

Once Human 151

Chapter 151

"Arthur Bilgart, your time of death had long since passed and that is something 'Death' doesn't allow . "

With terrifying death aura around it and a chilling voice that would make anyone fearful, the Grim Reaper slashed its scythe in the air and created what seemed to be a small dimension that enveloped the whole cave .

Unfortunately for the black mage, it was too late for him to escape by the time the weird dimension was created . The only thing he could do was desperately bang his staff on the transparent barrier but to no avail, his attacks were totally ineffective .

'This is not good . '

Arthur glanced around him but his Sixth Sense couldn't penetrate the dimension . If it was a barrier, his sense could have spread easily but a dimension is a whole other thing . Zodiac's books mentioned that whoever or whatever could create dimensions should not be messed with as they either have unique abilities or strong attainment in Spatial Laws .

Just from looking at the '???' from the appraisal and feeling the aura emanating from this Reaper, Arthur knew he has no choice but to fight seriously but he was confused on why a Grim Reaper would suddenly attack him after saying that .

"Why don't you explain yourself . I don't want to die without knowing why "

Arthur suspiciously asked the Grim Reaper whilst circulating the Dark Anguish Technique and activated the defense layer from The Dark Star Strengthening technique . He wanted to buy some time to prepare himself and also get some answers .

"You should know, better than anyone, why I'm here, and if you are purposely acting dumb then let me explain . Arthur Bilgart, death at the age of 32 by suicide . You have cheated death and lived more than your designated lifespan and that is not something easily forgotten . "

"Designated lifespan? Bullshit, I died when I killed myself and was reincarnated and to begin with, who are you to judge how much I'm going to live!"

The Grim Reaper wasn't angered by the unpolite attitude of Arthur, he just stared at him for a while before calmly replying with his usual chilling tone .

"I'm but an emissary . . . a messenger but it is not the same thing for what designated your lifespan . Fate is an entity that hates anyone who betrays or cheats it and it is exactly my duty to eliminate whoever bites more than he could chew . "

Still not understanding what was said, Arthur tried processing all the new things that was just said about Fate or whatever it is but he still couldn't comprehend how does that have anything to do with him . He died and born again! He even had a totally different Race! How is it unfair?

Even if it was unfair, he'll never submit, his life has finally become better after meeting Lucy and marrying her, having a cute daughter and lovely wife, what else could he wish besides that? He's not

going to let his life end because of some idiotic thing called 'Fate' that thinks it can decide who lives and who dies .

"Fate . . . is it? If it really exists, I would really love to kill it with my bare hands, after all, isn't it the one responsible for all the miseries I experienced, all the suffering I had to go through, but I'm sure I am not the only one who thinks like this . "

"*chuckle* Kill it? You are far too weak, Arthur Bilgart . Even with an enigmatic Race like yours, it would take you forever to even have the qualifications to meet it, much less beat it . You say your life was full of miseries but you are not the only one, neither were you the first or the last one to suffer .

Of course, some suffer more than the others but even if you blame 'Fate' it isn't going to change anything, you decided what to do and every action led to another . Fate may decide how you die and when but it doesn't decide what you do in your life . "

"Whatever and what does a Grim Reaper have to do with 'Fate'? Aren't you related to the dark side?"

It took the Grim Reaper a couple of seconds to understand what Arthur meant by the dark side, it kept the nonchalant attitude and chuckled again before responding"

"It's complicated so let's start, after all, this world is quite aggressive . "

Although he said 'let's start', the Grim Reaper just stood there and stared at Arthur without moving an inch . Arthur thought maybe it was a trap but at second thought, a Grim Reaper wouldn't do that as after experiencing his scythe, he didn't seem to be the tricky type .

Since the enemy is not attacking and there is still time, Arthur didn't hesitate as he took out a large body of a silver wolf and immediately possessed it . What followed was a torrent of notifications and a pressure pressing on his mind . Arthur was forced to activate [Pain Immunity] due to the intense pain he was experiencing but even with the skill activated, he still felt an invisible burden .

You activated [Solid Max Lv]: Your defense is increased by 15%

You activated [Wind Charmer Max Lv]: You Agility is increased by 10%

You activated [Extreme Poison Fangs Max Lv]: Your attacks now contain a deadly poison that deals 5% of the user's attack every second .

You activated [Deadly Stare]: Your eyes permanently cause a debuff to any targets the user looks at: - 10% movement speed, -15% attack speed .

. . .

You activated [Transmutation]: +25% stats, +20% damage received (10 minutes) .

The large silver wolf transformed into a green lightning beast with a domineering aura and a fierce appearance .

"You achieved such strength in a short amount of time . . . that's applaudable so come at me with all you've got, you'll die an honorable death and come to know how big the difference between us actually is . "

When all passives were activated, Arthur vanished and teleported behind the Grim Reaper, which still stood there motionlessly . The green lightning beast was merciless as the sharp long claws were slashed at the back of the Grim Reaper .

Cannot damage! 0 . Phy . Atk

Albeit shocked by the notifications, Arthur bit down with his lightning fangs and poured all his poison and endless Natural Lightning inside of the Grim Reaper's bones but the same notifications popped up again .

As he was close to the enemy and felt the deathly aura around him, Arthur was momentarily shocked and was unable to make a reasonable decision after seeing both of attacks dealing nothing .

Each second was longer than the other, at the spur of the moment, Arthur teleported away from the Grim Reaper before not before spitting two large fireballs .

Cannot damage! 0 M . Atk

Cannot damage! 0 M . Atk

Arthur stared at the Grim Reaper whilst crouching the wolf's body and taking a defensive stance . The enemy didn't attack but it wasn't injured too, it was unscathed from even the ancient flame which is something Arthur never saw . Even the Gods in the Underworld would be damaged by his flames so witnessing this sight, he was truly in shock .

"Do you understand now? I cannot be injured, neither can I die, I'm a Grim Reaper, I take lives and not the other way around, that's my purpose . "

The Grim Reaper started approaching Arthur with its scythe held horizontally, ready to slash at any moment .

'What honorable death? It's just one-sided!'

Arthur cursed the Reaper as it was not a fight, he could do nothing but back away from the enemy but even that simple tactic was useless as he was met with the Dimension's wall after retreating a dozen of meters .

It was only one exchange but Arthur knew he can't win, it was obvious from the second he activated that appraisal and it was later ascertained when he dealt no damage, not with his flames nor his claws and fangs which would kill a God if they are touched by them .

With no way out and zero chance of winning, Arthur's focus shifted to the surroundings until it landed on the black mage, who was scared stiff and fearfully looking at the Grim Reaper while trying not to grab his attention and be killed alongside Arthur .

'Maybe '

A reckless idea crossed his mind, it was suicidal but in such a desperate situation, it was better to try it than dying without resisting .

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The book of the damned appeared in front of Arthur, growled at it and the black book flashed a second before rushed straight at the Grim Reaper . Once it was close enough, the Death Golem and the rotten hand came out of the book and attacked the Reaper at the same time .

The golem smashed its fist at the Reaper while the rotten hand stabbed the Golem and poured all the saved energy to it .

'Bang!!!'

An explosive sound rang out in the silent and dark cave but nothing happened to the Grim Reaper . His dark tattered robe and his bones were still intact . However, the state of the golem was not so good, the hand it used to punch the Reaper was gone as it shattered the moment it touched its target .

Following its master's orders, the death Golem swung its second fist but this time the fist transformed into a sharp drill that was spinning and emitting a dark fog that swirled around it . With no hesitation, the drill stabbed the skull head of the Reaper .

'Dang Dang Dang Dang . . '

The sound was similar to a drill but no matter how fast it spun, it couldn't penetrate the skull or deal any damage, it was as if it was cutting an unpenetrable unique metal . A few seconds passed and the drill showed signs of breaking but the Grim Reaper was not that patient, it swung its scythe just one time and it was enough to cut the death golem in two and immediately kill it .

Fortunately, the rotten hand was a bit lucky as it was not in the scythe's range but it still received a bit of damage as a small blade wound appeared in one of the rotten fingers . Black blood leaked out of the injury but it was soon stopped as the rotten hand performed a weird gesture and pointed at the Grim Reaper .

"You also have a real specter hand that is rare to see in such a place, nonetheless, it's useless against me . "

As he said that, the Grim Reaper raised its free hand and the palm made of bones was suddenly clenched . All that was done was clenching a hand but this simple action managed to extinguish the rotten hand and make it turn blurry until it vanished .

When the rotten hand disappeared, the Grim Reaper turned his attention to Arthur but the lightning wolf was no longer there . It looked around for signs of Arthur but there were no wolves around and it is impossible to escape from its dimension .

With its two creepy eyes, the Grim Reaper turned its head and stared at the black mage, who had long since lost his composed behavior and was freaking out, especially when the Grim Reaper started looking at him .

Arthur grasped the opportunity and diverted the Grim Reaper's attention just for a couple of seconds just to possess the black mage . He didn't completely possess him, he's just hiding there without

controlling the body . Since the black mage is weaker than him, doing such a thing is easy and he doesn't have to resort to a skill that spends Mental Power .

Since the Grim Reaper came for him then there is a chance he won't kill the black mage as he's not its target and maybe he's not allowed to kill someone who didn't reach the end of his lifespan yet .

"I see . . . it's a clever trick, especially since your Race is unique but . . . you forgot that Grim Reapers reap souls and not bodies . "

The long gray scythe was swung down at the black mage, it easily passed through his body and was precisely aimed at Arthur's soul .

Since he was dormant inside the black mage's body, leaving it would take a bit more time than usual, Arthur could only take control of the black mage's body and immediately use [Faster Than Death] to teleport away .

It was a close call but the risk he took was futile as a small part of his soul was grabbed by the tip of the scythe .

"A soul fitting of its owner . . . truly!"

The Grim Reaper stopped marching slowly and charged at Arthur while stretching his free hand and clenching it again as he pointed it at Arthur .

Arthur was going to teleport away yet again but a gravitational force pressed against him from all directions, crushing his bones and almost turning him into minced meat .

If not for abandoning the black mage's body at the last second, he would have died . Seeing the black mage turn into nothingness, Arthur knew that the Reaper didn't care about the black mage which disappointed him and made him feel a bit helpless .

At such a crucial moment, where the black mage's body was crushed and Arthur hurriedly left it, the Grim Reaper smoothly switched his rushing path and swung his Scythe at where Arthur was at .

The scythe was like death itself at it approached Arthur centimeter by centimeter and he could only watch helplessly as he does not have enough time to use [Faster than Death], plus, shields or barrier are useless against it as it can pass through them easily .

The gap was shortening centimeter by centimeter, the scythe already passed his chest and was about to rip his soul out of his consciousness . Just when the end was coming, the chains around Arthur's souls tightened, not letting the scythe take more portions of it . It's as if it was claiming property of the soul and not letting the invader take what belongs to it .

'Clack Clack Clack . . . '

The chains wrapped around the bright light which is Arthur's souls and it totally deflected the gray scythe and forcefully pushed it out of his consciousness . Arthur did nothing but the Grim Reaper was sent flying until he crashed into the invisible wall of the dimension .

it sustained no damage but the Reaper was surprised by what just happened . The Grim Reaper's eyes stopped pulsating and became devoid of any light, the skeletal figure remained motionless as it stared at Arthur .

"No wonder 'Fate' personally ordered your death but this makes it much more interesting . "

With a final chuckle, the Grim Reaper launched itself at Arthur, who was bending on one knee and panting . His soul just clashed with that deadly scythe, the clash alone made his body tremble and feel extremely heavy .

Arthur teleported further away and threw a large Void Orb at the incoming Grim Reaper, who had an unbelievable speed . Arthur could only see a gray shadow charge at him, if not for his fast reactions, he would have died many times already .

Surprisingly, the gray shadow didn't dive straight into the Void Orb, instead, it avoided it and then slashed at Arthur . He wasn't able to fully see what happened but he knew for sure that the Grim Reaper avoided the Void Orb which only meant one thing, it didn't want to be hit by it as maybe Void Magic is deadly for it .

It's to be expected since Void Magic can hurt anyone even its own user . Truthfully, Arthur didn't expect this, it was a Grim Reaper that can't die, what's there to be afraid of?

With a bit of self-gained hope, Arthur jumped back and fired as many Void Orbs as he possibly can . Just as he expected, although the orbs were fast, they were easily dodged by the incoming doom .

Expecting such a situation, Arthur activated the Void Orbs and made them explode into countless devouring mouths that launched themselves at the gray shadow .

"Arthur Bilgart, you really are a unique existence but you can't beat Death . "

The Grim Reaper appeared before Arthur and stretched its hand toward his chest, planning to rip his soul with its bare hand . The hand was very close to his chest when all of a sudden, the Grim Reaper was pushed backward by a terrifying force .

Arthur only managed to react when the Grim Reaper was pushed more than a dozen meters . An illusory green palm and a blue blob of light soon emerged from a crack in the dimension and floated next to Arthur .

Their appearance was soon followed by thick plant vines appearing from the ground and wrapping themselves around the Grim Reaper without letting him have the room to breathe .

"This is your chance, use that arrow of yours . "

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Without even thinking why the World Tree was here, Arthur raised his hand and started conjuring the Heavenly Arrow . In the past, it would take him half a minute more or less but right now, after his stats rocketed and he broke through so many times, only three seconds are enough to fully create it .

When he fought against the World Tree, he only used a miniature Heavenly Arrow, it was weaker than the original one and it didn't have a cooldown so it's practical . Moreover, it was instantaneous which made it more efficient .

The Grim Reaper was immune to almost everything, so Arthur decided to use a Heavenly Arrow only made from Void Magic . Usually, he'll add other attributes to have some extra effects but to also reduce its devouring effect, after all, he can't fully control it in its normal state, much less if it's only made from Void Magic .

"Alright, you better back off or you'll get eaten too!"

Arthur warned the blue blob of light then fired the Heavenly Arrow . Since the cave couldn't hold the full size of the arrow, he had to reduce its size but that only made it more terrifying . A 40m long purple arrow that devoured the sand, rocks and everything in its way .

He was sure that if he stood in front of it, he would be devoured it despite being the one who created it . Amongst all the attribute, the Void Attribute is the most lethal one, not only is it too mysterious, it's almost impossible to stop it . It contained many sub-attributes such as Spatial Laws and Time Laws but Arthur wasn't able to extract one of them to use it individually .

If he mastered Spatial Laws, traveling back to Earth or wherever Lucy was teleported to would be extremely easy . But to master these laws, it would take a long time so the only way for him is to possess someone who has mastered it and obtain his mastery, however, to find such a person on Astria is a difficult thing .

The devouring arrow ate away the thick vines as if they were nothing and finally reached the Grim Reaper, which was entangled deep into the vines .

Arthur first found it weird that the Grim Reaper didn't get out of the vines but when he saw how the deeper vines resisted the Void Arrow for a couple seconds, he understood how powerful these plants were .

To make it easier for Arthur, the World Tree withdrew its vines in a split second and left the Grim Reaper floating in the air and facing the incoming arrow .

With its long gray scythe in its hand, the Grim Reaper stared at the incoming Heavenly Arrow and raised its free hand to use the same gravitational attack from earlier . This time, the intensity of the attack was raised several times until the space around the arrow turned blurry and started twisting .

The arrow was stopped a few meters away from the Grim Reaper but its devouring force and the ominous aura around it was still being unleashed . All the gravitational force could do was freeze the arrow mid-air but even that, was not going so good as the arrow was resisting fiercely and trying to absorb that foreign force pressing it down .

"Arthur Bilgart, I have misjudged you Void Laws are a forbidden magic that should never be used . . . even in death fights . "

With its lifeless eyes, the Grim Reaper shifted its attention to Arthur . It's easy to tell from its voice that it was disappointed but it's not like Arthur cared about its opinions or mood .

"Forbidden? Hell if I care, you're trying to kill me and I'm retaliating . Facing death, I'll use anything, forbidden or not so die!"

Multiple Void Orbs circulated around the Grim Reaper and exploded into countless small devouring mouths . They slowly crept toward the Grim Reaper while devouring the air and the bits of sands flying around due to the intensity of the arrow's aura .

Seeing the incoming creepy mouths, the Grim Reaper finally took action . It raised its scythe and slashed at the frozen arrow, creating a gray deadly arc made from an ancient aura . To fight the Void, it is useful to use Withering Laws and that's exactly what The Grim Reaper did . It thought that if countless years passed while the arrow is frozen, then it'll dissipate, however, things didn't go as expected .

The Withering Laws were working and countless years passed in the small space around the arrow yet the monstrosity didn't dissipate, instead, it appeared to be breaking through from the space imprisoning it .

Unfazed but what he's seeing, the Grim Reaper contemplated the approaching arrow for a moment before it raised its scythe again but this time it was not to slash but to block the arrow which suddenly broke through and rushed at it .

The gray scythe and the tip of the purple devouring arrow collided but no sound was created, it was dead silent yet the space around the clash distorted for a few seconds before the Grim Reaper cried out in surprise, however, it was too late as the arrow devoured its scythe and struck its bones .

It all happened too fast, Arthur could only see the scythe disappear and the Grim Reaper turning into a pile of gray ash that fell on the ground . Since it struck its target, the purple arrow's intensity lessened by a bit but it still dived to the ground and continued eating whatever in its way until stopping after a certain distance . All that was seen was a gaping hole in the ground, clearly showing how destructive the arrow was .

"It's over . "

Hearing the relieved voice of the World Tree, Arthur breathed a sigh of relief and looked around to check if the dimension was still present or not . There were some traces of its presence but it seemed to be dissipating at a very rapid pace, but that's to be expected since its owner was just devoured by the Void .

It's a pity he couldn't possess the Grim Reaper but at least he got rid of him . Thinking back, if it wasn't for the help of the World Tree, it would have been practically impossible for him to defeat it without entangling it for a few seconds to prepare the Heavenly Arrow .

"Thanks for helping me . "

Arthur was sincerely grateful, if not for its help then no one knew how that fight would have ended but the chances of him dying was far greater than surviving against a Grim Reaper .

". . . No need to thank me, we made an oath and I'm making my end of the deal . Helping you defeat any enemy that invades Astria . "

The blob of light vanished after saying that, it didn't even wait for Arthur to reply, maybe it was in a hurry or it didn't want to talk .

' . . . First time I see a shy tree . . . '

With the black mage killed, Arthur had no reason to stay here but after further thought, this was a golden opportunity . He didn't know where that monster from earlier disappeared into but since it was speaking about two worlds, then most likely, what it used was a teleportation item . All he got to do was wait for it then kill it and take away its item, furthermore, since it was only at the Spirit Realm, killing it would be a piece of cake .

The sad thing is that he couldn't bring Robin to witness the black mage dying, neither could he bring her his body since he turned into minced meat . He could only hope she believes in his words .

. . .

After leaving the death golem to guard the cave, Arthur went back to the Demon City to look for Robin and inform her of what happened . He needed to catch that monster and get that item because if it's really a teleportation treasure that leads to another world, it'll be a golden opportunity .

He needed to leave Astria and go to a world where he might find a Spatial Laws master or a way to go to Earth .

"So you're saying he's dead but the corpse is lost?"

With her arms crossed under the chest, showing those monstrous peaks, Robin glared at Arthur with piercing eyes, making him feel a bit uneasy .

'Weak or not, women are scary . . . *sigh*'

"Yes . . . more or less . "

While still glaring at him, she pulled back her glasses as usual and turned around after adding

"Fine then . . . I believe you . "

"R-really?"

"Why wouldn't I? I can rest at ease now that he's dead, I do not need a proof as it is YOU who faced him after all, I do not need to worry . "

Now that the matter of the black mage is done, Arthur didn't know what to do with her . She's a friend and things like this can occur again so it's better to have her in a safe place but knowing her attitude, she wouldn't like being guarded constantly .

"So what are you going to do now?"

"I'm obviously going back to the company's headquarters . "

Arthur hesitated a bit but he finally decided to send someone with her, it'll be much safer .

"My sect is on the Western Continent, It's already ruling the whole continent . You should move your headquarters there, sect will provide you support and you'll support it with materials, it's a mutually benefiting relationship . "

The leaving Robin stopped when she heard about a potential business, especially if it's with his sect . She heard of the MoonStar sect, although its patriarch is a woman, she knew that Arthur had a relationship with it, especially when it managed to control all the tribes and clans in that continent .

"What! Y-your sect isn't the M-moonStar sect right?"

Rey, who appeared behind Robin, stared at Arthur with fear as he hesitantly asked that . He was still scared of Arthur but apparently, since they separated, his relationship with Robin deepened and reached to the point where he became attached to her .

He's a cold-blooded killer but he found it fun to be with her and a life like this wasn't that bad .

Arthur came to know that he was absent for 1 month, unlike last time when it was only a few seconds, that 7 years dream was not instantaneous like last time . He was afraid that the next time it happens, more time will pass . . .

"Why don't we talk about the details?"

With a serious look, Robin sat on an empty chair near Arthur and looking at him with a strange look as if expecting him to sit too and chat for a couple of hours . Unfortunately for her, Arthur was not that fond of talking, except with Lucy, so he just said a few sentences to end the deal .

"No need to bother, if you want to details then talk to Jakob or Anastassia once you get there . I'll give you one Death Knight and one Bone Dragon, you can go back to your Headquarters or head immediately there, it's your choice . "

Arthur then glanced at Rey, who was still hiding behind Robin and not daring to show his face or talk again .

"As for you I think it's time yo-"

"He's with me . "

Robin cut him off and stared at him with a 'Got a problem' look so Arthur could only sigh and wave his hand in approval, after all, he doesn't have much of a choice now does he?

Since she said so then it should be fine, judging from his character now, he still didn't change but maybe one day he will .

. . . .

