That's how he knew what happened.

Geminae saw him freeze for a moment and understood as well.

"I see the memories have caught up. Good. It'll make my job explaining easier."

But before he could place another word, Alex was already charging at the imp.

"You fucking abomination! What did you do to that man?! Did you kill him?! Did you put more blood on my hands?!"

He lunged at the tied imp and started kicking and punching it in a fit of rage.

Geminae had to push him away with magic to keep him from killing the darned demon, lest he kill all three of them in the process.

"Calm yourself, Alexander! If you kill him, you kill us as well!" Geminae rebuked.

Alex growled at the angel-looking replica of himself before spitting at the imp.

"I swear to all that is holy and unholy. I will find a way to separate us, and when I do, I will murder you. But not after torturing you for an extremely long time in ways even a demon like you would find unimaginable," he growled.

The imp swallowed nervously; he could tell it wasn't an empty threat.

But Geminae raised his hand.

"Threaten him later. The man isn't dead. But he will be if we don't move fast," he said, looking at Alex resolutely.

Alex's head snapped toward him, a sliver of hope in his eyes.

"Where is he?" he asked.

"About a mile east of here. He needs first aid. He had something in his abdomen and was bleeding. We might need to burn up his wound so he doesn't bleed out before a rescue team gets to him."

Alex nodded his head, leaving the soul space immediately.

As he refocused on his surroundings, Alex looked at the sky. It was a cloudy day, and finding the sun wasn't easy.

But he still managed and oriented himself east.

Focusing on his back, he forced out Geminae's wings and took off toward the plane crash.

He reached it in seconds, flying blazingly fast, and landed next to it.

In the aircraft, he saw the man whose face was deathly pale. Touching his neck to feel his pulse, he felt a weak response.

'Good. He isn't dead,' he thought.

But he was in terrible shape.

There was still a metal railing pierced through his stomach, and blood pooled around it. And by the amount, there wasn't much left inside the man.

Alex did the first thing he could think of and lit his hands on fire.

Geminae's body was more resilient than a human's, so the flames barely heated his hands up. This allowed him to grab the metal railing and super-heat it, causing the wound to sizzle and fume a couple of seconds before he let go.

'That should at least cauterize it...' he thought.

But he was still left with the issue of him being practically on death's door.

With the cold of the open bay and the lack of blood in his veins, if blood loss didn't claim his life, hypothermia would.

"Geminae. Tell me you can help him live," Alex said, looking slightly panicked.

After a moment of silence, Geminae replied.

'Let me control your body. I can help, but I can only do it if I'm in full control.'

Alex froze in place.

"Excuse me?"

Chapter 794 Saved By An Angel

Alex wasn't just reluctant to let the divine spawn control his body. He was in fear of the result.

They were already in this mess because the demon part of him took control. What would happen if Geminae did?

Would he start messing with humans because they were, as he said, unworthy of living?

Geminae could hear his thought process and understood it.

After all, he had, not so long ago, threatened to consume the man and end life for humans, as they were not worthy of this gift Psyche had given them.

'Listen, Alexander. I know how you feel. But I will only control the body. I won't cut you off from your senses; you can take control whenever you wish. But I need to do this if you want me to save him. Can you trust me?'

"Hell nah!" Alex exclaimed in response.

"You guys have been the worst thing to happen to me in all my life. And that is saying a lot, considering the shit life I had!"

Geminae felt irritation rise in him.

'This is not the time to blame us for your misfortune. A life is at stake. Do you want to save him or not? Because he doesn't have much longer. I can feel him slip already.'

Alex looked at the man and saw that the skin was getting paler.

Touching his neck again, he no longer felt a pulse.

"Shit, he went into cardiac arrest!" he cursed.

'If you don't let me in control, he will be gone forever. Let me help. Trust me this just this once.'

Alex gritted his teeth.

He was reluctant to trust anything from either of those entities' mouths. But he couldn't let the man die.

Not if he could have helped.

"Fine, grab the wheel! But I'm watching! Do anything other than helping him, and I'm yanking you out of control. And then, you'll never be allowed a remote place near my mind again. Understood?"

Geminae didn't even deign to respond as he forced his presence to grow inside Alexander's body.

Immediately, Alex's irises turned a bright golden colour, and heat radiated off of him.

Losing no time, Geminae put both his hands over the man's heart, and with a few pulses of divine energy, he got the heart beating again.

Next, he looked at the blood pooling on the man's legs and waved his hand at it.

Slowly, the blood pulled out of the clothing and seat and rose back toward the man's stomach wound.