Arthur stared at the bone dragon disappearing into the horizon, Robin had already departed to the Itas Continent to start preparing things . With a Bone Dragon and a Death Knight, it should be enough to keep her safe unless a Heavenly Realm attacked but the probability is low .

Now that he doesn't have to worry about her safety, Arthur was just going to go back to the underground cave when someone suddenly stopped him .

It was a white-haired maid with a small horn erected from her forehead and inclined backward just like her hair .

Taliya[Head Maid] (Race: Demon): Lv487

'Now I see . . . I see hahaha'

Arthur didn't need to ask her to know from where she came from, one appraisal was enough to answer many questions . But what does a Head Maid from the Royal Demon Castle doing here?

There were only the two of them in this empty road a couple of miles away from the Demon City . Arthur's Sixth Sense was constantly active so if he was being followed . Inside the Demon City, he felt a lot of presences sneaking up behind him but he left the city so fast so they must have sent someone to follow him but that certain someone managed to catch up to him only when he was returning .

Since neither of them was talking, Arthur decided to just relax on the Dark Cloud and wait for her to act . The Death Golem was guarding the dark cave and if it is attacked by anything, he'll immediately know it . The golem may have the attack of a Spirit Realm but its defense is unbelievably high .

"Sir, the Demon Lord wishes to speak with you . Please follow me . "

'Straight to the point, huh?'

Staring at the figure of the maid, which slightly resembled Lucy, Arthur felt a bit lonely without her around . He missed talking to her all day without being bored, teasing her or embracing her . It may have been more or less a month in reality but for him, it was 14 years ago .

"Is that a request or an order?"

The maid was cautious of Arthur from the start, any sudden move and she'll act . She's an experienced fighter yet she couldn't feel him when he was far away, it was only by chance that she saw him flying on that weird dark cloud .

"Sir, I'm afraid that you'll have to follow me to the castle . "

With cold eyes and a threatening glare, the head maid unsheathed two short and sharp blades from under her sleeves and prepared to fight in case he tried to escape .

With his [Sixth Sense] Arthur already knew that she had 2 other blades hidden in her thighs and a red knife reeking of blood in her elbow, covered by the outfit .

"I like it when people get straight to the point . Wasting less time and being straightforward is the kind of people I like but I don't think that glare or those blades are enough to force me . Better try harder next time . "

The maid's eyes narrowed and her blades were raised and pointed at him .

"Sir, I would have to use violence then . Please excuse my rudeness, Ha!"

With that final word, she launched herself at Arthur and slashed with both of her swords . Her movements were perfect and her speed was excellent, it seemed she was best at speed from the look of it .

Before she could reach Arthur, a dark figure appeared in front of her and swung its two-handed long dark sword at her . Fortunately, she was quick and had fast reflexes, she sidestepped to the left, barely dodging the incoming sword which struck the ground and created a gaping hole .

Death Knight(Race: Undead): Lv500

"Maybe if you beat this one, I'll follow you . "

The head maid looked at the Death Knight with surprise . It was over two meters tall, a body covered with a dark armor and a skeletal head covered with a big black helmet . It was a lesser version of the powerful Death Knight that Arthur could spawn but this was intentional from him as she wouldn't be able to last a second against the other one .

The sky was as dark as ever, with some stars shining very far away, a distance even Gods couldn't cross . In such a place, where no living should exist, a small portion of the dark space warped and a figure was ejected from what seemed to be a portal .

At a closer look, it was a skeletal figure with tattered black clothes that matched its surroundings and two pulsating red eyes . The Grim Reaper calmly looked around it and after confirming he was indeed in the void, it just chuckled and casually mumbled

"*chuckle* Arthur Bilgart, I told you that you can't kill what's already dead, however, I must say you're a very interesting person in a strange world strange world indeed "

With a wave of its hand, the gray scythe, which was absorbed by the Heavenly Arrow, appeared out of nowhere, it was in perfect shape as if nothing happened to it . The Grim Reaper turned around and left, not minding the spatial tears and the infinite fluctuations happening around him .

"Fine then, it shall be like this for now in a boring world like this, a bit of entertainment isn't that bad *chuckle* . Now onto the next target . "

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Swiftly, the head maid performed a roundhouse kick at the Death Knight's head but it appeared to be a feint as the kick suddenly stopped when the knight raised its hands to block . Her two hands blurred as she slashed at the armored legs, trying to cut them off and make the fight easier .

Arthur thought this tactic wouldn't work as she inferior to the Death Knight in Lvl and most likely in stats too, however, to his surprise, the leg guards and the bones were cleanly cut by those short blades .

As the Death Knight lost its balance, Taliya grasped this opportunity and magnificently yet ruthlessly cut both of its arms then stabbed its skull, finishing it off once and for all .

From the look on her face, she didn't seem to be exhausted by the fight, she the first strike of the Knight, which was also the last and defeated it in just three moves .

clap *clap* *clap*

"That's good . "

Arthur clapped his hands as he stared back at her, who coldly glared at him, prepared to leap with her blades at any second .

"Sir, please follow me to the castle . "

Taliya assumed that she had won the little bet, she turned around to started walking away but unfortunately, Arthur still wanted to see what her limits are so with a flick of his fingers, the defeated Death Knight which had all of its limbs cut off and its skull pierced, slowly got up while a black fog reattached all the missing parts .

In just two seconds, the Death Knight was reanimated but compared to the previous one, this one was stronger . Of course, she had won the bet but Arthur made it look like it's still not done . He would politely follow her to the castle when this matter is done, he lost the bet after all .

"Humans are truly despicable . . . "

The maid coldly said that whilst raising her short blades and preparing to fight yet again .

"I never I was Human . You guys must have assumed that on your own . "

"What part of you does not look Human?"

No matter how long Taliya looked at Arthur's appearance, every inch of him resembled Humans except for his gray hair and blood red eyes . There is the chance of him being a Vampire but that Race is almost extinct and there are only a few secluded Vampires on Astria and from his behavior and demeanor, it doesn't match with the Vampires .

"Maybe this?"

Arthur raised his hands in the air and in a matter of seconds, the two hands transformed into long green vines that danced in the air . It was one of the perks of the Plant Magic, they are not as resistant as his normal hands but they could be useful in many ways .

With another thought, his chest erected sharp thorns that had some poison leaking out of them .

"A druid?"

The head maid inspected the vines and thorns with astonished eyes, her master, the Demon Lord thought the Human Empire sent a strong individual in here to carry out a secret plan but maybe it was not the case, maybe it was just baseless assumptions .

"Still wrong anyways, you should look behind you, the battle has already started . "

Hearing Arthur's remark, the head maid did a backflip and evaded the horizontal sweep of the knight's sword . Her thighs landed on the wide shoulders of the knight, then without hesitation, she stabbed both of her blades on the opponent's skull .

It was supposed to be a clean stab that finished the battle, however, the Death Knight was not just sitting idly and awaits for its death, it grabbed the maid's hand and slammed her body on the ground, crashing the ground and creating a small dust cloud .

The Death Knight soon followed by a swing of its sword which was aimed at Taliya's chest . The attack contained a special skill of the knight as its dark long sword whistled in the air and emitted a loud battle cry .

Facing the imminent danger, all she could do was raise both of her blades to block the incoming sword, she didn't have enough time to dodge as her body was aching from the earlier slam .

Just as the clash was about to happen, the long dark sword suddenly halted in mid-air, only a few inches away from the maid's blades .

"That's enough, you're not bad . "

It was a very short fight and Taliya appeared to be the physical type due to not using any magic, or maybe she was keeping it for a life-saving situation but it was unlikely as her life was threatened just a moment ago .

It's her bad luck that Death Knights have an incredibly strong defense and are strong warriors . Moreover, this reanimated Death Knight was Lv750, so that's to be expected for her to lose .

She silently stood up and cleaned the dust lingering in her clothes due to the fight, then she shot a glare at Arthur, it was apparent that she was not willing to admit defeat but from the earlier fight, it was obvious who is stronger . He didn't even lift a finger and let his Death Knight fight yet she couldn't beat the second one so what qualifications does she have to fight him personally .

Nonetheless, she achieved her goal as he was going to follow her back to the castle but the bitter feeling of defeat still wouldn't leave her . She is the head maid and an expert in fighting, for her to be defeated this easily proves that this person has a strength matching the Demon Lord, or so she thought .

"Please follow me . "

Begrudgingly, Taliya said that and started walking toward the Demon City . Arthur followed after her while riding his Dark Cloud and in no time, the two of them started running, or more precisely, the maid picked up the pace and the walking turned into jogging which soon became full speed running .

Since he was riding the Dark Cloud, Arthur didn't have to run but he had to admit that her speed was quite fast . Prior to his earlier judgment, she was really hiding her power as her current speed is at least double the one she used in the previous battle .

Nevertheless, no matter how fast she was, it was a simple thing for Arthur to follow her, his Agility was in the millions so he wouldn't be left behind whether it's flying or running . If he used the Lightning Form, arriving at the Demon City in seconds would be a feasible thing .

Since the Demon City was not that far from the place they met, it didn't take them long to arrive at the gates . They passed it without stopping and headed for the huge black castle situated north of the city .

The weather was quite cold since it's the Northern Continent and the snow was covering the roads, people were either at home enjoying some warmth or at the bar drinking some ale .

"How about you switch masters?"

After saying that, Arthur received no response so he thought it might be because she is running which led to her being unable to hear what he said . He waited until they entered an area devoid of people and with noise around and repeated his sentence

"How about you switch masters? I think you're quite capable . "

" . . . I beg your pardon, Sir?"

Arthur was in no way interested in her romantically or sexually, he would not even dare to have such absurd or obscene thoughts or Lucy's damnation would befall on him . It's just that he was feeling lonely and bored, a bit of company would not hurt so much . After experiencing a few days with Robin, it was not so bad to have someone to talk to, especially after those long dreams which made him feel even lonelier .

If he stayed alone until he found Lucy, it may lead to dire consequences as he began feeling frustrated at sudden times and felt like behaving evilly for whatever reasons . Maybe it is his rage from back then or it is his loneliness but not staying alone is definitely not a good thing for him right now .

If he knows for sure that he'll find Lucy in a month or two, he'll definitely bear with it but the problem is, he doesn't know that . What if the weird occurrences of the dreams keep happening, then he'll be doomed . To have someone to chat with, pass the time until he meets Lucy, then he wouldn't mind but then again, Lucy will kill him if she ever sees him with the maid, however, he was prepared for that, if he could see her again then whatever is going happen let it happen .

Although he should be worrying about Taliya's safety and not his, Lucy would most likely accuse her of seducing him and not the other way around well that is if she agrees to his offer in the first place .

Since he couldn't hear him properly, Arthur used Telekinesis to lift her mid-air and float her on board the Dark Cloud . His actions were met with a red dagger flying straight at him but unfortunately, it was easily caught by his two fingers .

"Relax, I'm just doing this to make the trip faster and to chat . Stop being so aggressive . "

She was still glaring at him, she glanced at the caught dagger between his fingers and couldn't help but feel a bit surprised . Of course, she didn't show that on her face as it was kept emotionless .

Purposely, Arthur made the Dark Cloud go slow to be able to talk about his offer with her . Well, he picked her because she seems strong and the loyal type, if she refuses, he could still go look for another person, even a talking pet wouldn't be so bad but that's very rare to find .

Feeling unsafe, Taliya stood up on the Dark Cloud and faced Arthur with both of her blades raised and pointed at him . From the look of it, she didn't trust him one bit .

"Why are you pointing those blades at me when you're the one who invited me to the castle?"

Arthur played with the red dagger in his hand as he talked to the maid, who still taking a defensive stance . After a moment of silence, the two short swords were lowered but Taliya remained standing and her glare never left him .

Arthur had no choice but to sigh and give her back the red dagger, since she was so cautious around him, he even used Telekinesis to pass the dagger because if he approached her, she would definitely

freak out and slash both of her blades at him which would break her weapons and that would be such a pity .

"We'll arrive in a few minutes, why don't we chat in meantime? It's basic courtesy for any maid to entertain the guest . . . isn't it?"

" "

He was only met with silence but Arthur still didn't let the matter go .

"Do you love the Demon Lord?"

Arthur wanted a companion for the time being but he wouldn't forcefully take her . Loyalty can be changed after time but love is harder, if she loves the Demon Lord or has a family then so be it, he'll just search for another one . Jakob or Anastassia won't be a bad choice too but since they are the ones taking care of his sect, then it's better to leave them out of it .

There's Robin too but she has to manage her company too . Aside from those, there's nothing else . Azure Bai would have been a good pick too, it's a shame he can't go back to the Underworld for numerous reasons .

Flustered and stunned by such a sudden and weird question, the maid retorted almost immediately .

"What are you saying? I'm but a servant, I'm a loyal subordinate of the Demon Lord and I have no right to love or have any special feelings towards my superiors, be it my master or anyone of the royal family!"

'Hm? Did I hit a soft spot or does she respect her master that much?'

"Since you're so optimistic if it's about your master, then tell me more about the Demon Lord . "

Except for a few known facts about the Demon Lord, such as him having one fully grown horn indicating how much strong he is, or his good ruling and how much he is loved by his kinsmen, Arthur knew nothing more .

He didn't even know how he looked like . He never had the time to come here and sightsee with Lucy but since he is going to meet the Demon Lord anyway, he might as well ask him about Lucy when the time comes . If there is a chance in a thousand he could find her parents, then he would try his best to do so .

" . . . "

Taliya didn't talk anymore albeit hearing him question her about the Demon Lord . The atmosphere returned to its usual boring silence which Arthur didn't like . He was not the talkative type but he would rather chat than remain silent forever .

With nothing to do but wait for the Dark Cloud to arrive, Arthur picked up the pace and increased the speed by multiple times so they could arrive faster . Taliya wasn't willing to discuss his offer, it was a blunt rejection so he could only ask the Demon Lord, maybe if her master agrees, she would too .

. . .

Three minutes later, the Dark Cloud entered the vicinities of the huge black castle and various guard patrols could be seen walking around the wide garden around the castle . Be it Humans or Demons, it seems that their Royalty likes to have a luxurious castle and a wide beautiful garden around it .

Arthur contemplated the garden and made a note to possess a few flowers that were unique . Lucy was a fond of flowers and thanks to his Race and Nature Magic, every plant he possesses he would be able to grow it back again whenever he feels like it . Of course, it would cost him a bit of Mana but the amount was so little that he could recover it all in just a second .

Seeing Taliya with him, the guards backed off and let the weird Dark Cloud pass the gates and enter the black castle . Although it had quite a unique appearance from the outside, the interior of the castle was honestly breathtaking . With pretty decoration and a cozy furniture .

Unlike the mansion of the Human Emperor, this one didn't have any guards inside of it, it was devoid of any guards, there were butlers and maids but no guards patrolling inside .

A few seconds after the Dark Cloud entered the castle, a teenager boy with a small horn excitedly came down the stairs and seemed to be eagerly waiting for Taliya .

"Taliya! Practice time has already started, I've been waiting for half an hour!"

The boy had short silver hair and a handsome face, one look and you can guess he is from the Royalty . No one knew why but the majority of the Demon Royalty had silver hair, which is why Arthur had a strong guess that Lucy had some relation to them in some way or another .

Even if it's the Demon Lord, if he is really her father and he abandoned her, he is not going to forgive him . He would kill him but he would make him regret his decision then he'll drag him to Lucy and let her deal with him, if she wants to forgive him or kill him, either way, he'll support her .

"Young Master, it's not the time for practice . We have an important guest and I have to lead him to master . "

"Jeeee! That's no fun, you promised to teach me . "

The young man started pouting with an unhappy look but one cold glare from the maid made his face stiffen and his pouting stop . He scratched his head in embarrassment and left as quickly as he came .

She may just be a maid but her position is surely high for her to be able to talk to the prince like that . Taliya jumped off the Dark Cloud and led Arthur to a room deep into the castle .

It's been a while since he saw any butler or a maid around which means that this area is probably restricted . However, if it's a trap laid by the Demon Lord, he wouldn't really care much as they do not have the power to imprison him .

His [Sixth Sense] was constantly spread around him so he could feel several presences lurking in the darkness but they must surely be some special individuals guarding the area against any sneaky invaders .

"The Demon Lord is already expecting you, please come in . "

Taliya stopped in front of a metal door and showed Arthur in . Behind the metal door was a room, devoid of any windows with a round table in its center and several elderly figures sitting around it .

'This must be the council of the demons . '

He read in a book that the Demons have a council of elders that decide about the political matters of their race . Obviously, the Demon Lord has the highest authority but these elderly also have some saying in the matters . If they oppose a decision made by their leader, things could become troublesome .

There were exactly seven people in the room, excluding Taliya and Arthur . Five old men and one middle-aged man, last but not least is a woman who appeared to be in her twenties, she was sitting next to the middle-aged man . All the present people had silver hair but the old men had a darker color, probably due to age .

"Master, I've brought him . "

Taliya gestured for Arthur to enter and then bowed to the present people . She was a maid so she had to show some respect, the maid then turned to leave but an invisible force pressed down on her and a quiet voice rang in her ears .

"Wait for just a second, this matter includes you too . "

Arthur didn't use too much force with the Telekinesis, he just stopped her movement for a bit then let her go . Unfortunately, she turned a deaf ear to him and continued heading out of the room .

She only stopped when the middle-aged man, who supposedly was the Demon Lord, finally talked

"Ah, Taliya . . . good job . You can stay in the room . "

As per her master's orders, Taliya walked behind the middle-aged man and stood there, motionless .

"Esteemed guest, please sit . "

The middle-aged man gestured for Arthur to sit in the only empty seat left . He had an amicable smile hanging on his face and he seemed to be friendly .

Zadahl (Race: Demon): Lv599

Mikayla(Demon Lord) (Race: Demon): Lv794

'I see now . . . I see . . . hahahaha'

Arthur laughed inside of him when the results of the appraisal were displayed in front of him . From the look of it, all present people seemed respectful towards the middle-aged man but the System would never lie or falsify information .

When someone is worshiped by many, such as a God or a Demon Lord, a title would be shown just like this one so the blue window in front of Arthur clearly shows that the woman was, in fact, the Demon Lord and not the middle-aged man . He didn't know why they were acting as if she's just the loyal wife but he wouldn't blurt out that out of the blue, he was curious but he did not want to cause a ruckus and raise suspicions .

"Thank you for your hospitality . Now onto the serious matters, could you enlighten me while would the Demon Lord himself personally invite me here?"

Arthur sat comfortably on the chair, with his back leaning on it and his arms crossed, quite an ambiguous stance but it's not like he cared that much at this point .

"How could you talk to our Lord like that! Behave yourself! Filthy Human!"

One of the elderly men stood up and angrily shouted at Arthur . It was just a Lv210 old man with old bones and wrinkled face, despite his level, Arthur was sure that a blow of wind could take his life . He did not like to be underestimated and he was certainly not a rash or reckless person but he did not like being yelled at by weaklings either .

Combining the invisible threads and Telekinesis, Arthur ruthlessly crushed the old man's vocal cords without mercy . Having created his own humanoid body, Arthur's human anatomy was matchless . Demons were a bit different to Humans but if it's about the body, they were exactly the same except the location of the heart which was the opposite of the Humans .

The old man started coughing blood nonstop, his hands were holding his throat as the pain was too much to bear . Only a few seconds passed yet the old man was already unconscious on the ground .

Taliya was the first to react as she took out her blades and was about to jump at Arthur when the middle-aged man raised his hand and blocked her .

"I don't like being talked at like that by someone who is only good at running his mouth and when it comes to fights, he's the first one falling pathetic . "

Arthur didn't even spare a glance at the unconscious old man . The other geezers were fuming but none of them dared to speak or complain . Seeing that the Demon Lord himself did nothing meant that this guest is not a normal one . Moreover, they didn't even see or how Arthur managed to cut the man's vocal cords and this only made them feel more afraid .

Even the middle-aged man gasped for a second, he knew Arthur was so strong but it's the first time he sees him act . The only one unfazed by this was his wife, the real Demon Lord . She had a long silver hair and a breathtaking appearance, young facial features with two black eyes . She maintained an emotionless face and stared at Arthur whilst remaining silent, she didn't even bat an eye when the old man was wailing from agony .

"Please excuse the rude behavior from our part . "

"No problem . I took out some competition from the play don't you think? Demon Lord~~~"

Arthur talked to the middle-aged man but he glanced at his wife for a second, it was but a glance yet it was instantly noticed by her, who had her eyes glued on him since the second he stepped into this room . From the outside, what Arthur said was directed to the middle-aged man but Mikayla knew it was directed at her, just from that one glance .

Arthur could easily guess that the council was like a second Demon Lord, so getting rid of one of the old men would benefit her, but he didn't do it for her sake but because he didn't like the attitude of that

annoying old man . He didn't want to go too far and kill him or else it would have been interpreted wrongly by the Demon Lord .

With the usual friendly smile, the middle-aged man nodded and was about to say something when Mikayla leaned her head and whispered something in his ears .

"Let's talk privately . "

Her voice was so low that no one but her husband could hear, or so she thought . Arthur easily heard that due to his Dexterity . Excluding his Dexterity, he could come up with at least five skills that enhance his hearing, he just didn't need to use them since his stats are so high, it would just be a waste of time .

The fake Demon Lord nodded to his wife and after coughing a few times he looked at the elderly present and said

"Thank you for granting us your audience, we'd like to talk with our esteemed guest privately . "

He didn't need to say anything else for these wicked bastards to understand his meaning . They were afraid of Arthur so they didn't linger there any extra second .

Very soon, the room was empty of any elderly, there were only four people remaining and the atmosphere was silent and a bit awkward .

Looking at the middle-aged man, Arthur noticed the horn erected to the back, matching the color of his hair . The woman didn't have any horn which was confusing but he didn't question it albeit being a bit intrigued .

...

When Taliya ascertained that the old men left, she whispered something to the fake Demon Lord but he just waved his hand and gestured for her to directly tell his wife since he too came to know that this 'esteemed guest' found out about the real identity of the Demon Lord . Just from his wife's actions, it was easy to conclude that .

Even the council didn't know about that matter since it was their trump card and the one and the most important secret they had to keep .

"What do you want?"

Listening to the soft voice, Arthur was a bit surprised since this voice came out from Mikayla's mouth . He was stunned due to how contrary her voice is to her appearance . Usually, a person with cold eyes and emotionless face, just like Lucy, for example, would have a cold and chilling voice except in unique situations but this Demon Lord had a voice softer than any other person Arthur have ever heard, which is why he was momentarily surprised .

"What do I want? Last I heard, it was you who invited me in here . "

Seeing Arthur talk disrespectfully to her master, Taliya was going to leap at him in any given second, it was a pretty funny sight, to be honest, Arthur was barely holding his laughter as he glanced at Taliya who displayed a serious face yet was in a funny pose .

"Speak your mind, no need for riddles . "

Still insisting he voice out his thoughts, Arthur could only shrug and dive into the matter . He wanted to know why they invited him but if the Demon Lord is going to insist then why not?

While pointing at Taliya, Arthur gazed at Mikayla and casually said

"I want her . "

A moment of silence passed quickly as Arthur corrected his sentence .

"Don't get me wrong, I want her to be my follower not as a toy or whatever you thought . I already asked her but she won't reply, so I'm asking the master instead . "

The smile on the middle-aged man's stiffened, he tried to keep it but he couldn't as he was dumbstruck by what he just heard . As for Mikayla, she was as unfazed as ever, it's either she was expecting that or it just wasn't that surprising to hear that from Arthur .

"Taliya is not an object to be given to anyone, she's a loyal servant for our household she is also my sister . "

'Is that so . '

Arthur didn't expect this but his intentions still didn't change, if she is willing to accompany him then it'll lift some burden off him . He just needs someone from the time being, and it's for the better if it's a strong person and someone you can trust .

He didn't trust Taliya but judging from her behavior, she isn't a bad person, after some time, maybe he'll learn to trust her a bit . The people he really has confidence in and fully trusts can be counted on one hand .

Arthur was prepared to talk again when the surroundings suddenly blurred and his vision darkened . Nothing besides that occurred yet it was enough for him to know that it's happening again and he'll have to endure for another 7 years .

. . .

Unlike what he thought, Arthur found himself in a white space with nothing but him around . He looked around and tried walking in all directions but it leads to nowhere .

Seconds . . . minutes and even hours passed yet nothing happened . It was just Arthur roaming the endless white space . At some point, he even thought he might have died but the probability of that being true is extremely meager .

"Hello there, Arthur . "

Another figure, exactly similar to Arthur suddenly appeared in front of him . It had the same facial features, same hair, eyes, and nose . Even calling him his doppelganger would be an understatement, the figure in front of him is his literal copy .

Arthur had one guess in mind, it's that person who possessed him when he was unconscious after fighting the Gods in the Underworld .

"Who are you?"

It was a bad idea to follow this person's advice and Arthur was truly angry at him but he still maintained a calm attitude and politely asked . For a person to cut him off reality, invade his mind and even possess his body, it's better to be not aggressive against him for the time being, at least until he found a way or a solution to get rid of this invader .

"I'm Arthur . "

"With my appearance and my name? Who are you?"

Arthur's eyes narrowed as he stared at his smiling copy, he couldn't even use any magic or create any weapon or he would have beheaded this smiling bastard although it looks exactly like him, it is not him .

"Who am I? I told you I'm Arthur hahaha"

While barely holding the urge to punch himself, Arthur coldly glared at his copy and said

"Why am I here? What are you doing here?"

The Arthur copy put his hand on his chin and closed his eyes as if he was pondering about something . After maintaining that pose for a couple of seconds, he laughed again and replied

"Hahaha, did you really think I'm here? This is just a message I left but I could guess what you're going to ask so I gave you early answers hahahaha now onto the serious stuff . "

'There is no way this is me . He's so lame '

"You see how wide this white space is? I created it . It's literally endless so that you can fight at your heart's will . "

"Fight?"

Confused by what he heard, Arthur sensed a foreboding danger but he couldn't fathom from where . There were only him and the douchebag in front of him .

"Now before you complain, listen to what I have to say . Did you ever wonder what's that ARK thingy in your status window? No? Well if you did, then you're going to have your answer, and if you never wondered . . . well it's a shame but you'll also be forced to learn to the truth whether you like or not . "

The Arthur copy raised his hand as if he was holding something in it then he resumed talking

"The ARK is something I created to help you specifically . It does not any kind of Energy, neither does it rely on Magic and keep in mind I'm talking about real Magic . It is purely scientific and its only goal is to help you . "

A cubic object appeared above his hand, it floated in the air and had countless small lines engraved on it . The lines would turn from blue to red every now and then but aside from that, its appearance was quite normal .

It was a bit bigger than a fist and was white in color with countless lines on it . Arthur couldn't fathom what's so special about it .

"I know it looks ordinary but the appearance doesn't matter . One of its many functions is to train you, and that is why I'm here today . This message is scheduled to set off when your body has met the minimum requirements to support the weight of the ARK .

Since all of this is new to you, we'll start off easy and just to let you know, your Energy, Health and Stamina Recoveries are increased to 100% . All your stats are lowered to 100 for the sake of the training and your weight is increased by 15 times . All the skills are disabled except the basic ones such as weapons masteries . There is no time limit and no matter how much you're here, not even a second will pass in reality .

Oh and don't die, alright? Having a 100% Health Recovery doesn't help if you're insta-killed, right? hahaha"

Arthur could not even process the first part before his copy suddenly disappeared, leaving the cubic object rotating slowly .

Countdown beginning: 10 . . 9 . . 8 . . 7

"Countdown for what?"

Arthur trying shouting for the robotic voice to explain what's going to happen but there was no response . The countdown reached 0 at last and what's about to happen finally happened .

TITLE: MEAT GRINDER / SEEKER OF KNOWLEDGE / ONE WITH THE SWORD / ARK HOLDER

Level ????

Class: Dark ARK Parasite

Realm: Immortal 5th Grade-

Strength:100

Intelligence:100

Agility:100

Wisdom:100

Vitality:100

Dexterity:100

Health:100 / / Health Regen:100%

Nether Energy:100 / / Nether Energy Regen:100%

Mana:100 / / Mana Regen:100%

Stamina:100 / / Stamina Regen:100%

Creation : 0

Attack:100

Defense:100

Magic defense : 100

Enigma abilities : Telekinesis / Ancient Threads / Sixth sense / ARK(ACTIVATED)

Mental Power : 100

Elemental Resistances:

Fire: 0%

Water:0%

Wind:0%

Earth:0%

Light/holy:0%

Shadow0%

Lightning0%

Ice0%

'It really changed!'

Even his infinite Stamina was turned back to 100 . He trying clenching his fists but the godly physical power he previously had disappeared . Since he entered this space, he could still feel his power but he couldn't use it but now, it literally all went away in just a split second .

From the clean white ground, a big silhouette popped up . It was a three meter tall white humanoid creature . From head to toe, it was all white with no facial features or clothes, it didn't even have a gender .

*Please pick you weapon . *

*List:

One-handed Axe: 10 attacks .

Two-handed Axe: 25 attacks .

Small Shield: 5% block, 5 defense .

Large Shield: 15% block, 25 defense .

....

A long list of weapons was displayed in front of him, the list was so long that he had to scroll down for a couple of minutes . There were all kinds of weapons but their disparity in attack and defense was not that large .

Arthur just chose a katana that looked similar to Makaze and closed the transparent window . He can wield other weapons but he was more comfortable with swords .

Are you ready?

'No . '

Arthur clicked no and spent some time getting used to the katana . He still had his sword mastery but the peak mastery is lost which is a shame or else he wouldn't have to worry even with such low stats . What's more is that his Stamina will run out so quickly so he can't drag out the fight for very long .

'Alright, I'm ready . '

*User approval obtained . Countdown beginning: 10 . . 9 . . 8 . . 7 . . 6 . . . *

Arthur tightly held the katana and faced the weird white thing humanoid creature in front of him . It didn't wield any weapons but it still had a tall height and a big size which was worrying a bit, especially since Arthur had a very low Agility and Dexterity .

Battle: Start!

At the robotic voice's sign, the white creature charged at Arthur and stomped its feet at him . It's been forever for Arthur since he fought this slowly and struggled against such a weak enemy . He may have lost his skills and stats but at least he still had the experience he gained from all the countless battles he had to go through, whether it's in reality or in those 14 years .

Arthur side-stepped away from the incoming foot and slashed his katana horizontally at the white foot . He was expecting to deal some damage but the Katana easily cut through the foot as if it was tofu . It was met with absolutely no resistance and the foot was cut off instantly .

Losing its balance, the white creature fell on the ground but albeit being unable to stand up, it still did a grabbing motion, trying to crush Arthur into minced meat .

Arthur didn't miss this opportunity, he avoided the hands by rolling in between and then did a vertical swing with his katana, cutting off the neck of this weird creature .

*Congratulations! You passed the first phase . *

Arthur was going to breathe a sigh of relief when the other copy of him suddenly appeared .

"Hi, there! If you're seeing this then it means you successfully passed the first phase . It was pretty easy, right? Hahaha, I knew you could manage it . Well, there are two other phases left to finish the beginner phase but it'll come with benefits, trust me . For the second phase, your stats are increased by 10 times but the enemy's strength is multiplied by 50 . You can also use the physical skills but only the basic ones, you can check them before fighting . Oh and here's a precious advice; Don't die! Hahahahaha"

'Lame fucker . . . '

Arthur cursed his copy repeatedly as he wiped the sweat off his forehead and sat down to rest . For some reason, his Stamina decreased by more than half just by doing three moves which are not a

normal thing . He had infinite Stamina since the moment he possessed Zodaik so he never felt tired no matter how much he fights .

The only thing remotely similar to fatigue he experienced is whilst activating all those passives and having to bear with the endless pressure pressing on his mind and causing him mental pain .

...

Another creature appeared, this time had a normal humanoid height but it was still strangely white . It took a stance similar to the karate from Earth, either way, it resembled a martial art stance .

*Please pick your weapon . *

*List:

One-handed Axe: 100 damage .

... *

Arthur picked up his Katana and the second he touched it, the robotic voice rang in his ears again .

*Available skills for swords: Cross Slash Lv1/ Hole in One Lv1/ Dance Harmony Lv1/ Enforcement Lv1 . . . *

A list longer than the weapons appeared in front of Arthur . He didn't even bother reading all of the skills, he picked a few that seemed useful in critical moments and ignored the rest . To read all of those skills, even a day wouldn't be enough as the list kept refreshing and increasing every second .

Are you ready?

'... Ready . . '

Honestly, he didn't even know why he had to do this but for now, he had to take his copy's word and hope these phases would give him decent rewards when he's out of this space and his stats better come back to normal or else he's screwed .

"Come at me, whitey"

Since they are all white, Arthur decided to call it 'whitey', it suits them and he isn't going to waste time to pick a name for each one of them if there's going to be multiple phases then more of these weird creatures will pop up .

A burst of wind was heard as whitey charged at Arthur with incredible speed . Seeing the opponent coming, Arthur didn't just stay idle, he raised his katana and used [Singular Point] .

It's a sword skill that allows the user to see what's the weakness of the opponent at the cost of 150 Stamina . As Arthur expected, it was not just one red point, the whole white figure was in red so it appears that wherever he strikes, it'll deal lots of damage .

[Cross Slash] was executed and two sword arcs made from sheer sword energy were thrown at the incoming whitey, which marvelously evaded the arcs and appeared on the left side of Arthur .

Having no time to dodge, Arthur swung his katana at whitey, performing a backward slash which failed due to it only hitting the air . Whitey crouched down to avoid the slash and did a fast roundhouse kick that sent Arthur flying 5 meters in the air .

Whitey didn't even wait for Arthur to fall on the ground, it dashed at where he's going to fall and kicked his exposed back, sending him stumbling on the ground which was dyed by the blood coming out of his mouth .

Fortunately, Arthur was able to stabilize himself and quickly got up . What's more, his Health was instantly recovered but the pain was still agonizing him . His broken bones were repaired in just a second but the pain was way slower and it took more than a second for it to disappear .

. . .

*Congratulations! You passed the second phase . *

"Hi again! It seems you're owning this beginner phase! I like that! To motivate you more, the stats will be raised ten times but the next enemy will be 25 times stronger . All your attributes will be unlocked but you won't be able to abuse the strong skills, only basic ones will be available . oh and by the way, after you defeat the next enemy, you won't hear another message from me, you'll just earn you rewards .

You can leave if you want after that but you can also train in this space, it cost a bit but you'll find it worth it I think . . . anywayyyyyy I got distracted for a second . I'm going to give you three warnings . One, don't mess with the System or provoke them or even fight against one of them, the fact that you're doing the beginner phase shows how weak you are currently .

Two, it is really unlikely but if you ever meet someone named 'The Joker' then don't mess with him, don't even talk to him, he's one of the only remaining Magic users and you'll just die by his hands, just pray you don't meet him .

Three, Don't mess with the Dragon Race, don't anger them or steal anything from them . That is all I can say, good luck and don't die!"

Arthur was sitting and panting heavily as he barely managed to beat whitey . The martial arts it used was pretty basic but it hits pretty hard and he was sent flying in the air for more times than he could count . Now came the warnings of his copy which left him startled and confused .

He never intended to mess with the Joker after witnessing him fight, neither did he plan on angering the dragons . He fought one in the past but apparently, that was not a real dragon . As for the System, Arthur was skeptical about it, it helped him in many ways but he still found it a strange existence, it even had a universe of its own . Thinking back to Astria, it's probably in the System's universe since all people on it have access to the System and are able to use it .

It was previously said that this beginner phase has only three phases, he just finished two so there was only one remaining . Thinking back to the previous enemy he just faced, Arthur decided to rest a bit and get used to his stats a bit more .

With the attributes added, Arthur can now fight more efficiently . Once he checked the attributes he could use, he was delighted to find out that the fire attribute is switched to the ancient fire attribute but there was no Dark Magic, no scrolled down but there was no sign of the Dark Magic .

Cursing the smug face and lame attitude of his copy, Arthur closed the window and picked a weapon and started preparing for the last fight .

'This better be worth it or I'll swear I'll beat the living hell out of him if he shows up in front of me again .
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Chapter 154

Having his stats increased by another ten times hugely boosted Arthur's capabilities and battle power . With the ancient fire and the other attributes now unlocked, albeit only being able to use basic skills, it'll surely be useful in countless ways . Whether it's the Shadow Attribute or the destructive and unextinguishable flames .

Arthur used more than an hour to get used to his current strength and to test several magical attacks . He was still going to use a katana but this time, he'll make proper use of his attributes to either slow down the opponent or even blind his vision to guarantee a successful attack .

Please pick your weapon

*List:

One-handed Axe: 1,000 damage

. . . . *

'Give me the usual Katana . '

Do you wish to pick 'Sharp Katana: 850 damage?

'Yes'

A long katana which was a bit curved appeared in Arthur's hand . He swung it a few times and confirmed the beginning of the last phase . He picked a katana when he started adjusting his body but when he tried slashing the ground, the weapon broke into countless pieces . Not even his flames could scratch the clean white ground .

*The last phase will be against yourself . Your opponent will wield the same weapon, skills, and techniques but he will have stats that are higher than yours .

. . . . Countdown beginning: 10 . . 9 . . 8 . . 7 . . 6 . . *

'Myself?'

Once he heard he's going to fight himself, Arthur was first confused than surprised . He thought that maybe he'll fight that lame copy of his but that seemed rather unlikely as when it talked to him an hour ago, it said that they'll not meet after he cleared the phase but then again, it never said that they'll not meet when the phase begins .

As he was contemplating and pondering what 'himself' meant, Arthur was interrupted when a weird sound rang in his ears and diverted his attention to its source .

Usually, whitey and his brothers would pop from the white ground and began to construct into a humanoid shape but this time, a strange black door appeared .

The door slowly opened whilst emitting some creaking sounds and from the other side, Arthur could only see total darkness and nothing more .

It was only after a few seconds that a figure similar to Arthur entered the white space through the black door . It wore the same clothes as him but the face was sinister as it was grinning evilly and displaying an unpleasant face . If Arthur had to pick, he would definitely pick the lame copy over this one . At least the copy was just lame and talkative but this one was silent and creepy, if not for its appearance, he would never have thought that it's him .

Arthur's copy also wielded a katana but its katana was jet black and looked a bit threatening with a black aura around it, in some ways, it resembled Makaze but this weird system training Arthur wouldn't be so unfair as to give Makaze to his opponent, right?

The battle began when Arthur's copy launched itself at Arthur, the black katana slashed the air and created several dark arcs made from pure sword energy, at the same time, it used the Earth attribute to raise three walls around Arthur to stop him from dodging its attacks .

It was quite a clever tactic, even Arthur was momentarily startled as he thought of using it not a second ago yet here it is using his plan against him . Seeing the incoming materialized sword energies, Arthur used [Earthen Wall] under his feet to raise a small wall that flung him 60 degrees toward his copy .

With the boost gained from the ball and adding his high stats, Arthur rotated his body mid-air and swung his katana down at the incoming attacks . He only swung it one time, it was a slow swing but you could hear a loud sound emanating from his katana .

[Hole in One Lv1]: The user sacrifices 15% of his current Health to unleash a devastating attack (can be used with any weapon or with bare fists) .

Arthur didn't hesitate as he used [Hole in One] and added Natural Lightning to his slash to further strengthen it and to ascertain its success in blocking the sword energies and hurting his copy .

Unlike the sword energies created by his copy, the attack he just unleashed was not in the form of a curved arc but it was a bright green beam that shot at the black arcs and cut through them all . All that was left was dissipating sword energies that slowly vanished in the white space .

As for the green beam, it shot at his copy with an unbelievable, its momentum and power were truly incredible . Unfortunately for Arthur, he was fighting himself and albeit using a strong attack and perfectly blocking such strong sword energies, it will not be easy to fight an opponent several times stronger than him .

His copy passed its hand on its black katana, making it glow with a dark red flame then it leaped at the green beam and stabbed its katana at the green beam .

With its flaming katana, Arthur's copy kept grinning as it cut the green beam in two and was only pushed back a few steps by his attack . It sustained no damage and to further worsen the situation, it didn't just linger there after deflecting his attack .

It suddenly teleported in front of Arthur and struck with its flaming sword, clearly aiming for his neck . In response to that, Arthur raised his Katana to block and used his other free hand to punch his copy's chest . A katana was met with another katana and his fist was also blocked with his copy's fist, a totally symmetric position .

As they were trying to overpower each other, Arthur used [Flame Spear] and tried to stab his copy in the back but the dark red spear was blocked by an [Earthen Wall] that suddenly appeared from below . The spear easily destroyed the wall but it was met with another wall and so on until it was dissipated .

'It seems the ancient flames was weakened . . . definitely!

No matter how many walls are raised, a flame spear like that would be able to easily penetrate all of them with ease yet the flame spear he just used dissipated after destroying four walls .

Seeing his copy still smirking, clearly mocking him for using such weak and useless tricks . Arthur let go of the Katana, which was instantly cut in two pieces but he didn't care about that, he concentrated his power in his leg and used [Enhancement] then he performed a roundhouse kick and struck his copy in its waist on the right side .

[Enhancement]: The Physical damage done by the user will be increased .

Cost: 75 Stamina per sec .

His copy was a second too late to block the incoming kick but it was only sent flying after a bit of its katana penetrated two inches in Arthur's right shoulder .

It was a fair trade but that's what any spectator would think, however, Arthur's kick was way more powerful than his copy's strike .

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The copy was sent stumbling on the ground and rolling dozens of meters away from Arthur . The right side of its waist was completely shattered due to Arthur's kick, it took it a couple of seconds to properly get up and stabilize its body .

"Wipe that creepy ass smile off your face and come at me . "

Arthur was the one smirking right now, he didn't even bother checking his wound, it was not too serious and with his current Vitality, it wouldn't take much for it to heal . The same thing goes for his Copy but shattered bones would take a bit more times even though the copy has higher stats .

Having his weapons cut in two pieces, Arthur had physical weapons to use so he could only conjure two sharp flaming daggers in each hand . He didn't wait for his enemy to recover, with two flaming daggers in his hands, he rushed at the opponent and when he was around 10m away from the grim faced copy, he suddenly created a clone of himself using [Shadow Magic] and instantly teleported behind his copy .

It's a bit surprising that the clone skill of the Shadow Magic was considered a basic skill but Arthur was not going to complain, it's available and useful so he had to use it .

The clone did as ordered and used the two fakes flaming daggers to slash at the knees of the copy . As for Arthur, who just teleported behind his opponent, he sliced with his daggers, using the assassin's two deadly skills [Backstab] and [Slice and Dice] .

[Backstab]: The user attacks from behind guaranteeing a critical hit and dealing 350% damage .

[Slice and Dice]: A fast hack of both the user's daggers (185% damage) . It can be used as a combo after using [Backstab] and in that case, it'll also deal a critical hit and deals 370% damage and activates the bleeding effect for 15 seconds .

The copy was not an opponent to be underestimated but albeit being created by the ARK, it was by no means a stupid opponent, it could even be considered a sentient being .

It realized that the frontal Arthur was just a clone when it felt a chilling aura behind its back . It was too late to use [Faster Than Death] but blocking is another thing . It tried to mimic Arthur and used [Earthen Wall] to fling itself high in the air, avoiding the flying daggers and Arthur's deadly combo but such tactic was already foreseen by Arthur .