It slid into the wound, which was barely cauterized properly, and went back inside his body. With all the control he could muster, Geminae redirected the blood into the veins, before closing them off magically.

This would buy the man a few hours, but no more.

The blood would resume leaking out of his body as soon as the magic broke.

But Geminae used his massive range of divine detection and felt that another aircraft was already flying toward them.

"Good. He'll get the help he needs."

Turning around, Geminae decided it was better to leave before someone saw him and misconstrued the situation. He knew enough of the human culture, through Alex's memories, to know they would think he was an angel.

That was the last thing Alex needed right now, to become the center of attention. He would tear him a new asshole if that happened.

What he didn't notice was the wounded pilot's eyes flutter open as he turned around. The man first saw a human back with two golden white wings and a heavenly glow on the skin before the angel-like being flew away so fast he immediately lost sight of it.

'An angel saved me...' the man thought, tears falling from his eyes again.

'Thank you, God...' the man prayed.

But his true saviour was already miles away, flying southwest at breakneck speeds.

As soon as they were airborne, Geminae pulled back his mind from the body, letting Alex resume control.

Alex flew in silence for a moment, looking conflicted.

"Thank you," he murmured, the wind taking his words away.

But Geminae had heard them.

'How could I get you to trust me if I let someone die before you after you asked for my help? I am not your enemy. I realize our feelings about humanity differ. But we can still be on the same side...' Geminae said in his mind.

Alex didn't know about that. But he was willing to give him at least a chance.

Meanwhile, the imp made gagging sounds in the corner, still tied up. Since Alex had used up a considerable portion of its power the day before and then forced himself into control during the night, he was too weak to break free.

But that didn't deter him from being an annoyance.

'Urgh! You guys make me hurl! Urgh! So sappy! Urgh!'

Alexander clenched his teeth, trying to ignore the impulse of murdering the damned thing, as he flew toward Montreal.

Geminae, for his part, was happy enough punching him in the head again before sealing his mouth shut with another line of runes.

It would only last as long as the demon was weakened, but hey, if it bought them a few hours of peace, that was fine by him.

Alex knew this way of transportation was a lot more risky since he needed to fly high to avoid being seen. But he also had no way of knowing what else he would cross paths with in the sky.

He wasn't equipped with navigation instruments, being a person and not a plane.

But at least, it was much quicker.

At this speed, he would be home in a few hours, maybe even before lunch.

However, a thought struck him.

'Should I even go home like this? What if I lose control again? Will I attack anyone near me? Will I put Kary in danger? How could I do that to her?'

He realized he needed to know more about his current state before sleeping beside the woman he loved.

Too many unknown factors were at play here. And he couldn't risk losing control again.

Not near his loved ones.

Chapter 795 New Security Measures

This led him to Jack's private hospital instead of his penthouse. Flying above the clouds until he got over Montreal, Alex curved his flight toward the northern shore and landed in the parking lot directly underground after flying into the entrance.

Surprisingly, as he entered, he felt something shatter. Almost like a thin layer of glass had just blocked him and gave out instantly.

'A barrier?' he wondered.

'Nah. It can't be.'

He landed in front of the service elevator and suddenly noticed a red light flashing above the door.

"Hm?"

His head tilted to the side as the wings on his back furled, taking the least space.

"Put your hands in the air where I can see them!" a voice shouted from behind him.

Alex was about to snap around and look at who was yelling at him when he also felt a surge of mana behind him.

"You heard the man! Hands where we can see them!" Another voice chimed in.

This made Alexander pause, as mages weren't common, and this was clearly a spell activation.

"I'm not a threat," Alex calmly replied, raising his hands to the side.

Putting them up would have been useless, as the top of the wings would have hidden them, anyway.

"Turn around slowly. We'll decide if you're a threat," the first voice commanded.

Alex turned toward them as slowly as possible, keeping his hands visible. He had a cocky smile on his face, wondering what idiot thought they could challenge him in a magic-slinging contest, even on this side.

But when his face came into view of the guards, one of them recognized him.

"You?" he asked, confused.

Alex also recognized him and smirked.

In his hands, instead of his usual automatic rifle, the man was holding a naginata, which contained only a faint amount of mana that he hadn't noticed until now.

"You let go of the gun?" Alex asked, taunting him.

The man recognized Alexander's snide comment and understood he was still himself.

"Alright, stand down. He's not an enemy," the merc said, sighing in annoyance.

Alex took this as his signal to lower his arms, and he crossed them over his chest.

The other man beside him grabbed the daggers floating in the air before him and stowed them in their sheaths.