"Oh no you won't!"

As the combo was going to land, Arthur made use of the Ice attribute and froze all the ground around him and his copy to make it impossible for a fast and sudden earthen wall to pop up from the ground . It may not stop the wall from coming out but it'll drastically slow it and buy him enough time to land his combo .

With it being in such a desperate situation, the clones abandoned any thoughts of facing the flying daggers and turned around and used its black katana to block the flaming daggers of Arthur .

"Haha, fool!"

As Arthur mocked his copy, his two daggers were met with the katana and his combo was blocked before the second skill was activated but all of this was expected by Arthur . The two flaming daggers which his clones threw at his copy suddenly merged together and transformed into a big fireball .

The copy turned its back and ignored the daggers because it deemed Arthur's combo to be more dangerous and deadly than two flying daggers which were thrown by a clone made by Shadow Magic but what it didn't expect is that those daggers were real ones and Arthur planned this from the start, the moment he teleported, he secretly passed his daggers to the clone and conjured another pair just as he appeared behind his copy .

'BOOOM'

The fireball hit the copy's back, burning its clothes and making it wail and fly high up in the air . Arthur decided to fall back just as the fireball was going to hit or else he'll be hurt too since his fire resistance has been lowered .

"Now the final touch . "

Arthur let go of his flaming daggers and jumped at his copy, which just crashed into the ground and wailed from pain caused by the flames .

'It's sentient after all fascinating yet scary . . . '

Arthur showed no mercy as he stood next to his copy which was rolling on the ground and trying to touch its back .

'ting ting ting'

Low noises made from the invisible threads were heard, the threads twirled around the copy's limbs and without any hesitation, Arthur used a bit of force and severed all the copy's limbs then he looked at its eyes, which were staring at him fearfully, and said .

"A copy can never beat an original, you may have my skills but not my memories or battle experience . So what if you're a lot stronger in terms of stats? Numbers are not everything and this clearly shows it . "

A white drill the size of a fist was created by countless small threads, it spun with a fast speed and penetrated the copy's skull, killing it on the spot and finishing this beginner's phase once and for all .

*Congratulations! You passed the third phase . *

*Congratulations! You finished the Beginner's Phase . *

*Performance:

Physical Score: 97/100

Skills Score: 71/100

Magic Score: 66/100

Battle Score: 78/100

Weapon Score: 6 . 5/10

Time Spent: 134 minutes 49 seconds . 'Average'

Overall score: 75/100 'Great Job' *

Rewards: +4 Grades, +40% to Health/Stamina/Energy Regen . +25M to all stats . +40 Creation . *

'These are definitely worth it . . . '

Arthur contemplated the rewards and was ecstatic as they were really incredible, especially the increase in Grades . Each breakthrough in a grade makes the limit of his stats a bit higher than the last one, so he can possess more corpses and add more stats each time he broke through to a higher Grade . Moreover, he gained another boost in stats too .

Although he doesn't use the Lost Magic which was related to the Creation stats in battle, it's nevertheless useful in many ways . There is also the tactic of flash bombs, it was quite useful last time so Arthur was planning on creating more in times of despair so he could use them to escape or the blind an enemy .

He can also create simple clothes and countless weapons, be it swords or guns but they are not very powerful, the stats are considered cheat for normal people but compared to Makaze, it's literally nothing .

On his own, Makazer increases by 4 million in Agility and 5 in Strength and it stopped at that only because Arthur had to breakthrough as the sword's power matched its master's .

"So how can I leave this place?"

Arthur faced the rotating cube and questioned, there was only him and that object in this endless white space and he was given no information or instruction on how to leave .

*You can leave by holding the ARK and saying 'Dra'lim' . You can also choose to stay and train more, all your stats and skills have been recovered and they will only be revoked again in case you enter the next trial . "

"Next Trial . "

*You do not meet the necessary requirements for the next trial: Divine Realm 5th Grade . *

"But my battle power is way above the Divine Realm, doesn't that count? If we're talking about Stats, mine should equal a God's . "

*Numbers are irrelevant . To gain access to the next trial, you need to reach the Divine Realm 5th Grade . *

"Irrelevant you say we'll see about that in the future . How do I enter the ARK again from outside?"

*To enter the ARK, all you need to do is say 'Dra'lka' . You cannot enter the ARK whilst being in battle-mode . *

Arthur nodded and walked to the cube, ready to leave this place . For now, he'll settle his matter with the Demon Lord and he'll return here to investigate more .

'Dra'lim'

Arthur said the words and instantaneously, his surroundings warped and his mind became hazy whilst his body felt as if it was carrying a mountain . It was the same exact feeling as when he was experiencing those weird dreams, however, this one was a bit tenser than usual .

The process took mere seconds but for Arthur, it felt like an eternity with the pain striking his mind and disturbing his thoughts, making him unable to move properly or think of a way to stop it, he was totally helpless .

It finally ended when Arthur's eyes opened and landed on Mikayla, the Demon Lord . He couldn't help but cough a mouthful of black blood . It was a sudden action made by him which alerted Taliya and the others but none of them acted, they just stared at him startled and confused .

After all, he just coughed blood out of nowhere . The husband and Taliya thought that the Demon Lord used her special eyes to damage Arthur but the silver-haired woman softly shook her head as she was just as confused as them .

Arthur was stuck in the white space for a long time but in reality, it was just two seconds, just enough time to blink his eyes .

The black blood was not a bad sign but Arthur felt a strong headache for some reason . He could feel his muscles and bones strengthening and hardening, his Mental Power grew to an unbelievable degree and he could feel an immense power inside his Dantian .

He just grew by four Grades and earned a lot of stats, so such a feeling is common but the weird thing is an annoying headache which wouldn't stop even after a couple of seconds have passed since he came out of the ARK .

'I wasn't warned about this!'

Arthur activated the pain Immunity which lifted some of the pain away but not all of it, nonetheless, Arthur bore with it and shifted his focus to the three others .

"Do not mind that . "

Arthur waved his hand, burning the black blood which splattered on the ground . He didn't know what it was exactly as it clearly wasn't normal blood but he had a strong hunch that they are impurities or something that was inside of him and hurting him, now that it's out then there is no need to think about it .

Now that the pain quietened and the matter of the ARK has been put aside, Arthur went back to the main topic .

"So you're saying you don't want to negotiate?"

Arthur clearly heard what the Demon Lord said earlier and it seems she regards the maid highly and trying to win her over would be practically impossible . He wasn't interested in political topics and since Mikayla didn't seem to be the kind of person of who abandons her people, just giving priceless treasures wouldn't change her decision .

Moreover, Taliya is the Demon Lord's sister so that adds to her importance for Mikayla . Although it was regrettable, Arthur wasn't going to insist too much, if he's lucky, he'll find a person like Mikayla so he can pass the time with him, at least until he finds Lucy .

With nothing more to do here, Arthur got up from his seat and prepared to leave the room as there is nothing else to talk about, at least nothing he was interested in talking about . There was the matter of Lucy's origins but seeing Mikayla's demeanor, he was absolutely sure she wouldn't talk whether he talked to her with a friendly attitude or tortured her .

"Wait . "

With the usual cold and calm voice, the Demon Lord stopped Arthur as she kept staring at him but there was a soft frown on her face as if she was struggling with something .

"The negotiations are over . Except for your maid, I'm not interested in anything else, no need to waste our time talking about something that will lead to nowhere . "

Arthur didn't even bother turning to look at Mikayla as he continued walking out of the room but he halted in his steps once heard the next sentence .

"I never said I won't hand my head maid to you, you just assumed that by yourself . However, I won't give my sister for an unknown person for a treasure or an object that is but a means to an end . "

"Then stop talking in riddles and get straight to the point . What do you want?"

Arthur faced the Demon Lord and stared into her eyes, it was but a stare but for Mikayla, she felt as if she was engulfed by a dark abyss . His eyes were sharp and cold as if she was going to be devoured alive at any second .

It was just the effect of [Bloodlust], it was quite effective since she's weaker than him but she managed to resist it, contrary to Rey who couldn't even lift a finger after being affected by it .

The Demon Lord dropped her head and stared at the floor, seemingly lost in thought . She only snapped out of it when the middle-aged man tapped her shoulder . There was a hint of sadness and bitterness lingering on her face, especially in her eyes . Some unwillingness and hesitation, as if she wasn't sure about what to do .

" . . . I want you to destroy the Human Empire . "

As if expecting to hear that, Arthur gave an almost immediate answer .

"That is not possible . "

" . . . Then help the Demons invade the Human Empire . "

Whilst shaking his head, Arthur shrugged his shoulders and casually replied

"That is practically the same thing . I can't personally help you invade the Human Empire but I can give you an army . "

Mikayla had some hopes after discovering how strong Arthur was but these two replies crushed all her hopes . She didn't need to see his real strength to know the difference between the two of them . He immediately knew she was the real Demon Lord and just a stare from him made her body shiver on its own . That is more proof than needed .

"Army?"

Arthur nodded his head and waved his hand, spawning a normal skeleton warrior . The strongest normal skeleton that he could summon is a Lv150 Skeleton but that is if he doesn't Mental Power . Necromancy didn't use Mana since the moment he broke through the Mortal Realm but if he uses Mental Power, then the spawned undead would be much stronger, however, the regen of Mental Power took hours if not days .

The skeleton wielded a rusty blade and a black shield that was half of its size . He could also spawn a mage or archer skeletons, as for Death Knights and such, the price would cost more and he wasn't willing to give the Demon Lord such strong Undead under her command .

It would cause a lot of trouble if the current balance on Astria is broken because of him . The current situation is calm despite a few small wars but it isn't too threatening . The clans are reclusive and just compete against each other, as for the Humans and Demons, it's fine as long as the current stalemate situations remain for some time until his sect starts establishing peace .

He wasn't going to order Anastassia to rule over Astria, but he's still going to stop these two Races from battling any further and causing countless casualties . The enemy may come at any second to attack the World Tree and they should unite instead of doing needless wars for small pieces of lands or stupid political reasons .

"This is a normal Skeleton with a Level of 150, I can spawn as many as you want of these, however, you must first tell me the reason you want to destroy the Human Empire . "

Each time the word Human was mentioned, a look of disgust and hatred would appear on their faces, their loathe and hate for the Humans seemed to be really deep so Arthur wanted to know why is it like this . As for as he knew, the Human Emperor didn't seem to be the tricky and evil person who only seeks power, he could also be mistaken but that was far unlikely .

Mikayla didn't seem the rush or idiotic type too, so he was curious on why these two rulers are battling each other and waging wars when they can remain in their own continent and just stay at peace . After all, there were countless perks in creating an alliance between them .

Humans and Demons may loathe each other but there can be reconciliation, maybe not today or this year, but after a decade or a century of an alliance, a change may occur .

...

The middle-aged man was the one who couldn't hold it any longer, with a clenched fist and a shaky voice, he explained to Arthur the real situation .

"W-we never wanted to rule Humans maybe the previous Demon Lord had other motives . . . b-but"

As he was going to finish, Mikayla stared at him, motioning him to stop talking but he just softly smiled back at her and took her hand, reassuring her and resumed speaking .

"It's fine . If we got the number we can finally "

With a resolute look, the middle-aged man looked at Arthur and added

"It was about five years ago, the Human Empire had a spy who managed to attain a high position in the Demon Ranking . The spy managed to invade our manor and successfully kidnapped out beloved daughter since that night, we never stopped our assault on the Humans and sent many experts to try and retrieve her but we couldn't even locate where she is . "

Hearing this, Arthur was a bit confused because when he visited the Human Emperor last time, he didn't see any strong presence guarding him . It was obvious that the Demon Lord was way stronger than the guards around the Emperor but why is it that they were not possible to retrieve their daughter?

" . . . Humans are a weaker Race than us, however, they can reproduce quickly and their numbers far exceed us, albeit having more power, we cannot foolishly engage in all-out war and risk the lives of all

our Race just for the sake of our daughter . Moreover, the Human Emperor has two many experts around him at all times, even my wif-- The Demon Lord cannot beat them . "

'Two guards? That's impossible!'

Arthur would have definitely sensed them . Although he wasn't that strong when he visited the Emperor last time, his level was low but his strength was quite frightening compared to mortals . Moreover, he slapped the Emperor's wife last time, if there was indeed two guards, they would have acted last time . There's got to be a mistake somewhere .

"Are you sure? Two guards? Last time I checked, he had no one strong next to him . "

"Last time you checked?"

Taliya never had a good impression of Arthur, hearing what he just said, her suspicions of him being a human spy were strengthened even further .

"Yes, I visited him a few years ago and he didn't have any powerful guards with him . "

Mikayla pieced somethings together, and before her sister could talk, she hesitantly spoke

"D-don't tell me the large undead army stationed around the Human Continent is yours?"-Mikayla

"Yes, it was a gift from me to the Emperor . "

"A-a gift? I knew it! You're with the filthy Humans!"

Taliya couldn't maintain her calm attitude, she unsheathed both her short blades and charged at Arthur, intending to finish him once and for all .

Taliya didn't even cross the small distance of a dozen meters before she was frozen mid-air but Arthur's strings . She was a bit rash but not idiotic, Arthur was not ruthless to the point of killing her for doing this .

Taliya struggled and tried moving her blades to cut the strings but that was only wishful thinking as she couldn't even move an inch . She could only stare at him hatefully, with piercing eyes, wishing she could rip him into pieces .

In the endless Void, the surroundings were as creepy and ominous as ever, with countless bright flashes far away and small destroyed planets everywhere .

The Grim Reaper was floating in the Void with its long gray scythe in its hands and its two eyes pulsating with a red light . It was silently floating in a specific direction and all the spatial tears and unusual fluctuation didn't affect it one bit . It passed through them as if they didn't exist in the first place .

The Grim Reaper floated for an unknown amount of time, it didn't care about time nor did it care about what's happening around it, it had a job to do and nothing can kill a Grim Reaper except Death Itself .

The trip was boring and unexciting, the Grim Reaper only stopped after he was met with an unexpected encounter . With its two eyes still pulsating but a bit more rapidly, as if it was happy, the Grim Reaper looked ahead and spoke with a cold and chilling voice

"You're the top target on my list, I would say what a coincidence to meet you here but I can't think of it as a coincidence, knowing who you are . Am I wrong, Joker? Or should I call you 'The Playful Magician'? Or Godslayer? Or even 'the last surviving person from the Omega Universe?'"

A funny-looking joker that resembled the one in a normal deck of cards appeared a distance away from the Grim Reaper . It played with two cards in its hand and displayed a wide grin on its face .

"Hahahaha, it's nice to meet you again, really nice! Hahahaha, I remember last time you put up a good fight!"

The scythe in the Grim Reaper's hand transformed into a bigger black scythe with a white skull in its center, the appearance was horrifying and its size was simply too big for the Grim Reaper to wield it as its weight alone must be astonishing yet the skeleton easily swung it around as it was weightless .

"Last time huh? It must be before I died the life of a Grim Reaper is quite long after all now there will be no distractions or interruptions shall we begin?"

"Hahahahahaha! That's how I like it! Less talking and more fighting, it's always fun to play a game!"

With a strange posture and an inclined back, the Joker stared at the Grim Reaper with its yellow eyes and added

"It isn't a game if there is no prize right? Hahahahah, name what you want!"

". . . . You really live up to your reputation if it's a game you want then it shall be! I have a lot of free time you see . . . I wouldn't mind how you survived and were the only surviving person of your Universe . Even my master, Death itself it quite curious about that . . . I can't say I'm not too . "

Hearing about this topic again, the aura around the Joker became colder and more domineering, his eyes sharpened but his smirk remained . After keeping silent for a few seconds, he laughed again and replied

"Hahahahah! So it is the truth you seek, you're not the first one but truth comes with a price, hahahahaha! The only way to beat me if to kill me, to defeat me without killing me is hahahahahahaha! Let's play let's play!!!! In return, if I win, I want your life!"

The battle finally began when the Joker charged at the Grim Reaper . Although there was no place to walk or run on, the Joker was casually running on the Void which is not something that can be easily done . Even the Grim Reaper had to float or fly to move around .

From what Arthur previously saw, on board of that old looking ship, the Joker had an incredible physical strength, he overpowered all his enemies with simple roundhouse kicks or punches . He would sometimes use his cards but he focused mainly on his physical ability .

The distance that was separating them was crossed in a very short time by the smirking Joker, he did a push kick straight at the Grim Reaper's chest but his talon boot was stopped by the big scythe which covered almost all of the Reaper's body .

The Joker ignored the Scythe and just as his boots were going to meet with the scythe, he rotated mid-air and used his other foot to perform a back kick which hit the sharp side of the scythe .

His movements were flawless and incredibly fast, by the time the Grim Reaper was able to react, he was already flung away by the strong power behind the Joker's kick . Although his weapon blocked most of the attack, he was still pushed back .

"You know that Physical attacks won't work on me, it's just a waste of time . "

Whilst saying that the Grim Reaper stabilized his body and faced the Joker, who was still grinning creepily .

Turning a deaf ear to the opponent, the Joker laughed and ran towards the Grim Reaper, clearly planning to use physical attacks just like a second ago .

The Grim Reaper may be practically immortal, but albeit not sustaining any damage from the Joker's physical attacks, he isn't going to underestimate his enemy and just stay still and let himself be flung around in the endless Void .

It fully knew the Joker's capabilities and although it told Arthur it was Immortal, it is actually not . It had died many times in the past and there is a number of things which can hurt it .

The Joker was on top of its list for a reason and it is certainly not going to hold back .

The large scythe slashed the Void and conjured several old looking skeletal heads that wailed and dived at the Joker . At the same time, the Grim Reaper opened a small rift in the Void and entered it . It didn't take it a split second to appear from another rift just behind the Joker .

"It is not good to be stubborn, Godslayer!"

The Grim Reaper activated another special power, it gripped the Void and rotated its free hand creating a purple whirlpool which was a bit similar to the one Zodiak used against Delia .

With a large whirlpool behind him and a dozen wailing skeletal heads to the front, the Joker was in a bad situation but he didn't even show a worried look, in fact, his laugh became louder and his smirk widened .

"Hahahahaha! Yes yes, this is what I want!"

The Joker lifted his left hand which had a normal looking card and said

"3♣ Serpent Creed!"

Seeing the Joker using the cards, the Grim Reaper knew that the fight finally started . Everyone who knew about the Joker or heard rumors, they would know he is a Real Magic user but no one knew how he used the Magic .

He didn't rely on any kind of Energy but pure Magic, the one told in ancient tales and legends . He came from a Universe that didn't have any Energy so its inhabitants used Magic but something happened and the universe was obliterated with no survivor but this psychopath Joker .

A black snake appeared around the hand that was holding the card, it was barely fit around the Joker's hand . Its eyes were empty and everything, including its sharp fangs, were black .

The serpent blurred after it just appeared and soon, it turned into a serpent looking claws with its fangs being the sharp edges of each finger . The Joker didn't even spare a look to his new claws, he just swung his hand at the wailing skulls and instantly got rid of them .

It was hard to explain what happened as the skulls just turned blurry and then dissipated into the Void . What was left was the fearsome whirlpool . It spun slowly yet the aura and pressure it was emitting were horrifying .

The Joker backed away a few steps, pointed his claws at the whirlpool then closed his fist .

"What do you think is more powerful, your attack, or my lovely serpent? Hahahahaha . "

The fist pointed at the whirlpool turned into a black blob which in turn transformed into a serpent head that was hissing . The serpent head opened its mouth and spit what seemed to be a black foggy beam which shot straight toward the whirlpool's center .

Such whirlpools were quite enigmatic and unlike any usual clash, no explosion happened, the black beam kept shooting inside of the whirlpool but the latter was devouring all the attack as if it was nothing .

Despite seeing his attack not doing a thing, the Joker kept laughing and the serpent never stopped spitting the long endless beam, powered by whatever power the Joker was using .

The Grim Reaper didn't stay still and watch, it vanished again and used the same method as earlier to appear behind the Joker .

The large Scythe was slashed at the back of the Joker yet the target was still laughing as if he was never in danger . The Scythe was just going to strike his back when two more Jokers appeared from both directions of the Grim Reaper . Both of them punched the Grim Reaper on its chest, sending it flying far away .

" 2♥ Heart's Haze!"

At the same time the Grim Reaper was sent flying, the whirlpool couldn't hold it anymore and exploded in countless purple dots that were made from Void .

"Hahahaha! It is quite simple when you figure out how the Void works! You have to try harder or else it'll be boring! Come on come on!!!"

The Grim Reaper still sustained no damage from the two punches but it wasn't that happy because dealing with the Joker wouldn't that easy . Honestly, it never expected or even wished for its whirlpool to work, it was only meant to slow the Joker for a bit .

After getting rid of the whirlpool, the Joker turned around and dashed toward the Grim Reaper again but this time, two more Jokers joined the fray and charged at the Grim Reaper too .

They immediately charged at the opponent since the moment they punched it so they were a bit ahead of the real Joker . They attacked from the left and right side of the Grim Reaper, they didn't even let it adjust its body or stop it from being flung away, they were just too fast compared to it but their attacks were not dealing any damage .

The first Joker to reach the Grim Reaper did an Axe kick aimed at the target's head, as for the second Joker, it sidestepped behind the Grim Reaper before it was sent flying down and used his knee to strike the Reaper's back, pushing it toward the incoming real Joker .

With no way to retaliate against such a speed, the Grim Reaper could only raise its scythe and spin its body like a car's wheel as it was pushed toward the Joker .

Using the serpent again, the Joker made a grabbing motion with his serpent . The black serpent head appeared again and the serpent's mouth was opened horizontally with its black fangs ready to kill anything in its way .

The Grim Reaper spun its entire body along with the large scythe, from afar, it looked like a sharp black wheel . A gray fog was being emanated from the large black wheel as it made its way toward the Joker, who was happily waiting for it with a creepy smirk .

It didn't take long from the black serpent head and the large wheel to clash with each other . Sounds similar to lightning were ringing in the Void, long lines exactly similar to lightning streaks were raging around the Joker and the Grim Reaper .

The purple lines were hitting everything around it, whether it's scattered rocks or spatial tears that were occurring around them . The clash lasted for twenty seconds before both of them were pushed back . The Joker was surprisingly pushed further and a ten-inch blade slash appeared on his left shoulder . You could even see blood stains on his clothes .

As for the Grim Reaper, it didn't look like he suffered any damage but the Joker was not that weak or stupid to the point that he could not deal any damage even with his Magic .

"You cannot be injured? Hahahahah, this is the funniest joke I've ever heard since a long time hahahaha"

The Joker examined his wound but when seeing the bloodstains, he became more excited as his yellow eyes brightened . He touched his wound and licked the blood that appeared on his finger .

"2♥ Heart's Haze! 3♣ Serpent Creed!"

As the Joker shouted this again, both the black serpent and the two Jokers behind him turned into a card but this wasn't the end . The two cards floated in front of the Joker, he caught them and spoke again

"5♦ Magician's Hat!"

The two cards merged together and a black Magician's hat appeared along with a red stick above it . The Joker grinned and grabbed both of them whilst saying

"Do you wish to see a magic trick? It's simple hahahahah! What do you think will come out from here?"

The Joker pointed the stick toward the hat in his hand and asked the Grim Reaper, which was already flying at him .

The Scythe was no longer in its hands, it now wielded a decayed bronze sword that had countless terrified faces engraved on it, it was a creepy looking sword with a withering aura around it .

"Giving me the silent treatment? Hahahaha, then I'll answer for you . . . it's a PIGEON! Hahahahaha"

The moment he finished his sentence, the stick tapped on the black hat and instantly, a white pigeon which couldn't be more normal came out of the hat .

The pigeon landed on the Joker's shoulder and as it did, the wound caused by the Grim Reaper was healed in a split second, even the ripped clothes were recovered as if they were brand new .

This was not the end of the pigeon's role, the Joker put the hat on his head and took a funny posture as he waited for the Grim Reaper's broken and decayed sword to hit him .

The Grim Reaper may be slower than the Joker but a huge margin but his speed could be considered terrifying compared to his foes, it's just that the Joker had a speed that exceeded all limits .

When it was a short distance away from the Joker, the Grim Reaper did a grabbing motion and used its Gravitational Laws . An invisible yet strong grabbing force pushed the Joker closer to the Reaper, which stabbed its sword straight at the Joker's heart .

As he was pushed straight toward the incoming danger, the Joker raised the stick that came out with the hat and tapped the Void just before he was going to be stabbed by the sword .

That tap seemed simple but a sword exactly similar to the one the Grim Reaper was using instantly appeared in the Joker's hand and replaced the stick .

Using the newly acquired sword, the Joker stabbed the Grim Reaper in the same way it was done to him and the two decayed swords struck each other .

"Do you really think you Magic can mimic something Death personally created?"

As it was saying that, the Grim Reaper's decayed sword easily shattered the copy created by the Joker and directly stabbed the Joker's heart . No resistance was met as the decayed sword penetrated the Joker .

Still smirking despite being hit, the Joker's other free hand which was hidden behind his back was lifted . The hand was holding yet another card .

"5♣ Cape of Deception"

A white cape appeared on the Joker's back, it flapped by itself and created rainbow light that covered the Joker and the Grim Reaper .

The pigeon that was standing on the Joker's shoulder suddenly disappeared but so was the decayed sword . Both of them disappeared and in just a second, the two switched places, the Joker immediately grabbed the sword and slashed at the Grim Reaper, which was now holding the pigeon .

The pigeon tried to break free of the creepy hand of the Grim Reaper but it couldn't and was instantly killed by the strong grip of the enemy .

Seeing the decayed sword being slashed at it, the Reaper was alerted, it used Gravitational Laws to push itself away from the Joker but just as it used the special laws, the white cape of the Joker flapped again and the same rainbow lights circled around both of them, making the Reaper unable to execute his laws .

Unable to avoid the decayed sword, the Grim Reaper stretched its hand toward the Joker's new wound created by the sword's stabs . Clearly, the Reaper was prepared to trade a wound for a wound since it couldn't avoid the sword .

"Hahahaha!"

The Joker ignored the stretched hand and slashed at the Grim Reaper, cutting its whole left arm . The sword was met with no resistance as it cleanly and easily cut the supposedly hard black bones of the Reaper . As for the Reaper itself, its hand dived through the Joker's flesh and attempted to grab his heart but it found nothing .

"Hahahah, I can switch your weapon with my lovely pigeon, what makes you think I can't change the position of my heart? Hahahahaha"

Despite not being able to successfully grab his heart, the Grim Reaper's hand still did significant damage as a withering aura dived deep into the Joker's lungs and created a gaping hole in his chest . Blood came out of his lips as he was pushed back .

One left an arm and the other was internally injured yet the Joker didn't show any signs of anger or rage, he was still smirking even with an injury like that .

"You entertain me everytime we meet, always with a new thing, Hahahahahaha"

The white cape and the hat disappeared as the Joker lifted his hand which was holding a card but this time, the card contained the image of a Joker . . .

Chapter 155

"Please do not misunderstand . It's true that I gifted the Emperor an army but that it does mean I'm his or your ally . I'm neither Human nor Demon and the war between of you does not concern me nor do I want to waste my time with that .

Although I consider him as a friend, I'll not help him rule the world or something like that, his matters are none of my business . I can give you an army too but I'll not personally help achieve your goals, I'll just provide means for you and do my end of the deal if you accept my offer, that is . "

Still frozen mid-air, Taliya glared at Arthur but chose to remain silent . As for the Demon Lord, she stared at Arthur but it was apparent she was absent-minded .

"We do not want an army . "

Whilst trying to keep a straight face and a deadpan expression, Mikayla calmly replied to his offer .

It was a bit regrettable, Arthur did not speak anymore, he retrieved his invisibly threads and unbound Taliya then he resumed walking out of the room .

"I still haven't finished talking . "

The Demon Lord really didn't want to let go of Arthur just like that . He was willing to help them for Taliya but she just couldn't be selfish as to sacrifice her big sister for her daughter . She had a small hope that maybe, just maybe she would be able to persuade him to help them get her back .

'That's it!'

"If--If you help us get our daughter back, I'll pass the Demon Lord title to you . "

It took her a lot of conviction to say that but for Mikayla, and even her husband, their daughter was more important than this position . Honestly, since she became a Demon Lord, her life became messier and more problematic with the council trying to find a hole and gain the title but she persisted, however, none of that matters if her family was divided like this .

Arthur finally disappeared from their view after he left one last sentence to reply to her .

"Demon Lord title? Is that how much your daughter is worth to you? . . . you can find me at the usual place I'm sure you know it . "

Three people were left inside the room, remaining silent, each having their own thoughts and struggling to come up with a good solution yet even after a couple of minutes, no one of them uttered a single word, they just stood there, motionless and silent .

. . .

Arthur had long since guessed that the Demon Lord sent someone to get him because he invaded the city and got rid of the black mage . That mage must have been causing trouble for them and since he disappeared so suddenly, they must've been suspicious or thought something bad was going to happen .

He didn't know how they tracked him but there is a chance that they tracked Robin and Rey he just happened to be with them but it's not like it matters right now, they can't threaten him or hurt him .

With nothing to do and no one to talk to, Arthur went back where his Death Golem was . His goal, for now, is to wait for that hideous looking creature to teleport back to the same location, if he could kill him instantly and take his treasure then there may be a chance to travel to another world and find a way to travel to Earth or find a master of Spatial Laws to possess . The chance may be slim but it still existed and that is more than enough to push Arthur to try it .

It's better than staying on Astria and loiter around . Knowing that Astria is a desolate world, it'll be quite hard to get out of it easily like the Underworld for example .

It's a world that is most likely in the Universe belonging to the System so the requirement to enter it is even more difficult which makes the plan to wait for a Space Master to come here is impossible to achieve .

Arthur sat at a reclusive corner in dark cavy room which was the same place the black mage was performing his weird ritual in . The Death Golem was guarding the exact place the ugly creature teleported from and the second anything out of place happens, Arthur would act immediately .

His sense was spread all the way to the surface and everything was ready, all he had to do was wait . With nothing else to do, Arthur opened his Status Window to check the changes as he gained quite an amount after passing the beginner phase .

TITLE : MEAT GRINDER / SEEKER OF KNOWLEDGE / ONE WITH THE SWORD / ARK HOLDER

Level: ???

Class: Dark ARK Parasite

Realm: Immortal 9th Grade

Strength: 135 . 9M

Intelligence:143 . 7M

Agility: 112 . 9M

Wisdom:127 . 8M

Vitality:104 . 4M

Dexterity:102 . 1M

-Health:115M-Health Regen:72894/s

Nether Energy:110M / Nether Energy Regen:85800/s

Mana:185M / Mana Regen:124514/s

Stamina: Infinite /Stamina Regen: ???

Creation : 125

Attack:218M

Defense:156 . 4M

Magic defense : 39 . 7M

Enigma abilities : Telekinesis / Ancient Threads / Sixth sense / ARK(Activated)

Mental Power : 1999

Elemental Resistances:

Fire: 100%

Darkness: 100%

Wind: 35%

Water: 75%

Earth: 75%

Light/holy: 5%

Shadow: 30%

Lightning: 100%

Ice: 30%

His stats have definitely risen by a huge margin and he is just 1 Mental Power away from breaking through, however, he won't be able to break through with just possessing, he needs to cultivate just a bit of Nether Energy and break that barrier .

Moreover, he still didn't reach the limits of his stats so he wasn't planning on breaking through the Divine Realm until he reaches that limit .

He already told Robin to collect all kinds of corpses for him and what made him happier is that she had an enormous stack of corpses in her storage rings, it's just that she forgot them in the Headquarters so he just told her he'll come when he's free .

The most important matter right now is finding a way out of Astria, as for possessing the corpses, he could do it in just a few hours and it'll be done swiftly .

...

A few days passed with nothing happening . Arthur sat there, silently waiting for the target to appear but it didn't seem the monster will appear anytime soon . Plus, his Dark Anguish Technique can't be channeled with Mana, adding the fact that there is literally no Nether Energy in this region, Arthur could only give up on cultivating a bit .

Seeing that waiting here will lead to nowhere and he's simply wasting precious time, Arthur used all his Mental Power to summon the strongest Death Knight he could spawn with his current strength .

He had to wait for his Mental Power to recover for a whole day before consuming it on a Warlock . The two Death Knights were at the middle stages of the Heavenly Realm and one of them was a Warlock .

With his Death Golem and two strong summons, Arthur was sure that if that hideous looking creature appeared, these three would be able to apprehend it immediately and retrieve that item from it before it could escape or teleport away .

Arthur was going to enter the ARK so he made all of this preparation . His lame copy said that no time will pass if he entered the ARK but he couldn't believe what he said . It may be the truth but he would rather plan things ahead and take some precautions rather than believe someone he just met .

"Dra'lka"

Just as he said that word, Arthur found himself standing in the endless white space yet again . His strength wasn't reduced and he could use the Dark Magic and anything else . He just entered the ARK but he honestly didn't know what to do exactly .

Welcome to the ARK

Please choose what do you want to do

*List:

Phase Training .

Rest .

Materialize .

Fuse . *

'So basically, I can't-do nothing but rest?'

Previously, the robotic voice, which apparently was the one controlling the ARK, told him that he couldn't undertake the next Phases until he breaks through to the Divine Realm . It was frustrating, especially when his power is equal if not stronger than normal Gods but his Realm is limiting him .

'What does the Rest do?'

*As the name suggests, the user 'Arthur' will be put in 'Rest Mode', increasing the Recovery rate by 200% and makes the time flow slower than outside . *

"Flow slower?"

*Yes . if the user 'Arthur' is in 'Phase Mode' then no matter how much time passes inside the ARK, no seconds will pass in Reality . As for 'Rest Mode', a Day in the outside is a month inside the ARK . The user 'Arthur' only has 10 years of rest currently . It will only increase if the user 'Arthur' passes other Phases in the 'Phase Mode' . *

'So that bastard was lying after all! He didn't explain it like this . . . tch! I knew it . '

His condition didn't require any recovery and he can do nothing in here besides walk in this endless space or maybe test his skills but Arthur wasn't in the mood for that . After pondering for a couple of seconds, Arthur left the ARK .

As his vision was back to the dark cave, he was momentarily startled as Taliya was standing a dozen of meters in front of him . She was just silently staring at him through the darkness .

Since he was not in 'Rest Mode' the couple of minutes he passed inside the ARK also passed in reality . Even if he stayed longer, with his Defense, there is no way he could be injured even if he just laid there without moving .

It'll even be hard for a Heavenly Realm to injure him, much less a Demon Lord or a low-leveled maid but sneak attacking Arthur was not the reason Taliya came here .

"If it isn't the head maid . What you brings you to my humble home?"

While folding his arms, Arthur leaned his back on the cold wall and stared back at Taliya .

The silver-haired maid kept a straight face and seriously said

"I'll follow you but on one condition . "

Hearing something that caught his attention, Arthur smirked as he could more or less guess what she's going to say

"Please pray tell then, I'm all ears . "

"I'll follow you if you get back Alina, the daughter of the Demon Lord . She must be safe and I'll not accept just a corpse . "

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To be honest, Arthur didn't think this 'Alina' would be alive after all these years . Humans despise Demons and knowing their attitude, she must have been tortured, raped or even worse by them, the probability of her being safe is rather unlikely .

Even if, supposedly, she's still safe, then what about her mental health? There are countless ways to break someone and it is harder to recover from a mental breakdown than a physical injury .

"Those are harsh conditions you . . . however, I accept . "

A sigh, that could be barely heard, escaped from Taliya's mouth when she heard his answer . She didn't know how strong he was but there may be a chance and if it means giving herself up then so be it!

Her focused attention was distracted when she heard a noise to the left, she thought it was an enemy but was dumbstruck when she saw an enormous scary looking golem and two creatures next to it .

She recognized the knight but the Warlock had a more creepy and ominous aura around it, its staff had a dark crystal that emitted a black fog and it wore a robe made from ancient bones and black tattered leather .

Arthur slowly got up and talked as he patted the dust off his clothes

"So let's make this clear . I bring the girl back, safe and sound of course, and you'll follow me?"

Hearing his voice, Taliya snapped off her daze, she shifted her eyes from the golem back to Arthur and nodded her head seriously .

"That is right . "

Only Taliya came to talk him which made Arthur a bit confused . It was the Demon Lord's daughter and not Taliya's, so why is she the one coming to speak to him?

There is only one explanation, it's that the Demon Lord didn't know about Taliya coming here . Arthur expected that they will come looking for him sooner or later but he didn't expect it to be that way .

His assumptions are not yet confirmed but he is positive that it's the case . Arthur raised his hand and pointed at the where the Death Golem and started injecting an astronomical amount of Mana to create a cage .

"Alright then, I'll depart whenever you want me to . But let me tell you one thing, I do not like being lied to, nor do I like being betrayed or people who break their promises . Should you not follow your end of the deal when I return the girl then let's just say you'll regret it . "

"Don't treat me like a Human . Demons always keep their promises, we're not like those filthy tricky humans . "

Arthur just shrugged his shoulders and kept creating the cage of thorny vines around the Death Golem . Vines as thick as a tree trunk twirled and wrapped around themselves as they made an unbreakable cage around the Death Golem, imprisoning it and creating some sort of a prison around that area .

Arthur didn't want anything getting in or out of this small area, should someone even try to cut the vines, it will automatically attack it and kill it at all costs .

"So, when do we depart?"

With a serious look and a deadpan expression, she replied

"We depart right now . "

She didn't even tell him to go prepare himself, Taliya was too direct as she demanded they depart immediately which was a bit rude of her part since he's going to retrieve the daughter of her sister and someone very close to her .

Taliya wanted to go straight ahead because her little sister, who is also the Demon Lord, does not know what she is currently doing and will probably oppose her decision which is something she could not tolerate as every day that passes, Alina would suffer more, if she is alive that is .

"Then off we go . "

Arthur waved his hand, taking out the Dark Cloud and immediately jumping on it and sitting comfortably on it then he looked at Taliya, clearly waiting for her to jump on the ominous dark nebula he was sitting on .

Of course, the head maid recognized the cloud and was not so optimistic about riding it for various reasons .

"You wanted to depart now so hop on . We'll never arrive if I wait for you or travel with your slow speed . "

Feeling a bit regretful, Taliya sighed and leaped on the cloud whilst trying to keep as much distance from Arthur as possible but it wasn't that easy . The cloud was wide but not to the point of keeping the distance she wished for, all she could do was just stand at the edges of the cloud and cautiously stare at Arthur .

The other party could feel the intense glare of Taliya, he shook his head and said

"I don't think we'll get along if you keep acting like that, I suggest you start practicing your role rather than being cautious, I'm not going to eat you or hurt you . Remember that I'm helping you and I'm certainly not the enemy . "

Albeit hearing what he just said, the silver-haired maid kept being cautious and the intense stare never went away so all Arthur could do was just sigh and try his best to ignore her, for now at least .

As usual, a dark barrier was created around the Dark Cloud, for safety purposes, and for Taliya, since he wasn't going to hold back in terms of speed, the wind resistance would surely crush her and push her out of the cloud so the barrier is there to nullify that .

Not even a minute after they rode the cloud, they were already out of the cave and even out of the city which was something Taliya's brain couldn't process .

The city wasn't outrageously big but it still was one of the main cities and the presence of the castle belonging to the Demon Lord proves hit, however, the cloud's speed was so fast that Taliya could barely see what's blurring all around her, it was too mind-numbing to witness .

"You see the difference now? If I wanted to hurt you then you would not even be able to retaliate so why not relax?"

With his arms folded and a plant twirling around his body, Arthur grinned as he noticed Taliya's astounded expression, it was a rare occasion, since she always keeps that deadpan face .

The trip was not going to take long but it won't be just a few seconds either . Seeing that Taliya was not the talkative type and there is a lot of time to spare, Arthur tried practicing with the Plant Magic and wanted to try to create a useful plant that may help him against Divine beings and above . There were countless uses of such Magic and he wanted to find a helpful one .

...

A couple of hours later, the cloud entered the perimeter of the Human Continent . Arthur fiddled with the Plant Magic since the trip began and Taliya, still goggle-eyed, stared at the blurring surroundings again and again whilst throwing a couple of curious and astonished glances at Arthur every now and then .

With a speed like this, her hopes of retrieving Aline rose by a huge margin, the lingering regret had long since disappeared and what replaced it was a boundless hope .

She had a close relationship with Alina and even considered her as her own daughter, so the thought of saving her and having her back is something she had long since yearned for .

No matter how strong she was, she couldn't abandon her duties and forsake her status to just infiltrate the Human Empire and get Alina back, she just didn't have enough strength to achieve such a difficult feat which is why, during all these years, all she did was hope Alina is safe till the day she becomes powerful enough to go there and forcefully get her back, however, that day was never close and no matter how strong she became, she was not near enough of obtaining the required strength .

Fortunately, Arthur wouldn't have to resort to violence if the Emperor did really kidnap Alina . He was sure that the Emperor would be kind enough to hand over the girl if she's alive, and if she had been killed a long ago, he really didn't know what to do but for now, he hoped that such an outcome won't happen .

One thing for sure, Taliya would certainly rage and try to murder the Emperor or do the same thing that was done to her family and try to kidnap the princess which is a dumb thing to do in the middle of all those guards . He would do his end of the deal but he wouldn't help her extract revenge, however, he wouldn't protect the princess either . If the Emperor really did torture Alina or worse, then he deserved whatever will happen to him .

"So, where do you think the Demon Princess is?"

Arthur won't waste time in searching every inch of the Human Continent, it would take a lot of time albeit his Godly speed so having a general location so search on would make things much easier .

"No matter how many spies we sent, we couldn't find any information about her location . "

"Then we'll have to visit the Emperor after all . "

Arthur planned to do that from the start but if she had a useful information, he wouldn't mind heading there first but it didn't appear to be the case so the Dark Cloud made its way toward the Capital of the Empire .

The Capital was more or less at the center of the Continent, with the Cloud's speed, they reached the flourishing city in just a short time . Obviously, the castle where the Emperor resides is not located inside the city so before reaching it, the cloud diverted to the East .

Noticing that they're almost there, Arthur looked at Taliya, who finally sat up on the cloud, and warned her one last time .

"Do not forget that I am the one retrieving the girl, your job is only to spectate and confirm the girl's identity if we find her . If you act then I'll not help you and you'll just be killing yourself . "

All he got was a slow nod from Taliya, she didn't seem to be listening to him as all her attention was focused on the enormous mansion just ahead . The cloud was a bit high so she was looking down from above .

Arthur also glanced at the mansion and was a bit surprised when he saw so many guards . There were at least six times the usual number of guards . It may have been a long time since he came, however, the change was too sudden, or so he thought .

Even the average Level of the guards has become above 120 . Seeing such strong guards, suspicions and guesses started rampaging inside Arthur's mind .

As the Cloud was slowly descending, Arthur spread his Sense and covered the whole mansion and its surroundings . He could feel some strong individuals but they were not particularly threatening, not to him at least .

His destination was the Emperor himself, it's better to head to him immediately rather than question each and every guard . A frown appeared on Arthur's face as he sensed the Emperor, his frown deepened when his Sense spread even further .

He said nothing but it was sure that something was amiss . Taliya, who had a bit of confidence after seeing Arthur's strange cloud, became anxious when she noticed his frown . She decided to remain silent but her thoughts were in total turmoil .