'Telekinesis. Low-level magic, but still nifty,' Alex mused.

"I take it what I shattered coming in was a barrier?" Alex asked, his eyebrow rising.

"Yes. And it'll take us a week to put back in place. Thank you," the merc spat, his tone sarcastic.

"No need. I'll put it right back up. You can have whoever, or whatever, was maintaining it take it from there," Alex said, walking toward the underground parking entrance.

He slapped his hand on the wall next to it and waved his hand to the left, projecting it across the opening.

A golden film flashed in the open space before going transparent. And with this, Alexander spun around, walking back to the elevator.

"There. Done. Now, I need to see the white coats. Something about me changed, and I need to figure out how much."

The merc looked at him with wide eyes.

He had thrown up a barrier like it was nothing when it took their mages, a team of three and a week, to do the same. And by the look of the barrier when it came to life, he wasn't sure their mages could make one as solid...

But even if he hadn't done that, the massive white wings curled behind him would have cued it away.

"I'm not sure you'll fit in the elevator," the man said, pointing behind Alex.

Alex looked confused for a second before realizing what he meant.

"Oh, yes. Pardon me. Let me put those away," Alex replied, shrugging his shoulders.

The wings melted away into his back like they had never been there, and the man shuddered.

He had heard through the branches that the kid might have become some kind of monster.

This was why a barrier was now at the entrance to the parking lot and many others around the compound. This was also why they had been forced to play at least six hours a night in New Eden to develop awakened abilities.

Jack wasn't afraid of Alexander losing to the beast in his body. But he was a cautious man.

It never hurt to be prepared for the worst.

But the mercenary believed they had prepared for nothing.

The kid had passed through the barrier without so much as slowing down. And he conjured it back up like it was nothing.

Plus, the speed at which he flew in was not something any of them could match.

This led to a serious question.

Was there even someone here who could keep him from entering the compound if he had been a monster?

'Maybe them... But would they get here in time?' he wondered, the image of two kids and two adults, two boys and two girls, popping into his head.

Pressing his keycard to the elevator's command panel, the merc kept a wary eye on Alexander.

He didn't fail to notice this. But what could he do?

Even he was afraid of what he might do. Was there a reason to lie to the man and say he didn't bite?

As his patchy memories had proven him, he did indeed bite.

As they climbed aboard the elevator, Alex opened his mouth to speak.

"I would also like you to tell Mr. Gu I am here. And Mr. Boudreau, if you can. They'll know who to call. Can I ask this of you?"

The merc looked at Alex with an incredulous face.

"Kid. Who do you think directs this compound? Mr. Gu knows you're here already. And on the remote chance he didn't, I still have to report to him since you set off our silent alarm."

Alex nodded his head.

'Cautious, as always. They don't disappoint,' Alex thought as he fell silent.

Now, all he had to do was go through testing again. Although, this time would be different.

He refused to leave the facilities as long as he wasn't sure the demon wouldn't claw his way out during his sleep again.

'I'm not letting anyone get in danger because of me again. Never again.'

Chapter 796 Getting Ready For Testing

The elevator took a minute to reach the scientific part of the compound, where the testing was being held, and Alex exited it alone.

"You know where to go, kid. I need to go report."

Alex nodded at him, waving his hand at the merc as the doors closed.

He looked around at the dull white walls and sighed heavily.

"I hate places like these... So sanitized, it feels dead..."

He walked directly toward the testing rooms and met with the doctors.

"Mr. Leduc! What a pleasure to see you again! It's been a while since your last checkup. Has Mr. Boudreau finally cleared you for your next round of testing?"

Alex looked at the man with a questioning gaze. But it made sense that Jack wouldn't tell anyone what was truly going on.

The risk of the new spreading only rose as more people knew.

"Yes. And it'll be a special one, too. I found new powers that I need to test. But I think you will need to revise the security of your testing facilities," Alex replied, deciding to go with it.

The man chuckled, thinking this was a joke.

But his phone rang.

Raising his hand, he apologized to Alex.

"I'm sorry. I need to take this. It's the boss."

Alex waved at him dismissively.

"Yes, Mr. Gu. What can I do for you today?"

"..."

"Yes, Mr. Gu... Are you su—"

"..."

"Yes, sir. Right away, sir."

He hung up the call, looking flummoxed. He glanced at Alexander before taking a step back.

Alex immediately knew what the conversation had been about.

"I'll wait in the containment bay. Get me when the security has been boosted, doctor," Alex said, turning to the next room.