"There isn't anyone with the description you gave me, however . . . there is a teleportation circle deep underground . "

With his Sense, it was easy to figure out all of that but Arthur was still going to talk with the Emperor to ascertain a few things . Alina didn't seem to be here or else he would have sensed her .

"A-Are you sure she's not here? We haven't even entered the mansion "

Taliya didn't fully believe him as she didn't personally search the mansion . She wasn't the kind of person to give up this easily, especially when it's about a member of her family . Albeit how she looks on the outside, she's a very caring person .

"No need to give me that face, we'll ask the Emperor before concluding false assumptions . "

Arthur was at the Peak of the Immortal Realm and with the use of a bit of Nether Energy, it's easy to cover his and Taliya's aura from the guards . It's a simple thing when the difference in strength is outrageously big .

The Dark Cloud slowly navigated through the guards like a fish in the water, even after passing a couple of meters away from the guards, no one of them seemed to hear or notice anything, it's as if they didn't exist in the same dimension .

'As I thought, it's definitely not the same . Better finish it before it gets worse . '

At last, Arthur got up from the cloud and jumped on the ground . His face grim and cold as he stared at the dumbfounded guards who turned their heads towards him, obviously surprised by the sudden appearance of this intruder, moreover, he appeared in the middle of them without them noticing him .

But by far, the one who was the most confused and startled was Taliya, she never thought he'll reveal himself so casually and for no apparent reason . She couldn't find a good reason to do that . Whilst still standing on the cloud, Taliya cautiously looked around as she raised her two short blades .

With his two cold eyes staring at the closest guards, Arthur spoke with a domineering voice as his two pupils turned gray and pulsated every second .

"What is the meaning of this? The dead should not be walking around so blatantly . "

Revived Soldier(Race: Human): Lv142 .

Revived Soldier(Race: Human): Lv133

Revived Soldier(Race: Human): Lv124

Revived Soldier(Race: Human): Lv138

Every man, albeit having the appearance of the living, had the same title when he was appraised by Arthur . It was a strange thing that Arthur was confused about when his Sense probed them . He felt their strength but he couldn't appraise them if can't see them so when the results were shown in front of him, he was a bit surprised .

All he had to do was piece this and that together, and that allowed him to easily guess why the Emperor was like that and everyone was this strong, even simple maids and butlers were strong which is not something commonly seen .

"What are you talking abo-"

Before Taliya could finish, she was interrupted by the guards, who unsheathed their weapons and attacked Arthur immediately . It was not an uncommon thing as he was an intruder but their lifeless expressions and almost robotic movements were more strange .

"It's always good to have a meal served to you for FREE!"

Arthur raised his hands and lowered them with a fast speed, each of his fingers had countless threads which followed his movements and cut everything in its way, including the lifeless rotten corpses coming straight at him .

What followed was a literal bloodbath, or it's more precise to call it a blood river . The red liquid was all over the place, everywhere you stepped, it's either a dismembered limb, head or a small pool of fresh blood . It was just one move from Arthur yet all the hundreds of guards in that area were killed almost instantaneously with no one surviving .

No grown or wails were heard, everyone but Taliya was alive, who was dumbstruck and wide-eyed by the gory and bloody sight in front of her . Even with a Level such as hers, she can't do that, at most, she would kill a few dozens then attempt to escape due to the disadvantage in numbers .

She was not afraid, nor was she petrified, she was surprised by this turn of events, she was also somewhat happy . She loathed humans, was disgusted by them, what else would be happier than seeing them being massacred like this . Plus, they belong to the Emperor, the true enemy of Demons .

If she had the power, she would make them suffer even more and kill them in a crueller way . Unfortunately, or maybe, fortunately, she didn't have that kind of power .

"Enjoying the show so far?"

Arthur glanced at Taliya, who just stared back at him with no response whatsoever, it was apparent she was shocked but also a bit happy . If he has this much power then getting back Alina is just a matter of time . Her doubts and suspicions disappeared in a matter of seconds .

Perhaps all he had to do from the start is just show her a few his destructive skills and it would have been enough but he was not someone who liked bragging that much and her believing in him was not something he was concerned about, sooner or later, this was bound to happen .

Arthur turned around and started walking toward the entrance of the mansion . He could sense hundreds of guards approaching his locations but he was still unfazed by that . There was also a specific location inside the mansion which has a dense amount of guards and a couple of strong individuals . That was most likely was the 'Emperor' resided .

With a cold smile and two pulsating gray pupils, Arthur burned the tall main door and entered the spacious hall .

Floods of lifeless soldiers charged at Arthur and Taliya just as they entered the mansion but albeit their outrageous numbers, they were simply walking to their imminent death .

It was as if the area around Arthur and the maid was Death's door, anyone who got close to them would be cut to pieces by invisible threads, they were so sharp the physically enhanced bodies of these walking dead were cut through so easily with no resistance whatsoever .

"These Humans are not normal "

As she stared at their lifeless looks, their complete oblivious expression of losing a limb or experiencing agonizing pain, Taliya came to a conclusion but it was a bit too late from her part .

"Took you a while to figure it out, huh . Yes, these are not humans, they are walking abominations . "

If Necromancy was bringing the dead from another world, then the magic used on these soldiers are much crueler and disgusting . Instead of summoning the dead from another world, this magic brings back the dead corpses to life in a much stronger state than when it was alive . It sounds like a good thing to have but the souls of these corpses would stick with the corpse until it really dies, it may be today just like it may be after a century .

They don't age, they don't react to pain neither do they disobey the master, the one who revived them . In a sense, the skeletons used by Arthur are a bit smarter since his stats are so high but in terms of strength, they are weaker than these abominations, but that is only the case if he doesn't use his Mental Power .

Although the sight was something Taliya would love to continue seeing, she couldn't help but speak up and try to stop the slaughter .

"L-leave someone alive, we can question him about Alina's whereabouts . "

Turning a deaf ear to her, Arthur waved his hand and spread his web of threads in all the surroundings, killing those who were coming to attack and those who were about to charge again despite losing a limb or a weapon .

With his two eyes pulsating with a gray light and a cold aura around him, Arthur looked at the flowing blood and lifeless look of the corpses and said

"Dead men tell no tales . Those are but a shell without a mind . Souls are trapped, tortured and in pain without a chance of retaliation . It's not something that can be easily undone . You may not feel anything when you see them but for me, at least I can release these poor souls from this endless hell
sigh"

Memories that he didn't want to remember resurfaced inside his head . Thoughts he didn't wish to think about, feelings he had long since abandoned, a darkness that had been buried for ages . It didn't completely resurface but he could feel it crawling back to the surface, trying to turn him insane, thirsting for vengeance, hatred for all things, rage towards who wronged him .

As he finished his sentence, Arthur vanished from Taliya's view, all that was left was dispersing black flames . Before he teleported away, Arthur left a Death Knight near her in case something happens but

what was about to happen is better not seen by anyone, even if she could handle witnessing a massacre, what's about to come is not a pleasant memory to have .

All it took him was four teleports to appear in the big main hall of the mansion, where the throne usually . In the past, when he barged in without an invitation, this hall had no soldiers or anything of the sort, however, right now, there were at the very least a thousand soldiers .

All of them without exception were revived ones, and at the throne in the end of the hall, there sat the Emperor and the Queen . Arthur could only sigh again as he looked at the familiar face of the Emperor yet the appraisal showed a different name, a different Race .

'Albeit it was only a short period, I considered you like a friend . All I could say is . . . I'm sorry for what about to do . . . '

The Emperor didn't even talk, neither did the Queen or any other soldier . Arthur also saw two people standing behind the Emperor, they were cloaked in some kind of Stealth skill but due to the difference in strength, he was able to see them albeit the use of their skill .

If he was going to ask someone, it better be one of those two hidden figures, the others are but walking corpses, only meant to obey the one and only master who certainly was not in this room .

'It was barely two years yet so much occurred inexplicable things, frustrating matters, and strange people . Where did they all come from . '

Arthur's eyes sharpened as he took out Makaze and looked at the crowd of lifeless corpses, they were all charging at him yet for him, it was all happening so slowly due to their slow speed and his high Agility and Dexterity .

How can you forget? How can you just live your life happily? Do you think you deserve it?

An angry yet sad voice rang in his ears, it sounded exactly like him but it was chilling, sad and above all, lonely .

All must be killed! None can live! Kill! Kill them all, ARTHUR! KILL THEM!

While clutching his head and dropping to his knees, Arthur tried to cast away the voice but he couldn't, no matter how much passives or skills were used, none were helpful . It was at this moment that the first enemy arrived upon him .

The soldier thrust his iron sword yet it was just the beginning, the second and third soldiers also attack from behind Arthur, aiming for his back and skull .

"Where!"

With a cold and loud voice, Arthur shouted this word as the sharp black katana vibrated and slashed the air with incredible speed . You could expect the soldiers around him to die but that was literally nothing compared to the damage that was done later .

The 360 degrees done by Arthur, which was not seen by any of the enemies, transformed into some kind of a black circle that slaughtered all the soldiers in the hall, at least all the ones which were at the same level of the circle .

The walls were cut by the circle and the ceiling began falling down, crushing the already dead corpses along with the Emperor, the elite guards near him and Arthur, who was looking at the ground with a confused expression .

Cloud dust and loud noises caused by the falling boulders and pillars was heard from afar, even Taliya who was far from the Hall felt the earth shake due to the explosion and its aftermath .

As the surroundings were clearing from the dust, the two guards, who were alerted by that attack, managed to react in time as they appeared in front of the Emperor, each holding a long sword .

They could feel the chilling bloodlust being emanated from Arthur, who was the only figure alive after the ceiling fell on the soldiers . He was looking up and still had that confused expression .

"Where . . Where!"

The two guards were just going to start evacuating when Arthur suddenly vanished from his position and appeared in front them . The guard on the left was a bit faster as he managed to react in time and swung his sword, trying to behead Arthur on the spot but a thorny vine had long since stabbed his chest, making a hole as big as his head and killing him on the spot .

As for the second guard, he wasn't able to dodge as Arthur's hand was stretched and grabbed his neck, lifting him off the ground and suffocating him, he could even hear his own bones being pressured and crushed . In just seconds, his face turned red .

The Emperor, the Queen and the elite guards, who were also lifeless corpses, were fast enough to circle around Arthur and attack with their strongest attack . They never uttered a single word and their Levels were much higher than the normal soldiers with the Emperor being the highest at a staggering 911 .

"Scram!"

Arthur didn't even need to move his hand or body to send all of them away . Not even the Emperor survived as a dark red flame burned all of them into ashes except the second guard, who was still being held by Arthur .

His two hands were trying to push Arthur's stretched hand yet no matter how much force he put, he couldn't move a finger . Strength was leaving him and the bloodlust of Arthur was suffocating him .

"Where is she! Where is she! TELL ME WHERE SHE IS!"

Unknown to Arthur, in such a strange state, he couldn't think properly and let the guard breath and answer him normally, the thought of letting go of the guard never crossed his mind .

All the guard could do was tap Arthur's hand to try and reason with him . He was clearly indicating his surrender but it didn't seem to be working .

With two eyes resembling a bottomless foggy abyss, Arthur stared at the guard . The other felt himself in real hell as that stare was like the devil's stare, he felt that all his weaknesses were exposed, all his memories stolen and his soul devoured by these gray eyes .

Hearing no answer, Arthur crashed the guard's body on the wall behind him, crushing his bones and making blood flow endlessly from countless injuries he suffered just from that attack . Knowing the

difference in strength between the two of them, it's quite normal for the weak party to suffer like this but it was but the beginning .

"WHERE IS SHE! TELL ME WHERE IS LUCY! TELL ME!"

Arthur kept crushing the guard on the wall until the supposedly sturdy wall of the hall was crushed into dust . All that was left was the guard who had a lifeless look .

It took Arthur a couple of minutes to realize that the guard he was still holding was already dead . He let go of the corpse which soundlessly fell on the ground .

With his Sense still spreading, he quickly found another target which was deep underground, where the teleportation circle was located .

'What the hell is that?'

A black shadow was running at full speed, his destination was the teleportation circle under the mansion . He has seen what happened in the garden and in the hall . Fortunately, he was smart enough to escape the second he sensed the aura around Arthur .

He was at the middle-stages of the Deity Realm, something that is practically invincible on Astria yet he was petrified just by Arthur's aura, that in itself proves how terrifying the enemy was .

He had seen quite a few powerful individuals on the West and East but they were not that threatening so he ignored them and stayed low while manipulating the Emperor just as his master ordered but now, change finally came and a dangerous enemy appeared out of nowhere .

A particular memory resurfaced in his mind as he thought of Arthur . It was the last words of the Emperor before he was killed and revived .

"Hahaha! You can kill me but when he comes, you better be prepared!"

It was unknown what method the Emperor used but both his son and daughter were teleported to an unknown location . No matter how Elias searched, he couldn't find a trace of them . He was afraid they would tell the truth about what happened, however, after two years of nothing happening, he dropped his guard and the alerting feeling slowly dissipated .

He was not afraid of the truth being divulged to the public, he was afraid of the punishment he would receive from his master if he ever disobeyed him or messed up the plan .

It didn't take Elias a lot of time to arrive at an empty room with only a few blue lights put in a specific position around a circle engraved on the ground .

Without wasting any second, he lifted both of his hands and started channeling his Mana to activate the teleportation and get out of here .

The process was going on with no problems so far, but what Elias feared ended up happening . First, it was a chill that made his body tremble uncontrollably, then it was a deadly stare that landed on his back and made him sweat .

Before he could execute any secret technique to escape from this room, countless threads wrapped around him, from his neck all the way to the tip of his toes . He was covered in so many threads that he looked like a spider's cocoon .

Elias didn't immediately give up, albeit feeling the thick killing intent covering him, he spat a purple acid that fell on the threads and quickly dissolved them . Out of reflex, he looked behind him but was astonished when he saw no one behind him, even the killing intent disappeared the moment he turned his head .

Trying to stop his hands from shaking, he lifted them again and started channeling the Mana again and poured all his reserve to start the teleportation faster so the enemy doesn't catch up .

A sigh of relief escape his mouth when a blue light covered him and the teleportation started at last . Seeing his whole body engulfed in this blue light, he felt so safe as no matter how powerful someone is, they can't stop this teleportation .

Taliya, who stayed with the Death Knight, slowly advanced inside the mansion but everywhere she looked, there were mountains of corpses and rivers of blood, this didn't look like a royal mansion anymore, not after the previous explosion and the damage done by Arthur .

It seems that the black circle created by Makaze did more damage than expected, the ceiling had long since fallen and walls were shattered to mere rubbles .

The stench of blood never left her nose as she wandered in the mansion, searching for a sign of Alina but after making two full tours of what was left of the mansion, she never found the girl . The Hall was no more and what replaced it was a huge area with endless amounts of corpses and boulders .

After searching for a bit more, she managed to find stairs leading underground, she was a bit hesitant but after glancing at the Death Knight which never left her side since earlier, she resolutely entered the dark underground with hopes of finding Alina .

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A few seconds passed since the teleportation began . Elias's heart calmed down and the shivering had stopped when he opened his eyes and found out that he was no longer in that underground room .

The world he was on right now was definitely not Astria as the sky was starry and blood red . The place reeked of blood and you would hear desperate every now and then .

"I'm safe *sigh* . . . anyways, what was that?"

Thinking back to the aura he felt before teleporting, Elias couldn't help but unconsciously shiver from horror . It was unknown what he took out but a blackboard was put under his feet and he started surfing the gray and destroyed ground as if they were waves .

His speed rose drastically when he started using that weird object . His movements were smooth and no matter how much craters or monsters he bypassed, none were powerful enough to stop him .

Elias didn't travel for a long time, it was just for a couple of minutes before stopping in front of a red castle that had color matching the bloody sky . The castle wasn't particularly wide but it was extremely high . Its central tower stretched for more than a mile with a four-armed monster statue in its peak .

Elias hesitated for a second as he stared at the castle, he hid a green coin under his sleeve and entered the castle with an uneasy expression .

The horrors that were seen once he entered the castle's ground was not something that can be easily forgotten . Hundreds of people with skinny bodies and bloody lashes on their body were carrying rocks or doing hard labors while hideous monsters were guarding them . It was a sight even Elias, who has been here for ages, could never get used to it .

After all, these people were his kin, the same Race as he is yet he can do nothing for them . While gritting his fist, he bypassed the monsters who gave him a contemptuous look before they resumed torturing the slaves .

The smell of blood was present in the air, never leaving it and intensifying every step he took towards the castle . More loud wails echoed from behind the stone walls, ringing in Elias's ears and igniting his fury but despite all of that, he kept a calm attitude and didn't show any bit of expression on his old face .

He was, in fact, an old man in his 50's, with a short gray beard and blue eyes . One look at him and you know he has been extremely handsome when he was young, it's unfortunate that he was born in the wrong world and at the wrong age .

"Damn useless piece of garbage! *lashing sounds* Do your job properly or just die already!"

A voice he didn't like to hear rang in his ears . Subconsciously, Elias turned his head only to see a black horror with long muscular arms, brown scales all over its body and a horn erected from its back with a pair of wide bat wings resting on his back . The sight couldn't be scarier, it was the nightmare of every normal Human .

This monstrosity was using a whip to lash at a middle-aged man who was trying to stand up and carry what seemed to be a blue crystal which pulsed with a light similar to Mana Energy .

"I-I'm sorry! My leg felt numb just a second ago so I couldn't help but t-trip . "

The monster didn't even pay attention to what the slave said, it swung its whip and without much strength put in the grip, it easily wrapped the whip around the man's neck and pulled his head off his neck . A gruesome and gory sight was displayed yet all the other monsters were grinning or laughing as if this was a source of enjoyment .

Elias maintained his expression and after staring for a couple extra seconds, he turned around and entered the castle . Such occurrences appeared daily and it was not one or two times, it's at least ten times a day . It pains him to witness it but it also helps him remember his purpose and never forget who he is .

For the next part, Elias just used his high Dexterity and a special technique to navigate through the castle and reach its peak . The reason is, he couldn't bear to see what was inside . Be it living people frozen in mid-air as if they were statues .

People tortured on the side with instruments never seen before and many other things that are better kept unsaid . What's more is that those monstrosities are enjoying this so much that their laughter never ceased .

There were elderlies, women, children, they were all alive and if they died in the process, they would just be tossed to the side as if they are disposable toys . It's sad when he knew that with his strength, he can slaughter all of these monsters but not their boss . To put it simply, he would just make his kin suffer even more than this so he decided to hold it in him just for now .

He followed his master's orders, slaughtered the Emperor of a foreign world and all its soldiers, used a forbidden skill to revive them and manipulate them and albeit feeling a little bad, if it's for the sake of helping his kin, then no matter the cost, it's definitely worth it .

A few minutes later, Elias arrived at the castle's peak, where his master stayed . It was a wide room at the very top, with only one living being there .

Staring at the metal door in front of him and feeling the chilling atmosphere and the ever-so-long silence, he mustered his resolution and pushed the metal door .

What faced the old man was an empty wide room with only a four-armed monster sitting cross-legged in its center . It had four eyes, sharp long scales around its neck, legs and arms and a very long horn erected from its back . It resembled no animal or insect, it could only be described as a living horror .

"It's you? What are you doing here? It's too early for you to come here that means something went wrong?"

"Something u-unexpected happened . I had to retreat immediately . "

The monster stared at Elias for some time, seemingly lost in thought . Its four blood red eyes were too creepy, especially when they are focused on you .

As if it felt something, the monster suddenly got up and shouted

"What have you done! Foo-"

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Before it could finish, a black shadow appeared from inside Elias, the shadow wielded a long black sword that was a bit curved .

The monster crossed its four arms to block the katana while using its leg to kick the incoming enemy . What it didn't expect is that the opponent suddenly vanished and reappeared behind it with the katana slashing at its back .

.

In his frustrated and confused state, Arthur chose to lay dormant inside Elias and let him teleport back to his home . In that case, he'll find a way out of Astria and eliminate this hiding enemy that was controlling the Human Emperor .

He didn't get the thousands of corpses he intended to possess from Robin, neither did he take Taliya with him as intended . Lots of things have been left unfinished on Astria but an opportunity arose and his most important goal right now is to find a way out of Astria .

He was going to get that monster which was talking with the black mage but since Elias seemed to be teleporting away, might as well follow him without alerting him and since his Race is special, such thing is easily doable .

The possessing was pretty successful and in no time, Arthur laid dormant inside Elias and shared the same point of view as his victim . The first thing he noticed was the totally different world he appeared on .

The most astonishing thing is the total absence of any kind of Energy, no Mana, no Qi, no Nether Energy . It was like Earth but here, the sky was blood red and the ground seemed rotten and dead .

Elias traveled at a fast speed but Arthur was able to witness everything, he saw no plant or any form of living thing except those wandering monsters that are either killing humans or banging their head on the floor for no apparent reason .

Fortunately, since he possessed Elias, his mind calmed down and the weird state he was in previously had disappeared . It's no wonder he was desperate to find Lucy, his loneliness coupled with his subdued anger are driving him crazy and he needs a quick solution .

The shock never lessened, especially when the victim arrived on the castle's ground . Witnessing the sight, Arthur started feeling utter disgust and dislike for these hideous looking monsters .

It's the first time he ever saw such creatures and he doesn't remember Zodiak mentioning similar creatures in his notes or books .

Arthur was never an evil person and albeit being dormant and not being able to appraise, he could more or less feel their power . He knew he could kill them easily but this would ruin his plan . It's an unfortunate thing but he isn't going to sacrifice his plan for them when he doesn't even know them .

He arrived in a new world, that's a fact, but what kind of world, that is the real question . Perhaps it would be better to search for a Spatial tunnel on his own and leave Elias and these monsters alone, however, there is the possibility of not finding any .