The doctor silently nodded, trailing Alex as he left the room. And as soon as he was gone, he rushed the scientists.

"Get the engineers. We need to triple-layer the bulletproof glass. We also need to get some mages in here. They are to erect a barrier in between the layers to boost the solidity against mana-fueled attacks."

One scientist under him looked at his boss with a perplexed gaze.

"Sir... Why do we need all this? Is something wrong?"

The doctor turned around, looking at him with wide eyes.

"Just do what I tell you to! Hurry!"

His sudden abruptness was out of character, and the scientist stopped asking questions and got to work.

Soon enough, an entire team of twenty people was working away on the testing chamber, making it able to withstand a mini nuclear blast and the equivalent of a mana bomb.

The walls were thickened with modular architecture from the outside; the inside was coated in an extra layer of instant-dry cement; magical barriers were erected.

The team even threw in a powerful force-field generator. Something that was still being tested as a prototype for the military.

All measures were reasonable. Mr. Gu had authorized the whole shebang.

Sitting in Jack's office, at a desk in the corner, Mr. Gu looked at all the construction going on through his left screen in rapid tempo before turning his gaze back to the right screen.

An image of a glass cell in the containment zone was currently shown on this screen. One where Alexander was waiting for the testing facilities to be strengthened.

"He looks calm. Maybe he has it under control, but he wants to know how he can stress that control. But these readings..." he mumbled, grabbing the tablet from his desk.

The tablet showed zero mana readings.

Yet, he knew that was wrong.

Alexander should at least be a C-grade on the scale they had made. A-grade, if he was melded.

However, the readings from the containment cell showed no mana reading at all. This made no sense.

Then, there was also the fact that the signal had frizzed out momentarily the second he entered the cell.

Mr. Gu guessed that he was too powerful to be gauged by their established scale, but he would still get a reading.

The only other alternative, he thought impossible.

"It's a reading tool, not an assessment tool. It can't get overloaded, can it?" he mumbled, scratching his stubbled chin.

The last month had been terribly busy for him. Mr. Boudreau had upped his time within New Eden, and many of the company's responsibilities fell on his shoulders.

This had led him to neglect his upkeep a bit, and a stubble had grown on his face. But he didn't dislike the seniority look it gave him, in the end, and decided to have his barber groom it into a proper goatee.

He was still a ways away from a proper one, though. But it would come.

Returning to the matter at hand, Mr. Gu berated himself.

'How tired am I to drift on stray thoughts? I need rest. Maybe now that the kid is back, Mr. Boudreau will take a break from New Eden for a while...'

For now, though, they needed to test Mr. Leduc. They couldn't even release him until this was done, by fear that he rampaged.

Mr. Gu doubted they could hold him here, but the orders were nonetheless those.

When a person was due for testing, they couldn't leave the compound until the tests were done and they were deemed stable.

A beeping sound caught his attention, bringing his eyes back to the tablet.

The display had switched from Alex's containment cell to a camera outside the compound aimed at the sky.

On this camera, a clear fire trail was approaching the hospital by air, and he already knew who it was.

"She's getting better at using this mode of transportation. I wonder how many awakened will use these methods in the near future..."

As the flames hit the ground, they morphed into a slender woman with sunken eyes and dull-coloured hair.

Kary ran into the hospital, heading directly toward the service elevator, where an attendant who recognized her let her in.

On the way down, she bit her nails nervously.

'Did he come back complete? Is he going to be missing a limb? Or maybe his mind will be broken. I hope he's okay...'

When the elevator doors dinged open, Mr. Gu was already standing before them, ready to take her to Alex.

"Follow me, young lady."

She nodded, keeping silent.

Chapter 797 No Effect

The tired-looking assistant brought her toward the containment cells, which made Kary nervous.

She had visited this part a few times in the last month as she brought in rogue awakened players, and heading there was already a bad sign in her mind.

When they got there, Mr. Gu led her to a cell in the corner, where she recognized the shoulders of the man sitting back facing them.

"Alex!" she exclaimed, running to the cell.

Alex turned his head slowly, smiling when his gaze met hers.

But his smile was bittersweet as he saw the signs of depression on her face. The dull look, the sunken eyes, the unkempt hair and loose clothes.

It hurt him to think about how his actions caused this.

"Hi, darling... How are you holding up?" he asked, his voice soft.

Kary started crying slowly as she realized it was still him.

"You came back... You really came back... I missed you so much..." she said, weeping softly.

Alex put his hand on the glass, looking at her with a pained expression.

"I'm sorry... I didn't think I would die from that attack. Is Violette okay? Did... Did I do anything to her?"

Kary rocked her head from side to side.

"Violette is fine. She was devastated at first, thinking you had died in her arms, but when we told her what we saw up that mountain, she settled down. But what do you mean, died?"

Alex sighed in relief. At least he hadn't hurt one of his friends when he was taken over.

"Just like I said. I died up on that mountain. If I hadn't had these two inside me, it would have been the end. Although, I'm not sure it was better that they save me..."

Kary looked at him, still in tears.

"No. You can't say that, not after being gone for a month without news. I'm glad they saved you, whoever they are. I'm glad they brought you back to me, safe and whole."

Alex's heart stung again.

'If you only knew...'

Kary spun her head toward Mr. Gu.

"Please let me inside the cell. I want to hold him."

Mr. Gu shook his head.

"I can't, Ms. Deveille. Procedures instruct that he must stay there as long as he hasn't been thoroughly tested. I'm already glad he accepted to go in there himself..."

Kary's tear-filled eyes turned to rage.

"Let me in there right this instant. I am not asking."

Mr. Gu took a step back, his eyes turning cold.

"Ms. Deveille... I know how you feel, but these are my orders. I can't disobey them. Please, let's not devolve into savagery. The testing shouldn't take too long, and you can embrace him as much as you want then."

Kary started heaving as anger filled her heart.

She had been in the dark for a month. And now that he was back, this man thought he could keep her from reaching out to him? From holding him in her arms?

Flames started covering her, her hair turning to a wildfire behind her, as her eyes flared up blue.

Alex looked at her with wide eyes.

'She's progressed so much in just one month. I don't know whether to be impressed or scared.'

Mr. Gu lowered his stance, making his twin swords appear in his hands. He was ready to defend himself, even if he doubted he was a match for her anymore.

"Enough," Alex's calm voice echoed from within his glass cell.

As he said this, the swords in Mr. Gu's hands disappeared, and Kary's flames extinguished. But their stupefied faces were a telltale sign that this wasn't their doing.

Both looked at Alex, who was staring at them.

Mr. Gu's phone was beeping loudly in his pocket, but he was too stunned to look at it.

"Mr. Gu. I know you have orders, but never threaten her again. I will not take kindly to it if it ever happens."

Mr. Gu was about to defend himself, but when his eyes locked on Alex's gaze, his vision swam, as he felt like he was getting stared at by a pair of black eyes with burning red irises. This made him instinctively shake.

He was trained to face Yaoguai. Nevertheless, his body froze before it started shivering.

'This is not a human,' he immediately understood.

Whatever was in that cell could no longer be called a person. This was an ascended being...

"As for you, Kary. I understand how you feel. But please. I don't want you in here. Not now. I'm still not sure I can trust myself. Can you wait until the testing is done? For my sake?"

Kary wanted to rebuke him. She wanted to tell him he had no right to ask this of her after leaving her like this.

But a warm feeling overcame her as a soft-spoken voice echoed in her mind. One she recognized from that mountaintop.

'He will be ok. Wait for him, just a few days more.'

Kary's rage mellowed out, even though she shot a stink-eye at Mr. Gu, but she slid her hand on the glass wall.

"Okay. I will wait. But please, don't vanish on me like this, ever again. Okay?" she asked, tears still streaking down her face.

Alex put his hand in front of hers, across the glass, and smiled.

"I won't. Now, head on home. Rest. You seem like you need it. And tell the others that I came back. I'm sure it'll boost morale a bit. I love you."

Kary's heart warmed up with his last words, and she finally felt like her missing piece was back.

"I will. I love you too."

She turned around to leave but stopped next to Mr. Gu momentarily.

Slap!

This snapped Mr. Gu out of his terror vision, and he looked at her with shock.

"Pull your swords on me ever again, and no one will find your ashes," she threatened, her eyes flickering with blue flames.

Then she left the compound, heading back home the same way she came here.

"Women, am I right?" Alex tried joking to relieve the tension.

But Mr. Gu looked at him with wary eyes before leaving as well.

'Did I overdo it by suppressing them?' Alex wondered.

He shrugged before sitting back down on the bed in the cell. What was done was done.

Chapter 798 Fear Of Change

?Mr. Gu left the containment area with fear in his mind. There was a reason he was shocked when his swords disappeared.

The containment cells were all built with a mana-inhibiting glass that would reduce the impact of mana usage against it. But a second measure would also restrain their occupants even more.

Under each cell was a machine that siphoned away mana from its occupant constantly, to the point that it should negate the usage of their power entirely.