To begin with, he doesn't even know how to find a Spatial tunnel . Thankfully, he had some description about them and a way to locate them, it was not precise but it would work if he used Eclipse Magic .

Eclipse Magic had the Dark Magic and the Void Magic, it's the perfect way to use the Spatial Magic since he can't use it individually .

He can also use Void Magic directly but it's too unstable, at least the Eclipse Magic is not that dangerous .

Arthur was not going to act until he learned something useful but after seeing the living statues and the true nature of such creatures and the possibility of them invading Astria, he was forced to act .

He regarded Astria as his home and he had to admit that he cared for his friends there, he isn't going to let such evil creatures invade his home and cause chaos .

If he didn't go to save Alina, maybe he would never have discovered them until it was too late . Better wipe the danger before it comes, at least that's how Arthur take care of things . No matter how weak

the enemy is or how insignificant he is, it had to be eliminated because even a Lv10 mortal can hurt you one way or another, it's that carelessness that causes tragedies to occur .

When he saw the master of his victim, Arthur waited for a couple of seconds and when a chance arose, he immediately left Elias and charged at the monster with Makaze in hand .

He was able to appraise when he was out and the result was a bit surprising, nonetheless, Arthur didn't stop and added Natural Lightning around Makaze to deal more damage .

Bucama (Race: Khin (Mutated)): 9th Grade Divine Realm .

'I can manage, it's not a God . '

Arthur teleported behind the monster just as he was going to strike him from the front . As the exposed back of the creature was laid in front of him, Arthur didn't hesitate as he swung his katana at its horn and wings, trying to deal as much damage as possible .

While vibrating uncontrollably, Makaze clashed with the horn, which surprisingly was extremely hard . Makaze couldn't even damage it, much less cut it .

The horn, in response to Makaze, bent in a weird way and pointed at Arthur and fired an ominous black beam at his face .

Arthur used [Faster Than Death] again and teleported away whilst leaving a Shadow Clone in his place to confuse the enemy .

Obviously, the Shadow Clone received the full blunt attack which was the black beam and died instantly, transforming into dispersing black fog .

In this split second, when the Shadow was dispersing and the monster was confirming the death of the enemy, Arthur replaced himself with another clone created from the Dark Cloud and possessed an extremely long snake made from long white bones .

It could barely be called a snake as its size was so massive that it covered the whole room . The newly created clone caught the flying Makaze and leaped at the four-armed monster, which was clever enough to realize the trick and shift its attention to its front .

'Let's begin with getting rid of this castle . '

The large snake opened its mouth and started spitting huge dark red fireballs randomly, the ancient fire hit every possible place, it burned walls and destroyed floors, nothing could withstand its head .

It didn't take much time for the four-armed monster to finish the second clone with its back horn . The black beam was just too strong and weird, the clone, albeit being much stronger than the Shadow Clone, was easily extinguished with just one black beam .

The dark nebula was absorbed instantly by the snake which confronted the monster after completely destroying the sky-high tower .

Elias was dumbstruck and petrified, not knowing what to do, he retreated the moment the fight began . He felt the endless tremors as he descended using his blackboard . Not caring what happened, he flicked the green coin which vanished immediately and what replaced it was a green sphere enveloping .

Every monster that met Elias was killed by him, he showed no mercy as he beheaded every last one of them whilst trying to save whoever can be saved .

As for the main fight, two figures were floating high up in the sky as rubbles fell from above and the castle was crumbling . Arthur finally shifted his attention to Bucama, who leaped at him with four dark spears, each one is held by one of its hands .

The snake, which was made of bones, was quickly enveloped by thorny vines all over his body . A sticky purple liquid was coming out of the vines, so was the fangs of the snake which had a very lethal poison .

Arthur was going to fully rely on poisons to finish this monstrosity, there's no crueller way than this one . By the time Bucama clashed with Arthur, the snake was totally covered with the thorny plants .

With a loud hiss, the snake opened its mouth and used its thirty inch long fangs to bite at Bucama, which crossed its four spears together and created a black tornado that clashed with the fangs .

The black tornado materialized by the four spears and the sharp long fangs soon clashed with each other . An impactful clash that caused the two parties to back away but it was apparent that the snake had a small advantage as it was only pushed back for a tiny bit and managed to withhold the pushing force with its unimaginable strength and large body .

As for Bucama, the monster was angry as it looked at Arthur with its four eyes, glowing with rage . Unfortunately, the monster was suddenly held by the long tail of the snake, which instantly wrapped around its body, stabbing the thorny vines all over its body and injecting endless amounts of lethal poison inside this monstrosity .

However, that was not the end, Arthur tightened his grip on the body and used the whole body of the snake to wrap around the monster, covering it all and crushing its body .

All of this was going smoothly until the snake body began pressing on that long horn sticking out of its back, Arthur felt an ominous aura and a chilling sensation . He didn't know what that horn was but one thing for sure, it was dangerous .

He knew that it was a bad idea to continue pressing on the horn and trying to shatter it so he backed away with the snake's body after using the tail to send Bucama flying down until he crashed on the ground, killing a few of his fleeing kin and creating a small hole .

Not even a second later, the hideous creature stood up, unscathed as if nothing happened . With its four raging eyes, it stood there silently for a moment before it began speaking coldly to Arthur

"What are you? What brings you to my world . "

If Arthur didn't possess Elias, he wouldn't have understood what Bucama just said . It was a weird language, even in pronunciation but with his unique skill, he learned it instantly . He could use simple telepathy to answer the monster but he decided not to .

He didn't come here to negotiate or talk, he had one goal for now and that is to eliminate this danger . He could more or less predict why these monsters wanted to invade Astria and if it's confirmed then part of his hopes will be crushed but at least he would have killed a potential threat to his home .

The snake's body twirled in the air as it made its way toward the four-armed monster . Bucama, in response to the opponent, stabbed its four spears on the ground and curled itself like a ball .

As the snake was almost upon the enemy, it opened its mouth and spit a small Heavenly Arrow totally made from Dark Magic and White Thunder .

It was quite difficult to get rid of the Void Magic in the Heavenly Arrow but as long as it is a small Heavenly Arrow and it's not the real one then it can be done .

Arthur was still hellbent on killing Bucama using poison but first, he had to immobilize it in order to slowly kill it . In all his previous attacks, Arthur was reluctant to finish the enemy using his powerful tricks and that is because he wanted the monster to suffer a bit before dying or else his mind would not rest .

The small Heavenly Arrow tore threw the wind barrier as it rushed straight at the four-armed monster . The creature could not react in time as white thunder struck it and Dark Magic penetrated its abdomen, literally pinning its body on the ground with no way of resisting it .

This was but a small doable feat that Arthur could do, his stats were outrageously high and dealing with a peak Divine Realm should never be a problem even if the opponent is a bit strange or stronger than what the appraisal indicates .

Arthur's overall strength should match Delia if not a bit stronger and if he uses Rizaki then that is a whole other matter .

Bucama, full of surprise and disbelief, stared at the arrow pinning it down and coughed blood continuously . The Godly Thunder was invading its body and smiting its organs and the Dark Magic was consuming its life force .

Slowly descending toward the creature, Arthur left the snake body and stored into his ring then stared at the hideous being in front of him .

"I'll give you a chance if you tell me the location of one Spatial Tunnel . "

Hearing the unfamiliar Human speaking its language, the monster was first surprised then confused . With eyes burning with hatred and rage, the creature still kept a rather calm expression albeit its eyes that was betraying it and replied to Arthur

"*cough* Spatial Tunnel? *cough* you came to the wrong world *cough* *cough* you think I would try to invade your world if such a thing existed here? Are you that weak or pretend not to *cough*notice it?

There's no Energy here! We were a *cough* forsaken and thrown in this hell but we learned how to cope with it, *cough* *cough* invented our own energy and became the dominant Race, we even killed all other living Races and left the weakest ones to control yet after acquiring so much power, Fate is still not willing to accept us! *cough* *cough* hahahah

I never *cough* thought there will be someone dumb enough *cough* to come to my world!"

'Just like I guessed . '

Arthur was not moved by what he heard, he just felt a bit disappointed, however, one look at this broken world and it is quite apparent that the existence of Spatial Tunnel is rather unlikely . Even a desolate world like Astria is much better than such a prison like this place .

Just as Arthur was going to shower Bucama with all kinds of poisons he possesses . A bright blue light flashed on his left, it resembled the one that he saw when Elias used a teleportation circle .

The reaction of the monster was much more surprising than Arthur's . Its eyes glowed with a blood-red light and its four-armed started smashing the arrow in a crazed manner as if it didn't care about its arms, it just wanted to break free .

"T-that fool! HE REALLY IS DOING IT!"

While looking to the left, the monster banged its arms at the arrow but it wasn't helping at all, no matter how much it banged the bulging muscular arms, it couldn't scratch or disperse the condensed Dark Magic .

. . . .

A couple of hundred meters away from Arthur and Bucama, Elias stood in a large blue circle with fifty or so people with him . They all stood close to him and stared fearfully at the surroundings . The place was littered with Khin corpses, no matter where they looked, there was a beheaded corpse .

Elias resolutely activated the big teleportation circle whilst the green coin protected them from the mage Khin monsters that were throwing ranged skills from afar .

This teleportation circle was the one Bucama was going to use to teleport all the Khin army with it but it didn't use it yet cause the preparation wasn't ready yet, or so thought the four-armed creature .

Fortunately, Elias was able to alter the destination and use it as a transportation means to take as many people as possible, this way, they wouldn't be tortured daily and the hellish life would be no more .

He knew that Arthur somehow followed him and he was thankful towards him but he wasn't going to wait for him to start the teleportation . If sacrificing their savior is what it costs to live freely then so be it .

. . . .

Arthur sensed that something was off, the ground was heavily shaking and the sky was turning darker and darker, these were definitely no good signs . He abandoned the thought of finishing Bucama slowly, the arrow will kill it anyways .

He darted off toward the bright blue light on the East and transformed into lightning to arrive faster . With such speed, the distance of a couple hundred meters would be crossed in a split second, literally yet even such Godlike speed was not enough .

Nothing can be faster than teleportation, that blue light was the indication that the teleportation has begun . As Arthur tried to grab Elias, his hand passed through the old man's head as if he didn't exist there .

Apologetically, the old man nodded his head to Arthur to express his thanks but he still felt a bit fearful after seeing the cold eyes of Arthur that glowed with gray light and the black flames burning around him .

" . . . So you used me to get your people out, good! Good!"

Arthur didn't linger there any extra second, he turned around and charged to the West, heading to the small teleportation circle that Elias appeared on when he arrived in this world .

There may still be a chance, he didn't need an explanation to know that this world is literally crumbling after Elias did whatever that blue light was . The ground was being opened in half and skies were falling .

As he was charging toward the West, Arthur noticed a thick red beam of light, it was like a pillar penetrating the dark sky . Just one look was enough for him to know that Bucama did that as it originated from where he left the monster .

Either way, he wasn't going to bother as time was of the essence, the destruction of this world was happening at a faster pace, especially when Elias disappeared with his people .

The annihilation was fastening by the second, as Arthur was bypassing lands after lands, which shattered or was devoured by the open ground, he soon arrived near the small teleportation circle which Elias used to appear here .

The problem was, he doesn't know how to activate it . If it was a normal one then he simply needed to inject Mana but Elias did much more than that to make it work .

By the time he started pondering on what to do, the ground under the circle began shaking and some cracks appeared, the sky was literally falling and if he does nothing, Arthur is going to be devoured, just like everything else .

Arthur focused his attention on his Dantian and gathered all his remaining Nether Energy . The Dark Anguish circulated through his body and black flames started burning his body yet dealing no damage .

'This should hold on for a while . '

Arthur raised his hands and did some strange black seals with his hands on the air and said

"Darkness shall fall, naught shall be done!"

As the incantation was done, a cubic barrier jet black was formed around Arthur, its size was not that big, only five cubic meters in height and length but that was only the appearance .

The Cube also enveloped a bit of the ground for the circle not to shatter . The shaking stopped and a small area around Arthur stopped shattering and whatever was eating the world couldn't cross his cube .

Arthur could see what's happening outside but the outsiders would only see an ominous dark cube, if it was a sphere then anyone would mistake it as a black hole .

Everything around the cube was destroyed, in just seconds, it was only a floating black cube with distortions in space all around it and the rumbling sound of the shattering sky .

Once he laid the cube, which was one of the techniques related to the Dark Anguish-technique, Arthur turned his attention to the blue circle on the ground and tried to imitate what Elias did .

The old man chanted for a short time before he injected some Mana in the circle, it seemed like an easy process but Arthur knew that a small mistake would lead him to nowhere or even the Void if it worked, that is .

Remembering something he experienced was no big deal with such high intelligence, within seconds words were coming out of Arthur's mouth, some were incomprehensible while others sounded weird, almost like gibberish .

It didn't take a long time for him to finish the chant, he soon followed by injecting a bit of Mana to the blue circle and waited for a reaction which never happened .

Seconds passed yet nothing occurred, there was only a confused Arthur standing motionless and staring at the teleportation circle .

He thought it might be because of the cracks but that it didn't seem to be the case as he could feel a bit of Mana inside the circle, maybe its what's channeling it .

Time was slowly running out as his Nether Energy was being consumed to keep him safe but that won't last long . The cube created a small space, just like what the Grim Reaper did previously but this was a smaller and weaker version . With the constant strong pressure from the outside and his lack of Energy, it will shatter sooner or later .

"This can't be happening . Think Arthur, think!"

Countless plans surged his mind but each was more dangerous and risky than the other . He could choose one but the probability of surviving is meager . If he gets engulfed by the Void, he either wander endlessly or dies from the powerful explosion that's happening .

Either way, it's not a good outcome . The dark cube was beginning to crack and Arthur began feeling some strange heaviness weighing him down, making him unable to breathe properly or think straightly .

'Here it comes!'

With but a few seconds left but he is exposed bare to what's about to come, Arthur decided to risk it all . He took one of the two last remaining perfect corpses for him, the silver wolf one and instantly possessed it without hesitation .

[Transmutation] was activated along with all the other passives which could be used, none were spared and the agonizing Mental didn't lag behind either, it struck Arthur's mind and made him feel dizzy for the first few seconds .

Crack *Crack!*

The cube shattered and the small space vanished, Arthur felt a surge of unstoppable pressure pushing him behind with no ways of resisting it .

With a loud howl, two wide flaming wings appeared on the wolf's back, the wings flapped nonstop and helped Arthur resist the pushing pressure, he dared not look behind . Even for someone who has complete resistance to Fire, he could feel a deadly heat coming from behind .

Boulders, dust and even air were pushed to the same direction, all clustered together into a ball or just being devoured by something .

'Damn! All this for a girl I don't even know!'

ROAR

The green lightning wolf ran against the pushing force, managing to overcome the strong pressure but wound after wound appeared on its body as spatial tears would appear everywhere and even a small one would kill an Immortal Realm like Arthur .

Arthur's attention was focused on one direction, his goal was to not lose sight of the blue circle . Obviously, it had disappeared but not its Spatial Tunnel, it wouldn't vanish that fast, he wanted to ride the tunnel before it disappears, it is a difficult thing to achieve with all the destruction that's happening but it's not an impossible feat .

He just had to find it before the grand explosion happens, because at that time, even with multiple bodies, he won't survive and even if he did, his soul itself would be hurt by the impact, he would be severely weakened and would just wander into the devouring Void .

[Griffin's Bloody Switch]: You choose one specific stats to reduce its value by 90% and add 50% of that value to another stats .

Cost: 50 Mental Power (Permanently)

[Mother Of All]: The user can produce Golden threats, unbreakable yet soft .

Cost: 10 Mental Power per second .

Arthur both of these techniques the second he spotted a Tunnel a distance away from him . The problem was that the wolf's body was being pushed back so he had to rely on there albeit that the cost is Mental Power .

At least the second one didn't take them permanently, still, the cost was outrageous so it doesn't matter . The lightning Wolf spit golden threads that stretched to its back and began pouring on it like crazy until it formed a golden circle .

Arthur also strengthened the circle with his own threads and activated Griffin's Bloody Switch to add to his Vitality by sacrificing his Wisdom . When his Agility was boosted by millions, the Wolf transformed into a green streak that bypassed the Spatial Tears and the devouring Void .

When he was almost there, the golden threads had already made a gigantic sphere, or to be more precise, it looked a bit like the tip of a cannon .

When Arthur was rejoicing due to the Tunnel being within his reach, a force similar to sturdy iron wall crushed the wolf's body and literally sent it flying hundreds of kilometers away but this was the good

part, the worst part is that his Health was reduced by 70% and the left flaming wing dispersed which reduced his Speed yet again .

What followed was a blinding light similar to the one created by Rizaki's, at that split second, Arthur realized that he's doomed if he's engulfed by it .

He abandoned all thoughts of flying to the Tunnel and used the Griffin's skill three times in a row to add all the stats into his intelligence . The golden threads brightened a lot, illuminating the gloomy surroundings, they also became fast and more beautiful to look at .

As he was being pushed back, Arthur focused his absolute attention on creating the thing on his back, the process took but a few seconds, however, few seconds were all it took for the pushing force to send him flying thousands upon thousands of kilometers .

. . . .

Exactly thirty seconds later, Arthur was almost going to crash into an extremely big orb that was devouring everything and emitting a blinding light and a deadly heat . He knew that it's going to explode soon yet he could not resist, not after he gave up on his Strength and Agility Stats .

When that half minute was done, the lightning wolf now had a large golden cannon on its back, it was twice its size and looked breathtaking .

'It's ready! Now let's try it and hope it works! Please '

With all of his hopes stacked on the cannon, Arthur closed his eyes, cut off his hearing and activated [Rinotsu] using the Wind Attribute .

The skill was used inside the cannon, which quickly made an engine-like sound and fired the compressing air which just exploded .

The explosion was nothing compared to what's happening Arthur . Albeit noticing that he was not pushed against the force with that try, Arthur was not angry or sad as he felt his body advance a few inches .

'84 . 9 left, alright then'

'BOOOOOOM'

Ten million Mana points, that's what Arthur just consumed to powerup a Rinotsu using the Wind Attribute, the force of the explosion which was fired by the cannon pushed Arthur way ahead and further from the bright orb .

The pushing force was strengthening by the second so Arthur didn't wait for it to lose its momentum, twenty million Mana points were used again to use a third Rinotsu .

Fortunately, he can use it again if he is in the wolf's body with the help of [Blood For Blood] .

Blood For Blood: By sacrificing continuous Mental Power, the user could ignore the cooldown of a chosen skill .

Cost: 150 Mental Power for each use .

Falling a few Grades or even a Realm is much better than dying or suffering an endless hell . He regretted every thought of saving Alina, he never thought it'll end up like this . It was foolish to come unprepared but the original criminal is Elias, who caused this world destruction by launching the big teleportation circle at the cost of this world's essence coupled with Stored weird Energies .

First thing he does is killing that bastard when he goes back to Astria, but that was rather unlikely as Elias, more than anyone, knew that there are people who can beat him and be the clever geezer he was, he must have thought of a plan of some sort and teleported his kin to a safer place .

. . . .

The distance between him and the Spatial Tunnel was shortening with every use but Arthur's Mana pool was almost not recovering due to the absence of Energy in this godforsaken world .

'Crack'

The golden cannon started cracking after four shots so Arthur could only expand his remaining 38 million Mana points into one last Rinotsu .

For the last time, and the last hope, Arthur used the ancient flames in Rinotsu, creating a deafening explosion and shattering the golden cannon the second it was shot . A dark Red beam appeared in between the Spatial tears, burning boulders and destroying flying lands, even the Void could not contain it or devour it, it was like a moving calamity .

Arthur on the hand was literally pushed ahead with no way of moving a finger due to the intensity of the force pushing him, in comparison, the earlier force was nothing, it was like comparing the strength of a mouse to an elephant's .

The unfathomable distance that was separating Arthur and the Spatial Tunnel was crossed in mere seconds . With his Mana Pool totally Empty and no present Mana to recover, Arthur could only rely on what's left of his Strength and Vitality to overcome the Spatial Tears and force his body to divert for a bit and head for the Tunnel .

Fortunately, with the help of the earlier explosive blast created by Rinotsu, Arthur was able to more or less arrive near his destination . Although he achieved his goal, just when he was a few meters away, the long-awaited explosion of the gigantic orb has finally occurred .

As if the light that it was emanating was not bright enough, at the moment of the main explosion, a white blinding ray of light covered Arthur's vision just as he opened his eyes and the next thing he felt was a heat that immediately extinguished his remaining wing and deactivated [Transmutation] by consuming the green lightning .

With a final push, Arthur was able to use the main explosion and his earlier momentum to enter the tunnel but not after the wolf's body was ripped to shreds and devoured by the Void .

He only entered the Tunnel with his real body, which was ejected from the wolf's . It is the first time he dies inside a corpse . if he didn't possess the wolf

If he didn't possess the wolf and didn't have those countless passives activated then he would have long since died due to the Spatial Tears and the dangerous Void . With his Mana Pool empty, His stats

lowered and in an exhausted Mental State, Arthur abandoned any thought of controlling his body and let the Tunnel drift him to its destination by its own .

His main body was intact at first but as seconds passed, the wounds he suffered inside the wolf's body began appearing, he was in a disastrous state, literally and he had no power left to move properly .

The good thing is that his Mana began regenerating at a rapid pace by absorbing scattered Mana which helped him greatly as he made use of this to use simple yet effective Healing Skills .

It was a one minute trip but for Arthur, it seemed like a one-year trip . He thought of many things, his weakness, his helplessness in such a situation, his wife Lucy, who he missed so much . If she were with him, maybe he would have been more careful, maybe things wouldn't have gone wrong, so many things would have been different yet there are no ifs in life .