But Alexander had ignored those and suppressed him and Ms. Deveille from inside his cell. This effectively meant that the cell wasn't even restraining him.

He was only inside it to reassure them.

This attested to his current state of mind. But what if that changed?

What if he decided he had wasted enough time here? What if he lost control of his powers?

Mr. Gu didn't trust him to be in complete control. Not after what Jack had told him when they came back.

How the creature that Alexander had become had tried attacking them. What would happen to anyone in this compound if he lost control of that thing again?

Or worse. The rest of the city...

That... thing inside of him. It wasn't to be trusted.

Little did the assistant know, Alex agreed, regarding the demonic side of himself. Sadly, there wasn't a way to get rid of it now.

He would have to find a way to restrain it by his own means because he had a feeling that their tests would only show what he feared.

If the demon was really an integral part of him now, then a slight slip of his focus and could gain control of his body. And this was a less-than-desirable result.

He had already asked Geminae several times if there was a way to contain the demon. But Geminae was at a loss for ideas.

If he had been more powerful than the retched thing, then he could have exerted his strength to keep it contained. But that was no longer an option.

Since Psyche's soul fragment no longer acknowledged him as its rightful proprietor, he couldn't draw power from it anymore. This meant he was stuck looking like a teenage version of Alexander with wings forever.

Alexander could feed Geminae with some of its power if he so desired. But he still wasn't sure he could trust Geminae.

Not entirely, at least.

This left him in a challenging position.

On the one hand, if he looked away from the imp for too long, it could go on a rampage and possibly kill people he cared about. And he didn't want that to happen.

On the other hand, he fed Geminae with divine essence to make him powerful enough to restrain the demon. Still, he exposed himself to the possibility of a takeover from him instead.

He could think of a third option, but it felt like suicide to him.

Merging the remainder of Psyche's fragment with his own soul.

But just thinking about this sent all kinds of alarm bells ringing inside his mind. It was almost like the shadow of Psyche's presence inside the orb was advising him against this course of action.

'I guess those tests will tell me more about how stable I am. Maybe then I can decide whether I do something about this now or wait.'

Kary landed on the penthouse balcony and burst inside, almost tripping on her feet.

Although her control had improved tremendously in the last few weeks, her amount of mana was still minimal. And using Avatar of Flames form was mana-consuming, to say the least.

At least, she no longer singed herself or her hair when she changed into it. This had been a big problem at first.

As she dragged herself upstairs, Kary thought about the look that Alex had given her as she left.

'He seemed scared of something... What happened during his time away?' she wondered.

She carried herself to the bathroom adjacent to their room and quickly threw her clothes into the hamper before almost crashing into the shower.

She rushed to open the cold water as steam started escaping from her pores.

The second the cold water left the shower head and landed on her skin, a steam cloud burst out from her body.

She sighed in relief as her body temp cooled off.

This was another downside to her using her newest ability.

Her body did not appreciate all that heat.

Even if she covered her skin and clothes with a layer of mana, which kept the flames from burning her, it didn't mean the heat was dissipated entirely. Some of it seeped into her and had to come out, eventually.

If she neglected it for too long, her body temp shot up, and she could cause herself serious harm. She had learned that at her own behest.

As she felt her body cool down to a normal temperature, Kary swatted at the shower nob, turning the water to the hot side, before she pushed herself back to her feet.

She let the hot water wash away the sticky sweat her body had expunged while thinking about her meeting with Alex.

Aside from him looking reticent to let her near him, she also noticed something else about him. He seemed bulkier than before.

But that wasn't all.

His countenance had changed completely. He seemed more confident.

Which was contradictory to the fear she could see in his eyes. But his body posture breathed of confidence.

Like he instinctively knew that he was above the others in his presence. It was the kind of countenance she had seen in people like Aberon and Aravelle.

The aura of a powerful being.

Then there was also how he so quickly extinguished her flames from within the containment cell. Since she brought a few young awakened people in, she knew those cells were built to prevent the people inside from using their powers.

Yet, it had seemed effortless for him.

"Just how much have you changed?" she murmured.

Only time would tell.

Chapter 799 Testing His New Body

By the time Kary had reached home and fallen asleep, Alexander was being called back into the testing facilities.

When he got there, he looked around at the modifications and hummed.

"Hmm. I'm not sure this is going to be enough. What kind of standards are you guys looking at?"

The scientists scoffed at him, looking at him with lifted noses.

"Sir. Please do not look down on our efforts. I doubt even the demon you fought last time in the woods near the hospital could break out of this. Just get into the chamber."

Alexander felt an urge to slap some sense into him but resisted. It wasn't his fault.

The poor man wouldn't know better if that demon he mentioned stared him in the face.

So he got into the chamber and silently hoped. Hoped it wouldn't shatter the moment he used the demon's strength.

Alexander started the tests slowly, only using the power of his own new body. He could already tell it was much stronger than before, without even needing the testing, but it allowed him to figure out just how much stronger.

He started by completely sealing his mana, so his body wasn't naturally enhanced and did all the physical tests. When the scientists declared they were satisfied with his physical, he shook his head.

"We aren't done. We are doing those again at least twice. Possibly even four times, depending on a theory I have."

The lead scientist wanted to tear into Alex for giving him orders. But a voice came over the speakers, and he had to grit his teeth and accept things as they were.

"Do as he says, Mark. What we want is the full picture. If he says he has more to show, repeat the tests until he's satisfied."

Alex recognized Jack's voice and smiled at the camera.

"Glad to hear you hear, Jack. It's been a long month, and I have a couple of things I need to test out. Thanks for getting them to cooperate."

Jack's voice popped over the speaker again.

"I'm doing this for posterity, Mr. Leduc. I want to know what I am up against. We have no idea what you came back as. This is nothing personal. You get it, right?"

Alex chuckled.

"I get it. I take no offence. Your wariness lets me figure out what I have become, just as much as you. I know we have grown friendly, but ours was always a business relationship, wasn't it?"

No answer came this time as the scientist nodded at him to prepare for a second round of physical testing.

Jack sat in his office, a saddened look on his face.

Although Alex was right that their relationship had started as a business one, he wished that Alex had grown to view it as a partnership over the time they worked together.

But it was better to stay realistic at the moment.

No one was even sure that this was still Alexander Leduc. For all they knew, his mind might be someone else's, mimicking him until the opportune time to strike.

It was better to play it safe than to be sorry.

Alex let his mana out during the second round, naturally enhancing his body with it, and the results wildly varied from the first round.

The scientists were confused.

They knew Mr. Leduc could enhance himself through some sort of fusion, but he would always have a change in appearance when he did. This time was different.

And he insisted on doing another round of testing.

The tests ranged from testing his strength, speed, and stamina to testing his body's natural resistance and regeneration.

And he was already showing results far past human standards before using his mana. When he let his mana enhance his body, he was already basically a superhuman.

He was getting results similar to when he melded to White before this incident. And Jack knew he wasn't melded right now.

Jack was in the loop about Alex's soul companions being left alone in New Eden. He was also fairly familiar with the appearance change it brought.

This was all him.

It frightened Jack to think about how strong he had become.

Alex readied up for a third round of testing, but he warned the scientists.

"I'm about to use something that I haven't used much before. I don't know how it will affect the surrounding people. It would be better if you all went into the remote testing lab."

A few of them, who were already terrified at his results, immediately started moving.

But the head scientist was being arrogant.

"Stop! No one leaves this room. I've had it with your empty warnings. Just do what you must, and let us do our job, kid. I studied for a decade for this PhD and will not let a child mock my achievements."

Alex looked at him with a frown. He was only trying to keep them safe.

"Fine. I've warned you; the rest is on you and your big head."

Alex morphed his body entirely into Geminae's body, even absorbing some of his power from the soul space.

It wasn't permanent, but Geminae felt it and almost panicked.

'Couldn't you at least have warned me you were sapping my strength away?' he asked in Alex's head.

'I thought you were always watching what was going on?' Alex replied.

'I was busy lecturing the red skin. You took me by surprise...'

Alex chuckled mentally, keeping a straight face.

Too bad for him, he thought.

He wanted to know everything he could, so it was a given he would morph into both his new forms for testing as well.

And already, he was seeing changes in the people testing him.

The looks they gave him had gone from fear to awe. He would even venture to say some looked at him with reverence.

Maybe a touch of worship?

All he knew for sure was that the weaker-willed ones seemed most affected.

'How are they going to react when I morph into a full-on demon?' Alex mused.

There was no point in doing guessing games. He would find out sooner than later.

Chapter 800 Changed Temperament

?The testing this time was a tad slower, as most of the people doing the readings were constantly distracted by his glowing skin of two-meter-wide wings.

But just as Geminae had told him once, his body was not made for physical prowess. The results of anything physical were practically the same as with just his mana enhancement.

However, they differed in his body resistance and his regenerative capabilities.

It took the room's defence system firing at him just to inflict minor wounds. And they regenerated almost instantly.

Once he was done with Geminae's body, Alex signalled he wanted another test. This made the head scientist growl.

"This is the fourth physical test, Mr. Leduc. Haven't we gone over all your physical capabilities enough? What more is there to test?!" he screamed.

Alex stared at him, his eyes going ice cold.

"I'm not done, and I recall Mr. Boudreau saying you were to acquiesce to my demands on this. So how about you shut up and do that?"

The scientist threw his tablet at the bulletproof glass, shattering it, and started shouting.

"Fine! I'll administer this test myself. I hope you're ready!"

He punched in his credentials to open the testing chamber and stomped his way inside.

"You wanted to piss me off, then you've succeeded. Now I test you myself! Let's see how this newly enhanced body fares against awakened people!"

He activated a device on his wrist, which Alex had seen earlier but said nothing about.

And immediately, a change happened inside him.

The device functioned on a monster core, most likely one of the dire wolves they had slain a month ago, and infused his cells with it. His scrawny body suddenly developed muscle, and he grinned at Alex.

"How about now? Still want to be cocky?"

Alex looked at him deadpan and turned his head to the camera.

"Do you expect me to work with this trash? He gets annoyed at the stupidest of things. PhD? What good is that if you have the mental capacity of a slug?"

The scientist's eyes bulged as he dashed at Alexander.

He threw a punch, a sloppy one at that, a clear sign that he had never fought once in his life, and screamed in rage.

But a red hand halted his punch a meter away from Alex.

That was when the scientist realized he had fucked up.

"It seems Jack doesn't care what happens to you. I guess that means you, indeed, are going to be running these tests on me."

A loud snap echoed in the room as the scientist's fist was bent backward quickly and broken.

The man howled in pain as blood started dripping out of his exposed wrist.

"Oh, no. I didn't want to break it like this. Now, you'll bleed out. Here, let me fix that for you," Alex said, a savage grin on his lips.

Flames appeared over his other hand, and he used it to grab the stub under the scientist's wrist, cauterizing the open wound with black flames.

The man almost passed out from the pain, but a light slap to his cheek from Alexander kept him awake.

"No, no, no. We are not done."

At that moment, Jack's voice came over the speakers, and four turrets descended from the ceiling, locking onto Alex's demonized body.

"Enough, Mr. Leduc. He gets it. Let us continue with testing without further bloodshed. Let him go."

Alex turned his head to the camera that was trailing his every movement.

"How boring. He provoked me. Can't I get a little fun?"

The turrets started whirring up to life, warming up to fire.

"Is this what you became during your month in the woods, Alexander? A monster? Let him go."

Alex clicked his tongue before chucking the half-conscious scientist toward the door.

"He asked for it. And if you want to call me a monster, then so be it. But don't threaten me with a good time. Those cannons better be ready to shoot me if you want to threaten me with them."

Finishing his phrase, Alex blinked out of view, reappearing behind one turret as he slashed through it with his clawed hands.

The turret was torn to pieces instantly. And before the others could even trace him, he had already blown them up as well.

He looked back at the camera and spat.

"Can we get back to the tests now? I'm bored."

From his office, Jack was looking at his screen with sweat going down the side of his jaw.

'What has he become? Is it even safe to let him go? Can we even hold him back if he wants to leave?'

Many thoughts coursed through his mind until Alex's voice snapped him back to attention.

"Hello? Anybody home? I want to finish these tests. The sooner we are done, the sooner I can return home."

Jack didn't know how to respond, so he sent a message to the scientists to resume testing.

The head scientist was sent to the infirmary to receive treatment for his contorted wrist. For now, his employees would have to finish the tests alone.

But his mind stuck on whether he could let this thing out of here. It seemed like a bad idea.

The Alex he knew was nowhere to be seen at the moment.

Aside from looking like him, that demon was nothing like him.

Impatient, arrogant, and violent to an extreme degree. This was all he could see from it.

But as soon as Alex reverted to human form, he returned to normal.

'Which one is really him?' Jack wondered.

And he wasn't alone.

Mr. Gu had also been looking at the testing, wondering if he should call in reinforcements from his old order.

If this thing got out and went full demon, it would surely wipe out the city unless someone was there to stop it.

They were stuck in a dilemma that could affect millions of lives.

Jack turned to his assistant and broke the silence.

"Call them. It is better to have them close and not need them than to be responsible for genocide. I regret to say this, but I think our biggest threat may turn out to be Mr. Leduc, for now."

Mr. Gu gulped but did as told.

Things were looking bad.