When the short trip was finally over, Arthur appeared in a destroyed room, it looked a bit similar to the one Elias teleported from but the only difference is that rubbles and dust were all over the place .

With the bit of strength he managed to muster, Arthur got up and looked around only to realize that he was back at the same place . Albeit receiving all these injuries, he breathed a sigh of relief as he was back in a safe place .

He didn't linger there any longer, he left through the door, or what was left of it, and arrived at the shattered mansion in no time .

The place was still broken and dusty, just like he left it, with corpses all over the place and its reeking smell of blood, if not for the golden broken pillars and some structures that were still left, anyone would think this was a place where a bloody war occurred and not the mansion of the Humen Emperor .

Without sparing a glance to the deceased soldiers, Arthur left the mansion and spread his Sense as far as he could only to be surprised when he sensed someone not far away but his surprise soon turned into astonishment and anger as he sensed the second presence .

His Mana was recovering at an astonishing speed but he had to rely on his body for now . He retrieved Makaze and held it tightly whilst staring at a specific direction .

"Looks like I need to rely on you again, friend . "

In response, the black katana vibrated intensely and black flames started burning on all of its edges, seemingly ready to cut anything in its way .

Arthur took one final breath before he squeezed every last bit of strength he got and darted to the North .

.....

The Royal Garden, which once was one of the most beautiful things is now dyed with blood, the breathtaking flowers died and the trees were cut down or destroyed by either sharp weapons or from the previous explosion .

Taliya had decided to wait a bit longer for Arthur, she had inspected the dark room underground but found nothing except that blue circle . She knew its function yet didn't know how to activate it,

furthermore, she had to evacuate as the roof was falling and the ground kept shaking . She couldn't die in such a place after going all the way here .

She had high hopes for Arthur and wished he would return with Alina but an hour passed and still, nothing happened .

After waiting for so long and hearing or seeing nothing, dejected, Taliya could only shake her head in sadness and remorse and turn around to leave .

She felt a bit bad for involving Arthur and causing him to suffer so much . She didn't know what happened to him but by the look of it, it doesn't seem to be going well, just by the fact that he didn't return . But she felt sadder for Alina, who is still young yet had to suffer at the hands of the filthy humans just because she had special origins .

Seeing the destruction and rubbles all over, her mood worsened . With the death knight next to her, Taliya left the mansion and was just about to leave the main gates, which didn't exist anymore, when she heard a loud explosion just a hundred meters away from her .

Before she could see what just happened, another explosion happened a distance away from the first one and this continued for a few more times before it stopped .

....

Arthur somehow managed to catch up to whoever is aiming for Taliya, with Makaze in his hands, he used [Faster Than Death] to appear next to Bucama and swung the sword, cutting one of the monster's arms . Arthur then lifted his free hand and fire a dark red flaming ball which instantly hit the hideous creature due to the distance between them being just a couple of inches .

With his state being so bad, Arthur couldn't afford to relax . As the monster was sent flying away, he followed after it with a few teleports and appeared behind it while it was still trying to stabilize itself .

Again, Makaze stabbed the back of the monster, where its horn used to be, this time, it was met with no resistance . Blood gushed out and a gaping wound was formed by the sharp katana but that was not all .

Arthur injected Natural Lightning and his special black flames and made them invade Bucama's body and destroy its cells one by one, aiming for the Dantian and Meridians .

Honestly, Arthur was confused and surprised at how this monster managed to come here . His knowledge of that foreign world was limited so perhaps there was an extra teleportation circle but how did Bucama manage to reach it so fast with all those Spatial Tears .

It definitely had something to do with that weird horn and the red beam which penetrated the sky, nevertheless, what is done cannot be undone and this monstrosity has to be killed on the spot!

....

With only two arms remaining, Bucama got up and stared angrily at Arthur . It received severe injuries due to the destruction of its world and it was in a very bad state . As it found a prey to absorb, Arthur attacked out of nowhere .

Fortunately for Bucama, Arthur was also injured all over his body which made them in worse states . With a disgusting grin, the monster stared back at Arthur and shrugged its arms while saying

"Friend, I can see why you want to kill me but let's stop for now . Don't you see our states? Fighting further would be meaningless . In return, I can promise you that I will leave this place as soon as I recover . "

Although the creature was speaking to him, Arthur ignored it and ordered the death knight to take Taliya further . It was apparent that Bucama needs her for something and if having her means it can recover then she retreats immediately .

When he was in the Spatial Tunnel, Arthur tried many times to enter the ARK but it didn't work no matter how much he said the word . Even when he was rushing here, it didn't work either . It's either malfunctioning or he is still in battle mode but he didn't know how to leave that mode as the System never mentioned it or specified how .

...

As she was in total disbelief of the calamity that appeared before her eyes, Taliya snapped out of it when the Death Knight grabbed her and put her on its shoulder then it jumped away from the monster while taking big strides similar to wide jumps on each step . The Knight only stopped when Taliya struggled and slashed continuously with her short blades .

Due to the shock, Taliya didn't have time to glance at the second figure but she knew it was Arthur, as far as she knew, he's the only one strong enough to fight such a monster .

...

As the monster kept speaking nonsense and making peace treaties on its own, two thick black flaming chains sprang out of the ground and wrapped around the monster instantly, making him unable to move a finger .

Arthur held Makaze with his two hands and didn't waste a second, he teleported in front of Bucama and used [Thousand Waves] straight at the monster's chest .

With such a close distance, coupled with a sharp blade and a peerless wielder, Bucama was literally cut in two vertically and you could see its four eyes filled with disbelief, unwillingness, and anger .

'poof' 'poof'

Two pieces lifelessly fell on the ground, not moving . the chains dispersed soon enough and what was left was a panting Arthur who was bending on one knee and using Makaze as support .

Such a strong strike could not be resisted by Bucama, which was already injured and weakened .

Despite winning, Arthur still felt regret over the stupid decisions he made, at least he managed to clear the danger . As he was about to get up and leave the place before more unwanted enemies come, the two pieces of Bucama shined with red light and the remaining scales vibrated and exploded and created countless tiny sharp pieces which struck everything in the small area around the monster's body .

Arthur, who could not react in time, was left defenseless against this . The sharp pieces were just about to hit him when a black shadow suddenly appeared behind him and grabbed him by the back of his head then darted away from the area .

The shadow was even faster than the pieces as it barely saved Arthur from being hit .

. . . .

Taliya, who was confused and still scared of the monster, mustered her courage and decided to head back . Her resolve strengthened when the Death Knight suddenly dispersed and vanished from sight .

The distance the knight crossed when it grabbed her was a bit far so she pushed her speed to the maximum to return to the mansion yet again but as she was almost there, a tall figure appeared in front of her .

With a long black hair, a bronze skin and a two-handed large axe on his shoulders, Jakob smiled at Taliya and said

"Now now, what is the Head Maid of the Demon Royalty doing here?"

Although the MoonStar sect is in the West and didn't expand further, Taliya fully know who Jakob was, she also knew his Strength and immense brute power .

She held her two short blades and stared coldly at Jakob without uttering a word .

"Those are two dangerous blades missy, I would recommend you to not be so careless, as long as you cooperate, nothing will happen to you . "

As he said that, Jakob held his axe and pointed it at Taliya as his two eyes glowed with a hazy red light .

. . .

Chapter 157

With the little bit of consciousness he has left, Arthur was able to distinguish Anastassia's figure, who managed to make it in time and save him from the final attack of Bucama .

It may be a mechanism laid by the monster in case it died . In normal cases, such attack wouldn't hurt him too much but in his current state, it would've been deadly, especially with his stats lowered .

Still panting heavily with his katana supporting him, Arthur looked up to Anastassia, who was in a black outfit that covered her whole appearance, seemingly like a ninja .

"Thanks, I owe you one . "

"No need to thank me, more importantly, what happened here?"

Surveying the surroundings and witnessing the bloody ground and the destroyed land, Anastassia was truly shocked . She came here for an investigation yet stumbled upon a wounded Arthur and a mass of bodies .

Before he could start explaining what happened, a massive wave of pain and shock overwhelmed Arthur, it crashed into him at the same time, making him unable to see properly, blackening his vision and making him lose consciousness .

After all the effort and strength he exerted, it's to be expected, especially the burden from activating all the passives . The wolf's body may be the perfect one for having them all activated but it's only the perfect one amongst the one he possesses in his storage . There must be a more suitable body out there, he just needs to find it .

...

The passing of time went unnoticed for one unconscious . When Arthur finally opened his eyes, he found himself laid on a comfortable bed inside a wide room . No one but him was present there and by the look of it, his body seems to have recovered fully, even the stat loss disappeared which is a good thing .

What's left to find out is how long was he unconscious? He hated being so defenseless and helpless, anyone would be able to kill him with the proper weapon if he's unconscious . It can be considered fortunate that it was Anastassia who saved him and not some crazy or weird stranger .

As Arthur's Sense spread, he was able to find out that he was currently located inside of his sect's area . Ma Clan disciples trained or spared outside, with some old tribe members trying to learn the use of Qi or challenging disciples .

There was no shortage of people, but the defense was tight with three bone dragons permanently guarding . There was also two death knights around .

One was located a couple of hundreds of meters away from him and it seemed to be the one who was guarding Taliya . As for the remaining knight, it just entered the room he was in along with Lissandra, who Arthur almost forgot about .

So many things happened, from hunting a black mage to the phases of the ARK and last but not least is facing that hideous looking monster .

Unconsciously, Arthur opened his status window but was sad when he saw his Realm drop by 6 whopping Grades . His stats also dropped but compared to his Grades, it was nothing .

The cost of preserving his life was indeed high . If he didn't use those forbidden skills, he wouldn't have survived or even resisted that shocking pushing force, neither the countless Spatial Tears .

..

Lissandra entered the room with a rather serious yet calm face, she was not as fearful as was last time . From the look of it, she either gave up on escaping or accepted her fate as Mortal, there was also the small possibility of her plotting to cheat him or someone close to him .

Still ignoring her, Arthur spread his Sense further yet found nothing weird that is worth paying attention too . When he ascertained that there was no danger around, he turned his head and looked back at Lissandra, who stared at him silently, as if she was the same rank as him or was never his enemy, to begin with .

Time slowly passed with no one of them uttering a single word, this silence was broken at last when Lissandra spoke with a straight face and a resolute tone .

"I know it's not my place to say this but I have come to make a request . "

"Denied . No requests, no trades, no offers, nothing . I'm not going to negotiate with a double-faced person . "

Seemingly unaffected by the instant answer and the rejection, Lissandra didn't leave and kept staring back at him with serious eyes, she remained silent for a moment before adding

"W-what if I told you I have a way to send you wherever you want?"

It was an alluring proposal, Arthur is impatient and wants to go to Earth and check if Lucy is really there or not but he's not that idiotic to believe whatever she says . Furthermore, let's just say she's speaking the truth, there must be some catch, she won't give precious information for free .

"Still a no . It doesn't matter what you can provide, I'm not negotiating or trading with you, go back . "

This time, Lissandra became a bit annoyed, it's indeed true that he has countless reasons not to trust her but he isn't even willing to listen to her, which made her unable to voice out her thoughts .

"At least listen to what I'm going to say! It's really ser-"

Before she could finish talking, she was interrupted by the Death Knight beside her which raised its axe, showing that it'll strike her if she spoke an extra word .

Begrudgingly, Lissandra left the room after throwing one last glare at Arthur, he didn't allow her to speak so she could only go back the way she came from .

As for Arthur, he ignored her and closed his eyes and entered the ARK, he had something he wanted to try and hoped it would work .

After softly saying the required word, Arthur surroundings blurred and he found himself standing in the familiar endless white space .

Every time he entered the ARK, he felt like he was in some kind of prison . if you look at this incredibly big space, by no means would you think it's a prison but maybe the thought of him being alone in such a huge place made him feel sadder and lonelier .

Without wasting much time contemplating the white surroundings, Arthur browsed through the available options and proceeded in entering the 'Beginner Phase' again . He wasn't sure but there's the possibility of obtaining the rewards again if so then he can spam it until his stats reach a limit and if he doesn't receive anything then he'll just rely on possessing until he goes to another world and cultivates .

The process and opponents were exactly the same, the only difference was that his lame copy didn't appear this time, he only heard the robotic voice of the ARK telling him to choose a weapon and so on .

Since he knew the attack patterns of the opponents, especially the hard ones like whitey, it wasn't that hard to defeat them for the second time and at the end of the third phase, he was given a score just the last time but you could see some improvements .

*Congratulations! You passed the third phase . *

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*Congratulations! You finished the Beginner's Phase . *

*Performance:

Physical Score: 97/100

Skills Score: 77/100

Magic Score: 73/100

Battle Score: 80/100

Weapon Score: 6 . 75/10

Time Spent: 111 minutes and 7 seconds . 'Average'

Overall score: 79/100 'Great Job' *

Rewards: +4 Grades, +40% to Health/Stamina/Energy Regen . +29M to all stats . +0 Creation . *

'It's working!'

Feeling overjoyed, Arthur opened his status window and felt happier upon noticing his Grade increasing . If he repeats the Beginner Phase again then he would come back to being a peak Grade Immortal .

Without much hesitation, Arthur signed for another challenge and immediately began the first Phase . The third time passed as smoothly as the second one . The score was only 77 but Arthur didn't pay much attention to it .

His eyes were waiting for the rewards to pop up but his excitement lessened when all he saw as a reward was two grades and no advancement in stats, which was such a pity but at least he received something .

*You cannot do the Beginner Phase until the loading time ends . (9 Years, 11 months, 29 days, 23 Hours and 58 seconds) . *

'10 years!'

Arthur had eyes full of disbelief when he saw that . Even though the time outside passes at a much faster pace than inside the ARK, as an inhabitant of this weird ARK, he had to go through ten literal years and wait patiently, and that is something he wouldn't do .

Heck! Even if it was a year, he would still not do it as it would worsen his mood, and make him go mad . Before leaving the ARK, Arthur decided to try a few things with the Plant Magic and his other attributes, trying to fuse them and he was met with a bit of success .

It was not overwhelming but it'll surely help in the upcoming fights .

'Dra'lim'

TITLE: MEAT GRINDER / SEEKER OF KNOWLEDGE / ONE WITH THE SWORD / ARK HOLDER

Level: ???

Class: Dark ARK Parasite

Realm: Immortal 9th Grade

Strength: 172 . 4M

Intelligence:189 . 9M

Agility: 155 . 6M

Wisdom: 146 . 2M

Vitality: 137M

Dexterity: 137 . 4M

Health:140M // Health Regen: 73718/s

Nether Energy: 145 . 6M // Nether Energy Regen: 90500/s

Mana: 220M // Mana Regen: 132378/s

Stamina: Infinite /Stamina Regen: ???

Creation : 125

Attack: 264 . 1M

Defense:187 . 7MM

Magic defense : 48 . 1M

Enigma abilities : Telekinesis / Ancient Threads / Sixth sense / ARK(Activated)

Mental Power : 1999

Elemental Resistances:

Fire: 100%

Darkness: 100%

Wind: 35%

Water: 75%

Earth: 75%

Light/holy: 5%

Shadow: 30%

Lightning: 100%

Ice: 30%

Death Count: 1 (2 more to obtain 'Unbound')

In his current state, Arthur was the strongest he has ever been, if not for his long cooldown cheat skills that cannot be used currently, he would be in a much safer position . However, relying on Makaze whilst deploying then ancient flame or Dark Magic is more than enough to overwhelm a Divine Realm .

Even against a God, Arthur was sure that he wouldn't be pushed back and he would have a good advantage, especially with such high stats .

He had a guess that every God had at least 100M in all stats which is a boost if they breakthrough godhood, but that was just an assumption, but if it's true, then he would be much stronger than a normal God .

In prowess, if he were to face Meyzu or the Lich King right now, Arthur had a lot more confidence, and if Lucy joined him, getting rid of them wouldn't be much of a problem, even if they use the strange illusory phantoms behind them .

One Heavenly Arrow is all it took to scare them and if he learns to use Rizaki properly, there's no end to what he could achieve and truthfully, he doesn't seek fame, power or riches . He just wants more strength to protect Lucy and Saly, to have them live a peaceful and easy-going life .

Earth would be a perfect choice but he would rather live on Astria as he considered this world a home more than Earth ever was .

...

"Jakob! What did you think you're doing by bringing the head maid of the Demon Lord to our base?"

With a cold tone and an expressionless face, Anastassia reprimanded Jakob whilst glaring at Taliya, who was silently standing not far away .

"Well . . . hahah you know, she had a Death Knight besides her so she can't possibly be an enemy, right?"

Scratching his head embarrassingly, Jakob tried to find a suitable excuse .

He would take the risk of bringing a powerful enemy to their base rather than killing one of Arthur's friends because that's an irreversible thing which will make him receive the full wrath of Arthur, who would most likely not let him live .

Shaking her head helplessly, Anastassia could only sigh at Jakob's behavior and actions . Ever since they met, he would always do things the wrong way or screw the plans, nevertheless, he at least knew how

to correct his mistakes . Compared to when they just met, he is way stronger and smarter, or so she thought .

She could remember having a headache anytime she argued with him . He was not that powerful, to begin with, however, Arthur had a good impression of this young man, who in the course of eighteen months or so, managed to grow way taller and become a lot stronger .

If she could name one of the good things about Jakob, it had to be his hard-working attitude, the man never slacks off and he's battling comrades and enemies every day, whether it's for training or to eliminate a threat .

"Didn't the thought of her being the one who summoned that knight ever cross your head? She's a Demon, she can't be trusted!"

Anastassia was fully capable of dealing of the Death Knight standing next to Taliya but she didn't, for the same reason as Jakob's .

The knight looked exactly similar to the one accompanying Lissandra, so Anastassia was hesitating a bit, moreover, it can't be just coincidence to be where Arthur was, especially when she knew what the identity of Taliya was .

Before everything else, Anastassia was Human, so like any other of her Race, she held a negative impression of the Demons albeit not interacting with them that much . It's like an inborn disgust or loathes, can't be explained properly and it's something you develop naturally when you grow in an environment where every Human talk bad or hates Demons .

As they were both arguing, Taliya remained silent and tried to grasp a good opportunity to sneak up and retreat . With the Death Knight protecting her back, there is a high chance of escaping despite all the defenses and strong figures here . After all, she saw how powerful the Death Knight was, monstrous strength and swift despite its size, one swing of its axe can easily crush her .

Taliya was no fool, she knew that Jakob or Anastassia could easily apprehend her so she patiently waited for the black-haired woman to drop her guard or look away, only she needed is for the enemy to be distracted for a second and that was more than enough .

She can't escape far after witnessing the three bones dragons and a terrifyingly big minotaur guarding the gates of the sect but with her being the head maid of the Demon Lord, she got a few items that may be helpful in such desperate situations .

Unfortunately for her, the Death Knight didn't take her orders and seemed to follow only one straight order and that is to protect her from any danger .

With the long sleeves of the maid dress covering part of her hands, Taliya sneakily shook her arms, making the hidden sharp blades slowly descend and when they were just about to be exposed, she stopped shaking her hands and surveyed Anastassia and Jakob, who were still talking without minding her .

'So arrogant to the point of not letting me unguarded and not sealing my powers . Humans never change'

Taliya they were the leaders of the most powerful sect in the western continent, and that the black-haired woman it that sect master, who is much stronger than her sister, the Demon Lord .

But no matter how strong you were, you must never underestimate an enemy and let him be unguarded, that is an iron rule Taliya followed since childhood .

Seconds passed and the moment she was waiting for never came, despite that, Taliya didn't give up, she waited a bit more before launching her offensive .

She unsheathed her short blades with lightning speed when a black shadow appeared before her and pinned her body against the wall . It was Anastassia, who never dropped her guard for even a split second, it's true that she was talking to Jakob but her attention was focused on the enemy, who shouldn't be here, listening to their conversation .

Having expected something like this, Taliya dropped a black object that soon emitted a smelly yellow fog that obscured the view .

The Death Knight also reacted and stretched its hands to grab Anastassia, who swiftly dodged the hand and kicked the Knight, sending it crashing into a wall a few meters behind it .

Anastassia's right hand, which was supposed to be pinning Taliya down, was now feeling the empty air . Cautious and startled at the same time, Anastassia crouched her body for a few centimeters before disappearing into a black shadow and chasing after Taliya, who was just about to leave the room .

The Death Knight quickly recovered by Jakob's large flaming axe came crashing down, pushing the knight and leaving it stumbling for a few steps before it stabilized its body, by the look of it, Jakob's attack was not strong enough to damage it .

As for Taliya, she couldn't step past the doorstep before a cold chill ran down her spines and a dark and red dagger appeared a few inches away from her neck .

Anastassia was standing behind Taliya, with her dagger at the enemy's throat, ready to finish her but only stopped when she sensed an additional presence in the room, clearly stopping her from slicing the maid's throat .

"It's useless to fight any longer, she's not an enemy, for now at least . "

Arthur appeared in the center of the room, wearing the usual black clothes with his grey hair which grew a bit and two cold eyes, one blood red and the other having the same color yet pulsating with grey light every few seconds .

"She's a demon, I cannot let her be unguarded anymore . We should at least seal her powers to eliminate any further danger . "

Still not convinced about Taliya's true intention and doubtful towards her, Anastassia insisted that the appropriate measures should be taken and the Demon to be apprehended and sealed .

Unlike Arthur, who had a broader view and an open-minded opinion about the Demon Race and all other Races in general, she didn't like this silver-haired one bit .

Moreover, to add oil to the already burning fire, this maid was the head maid of the Demon Lord himself, the archenemy of every Human .

As for Arthur, after experiencing so much and living on Earth, where wars and racism are not that spread as they are here, he didn't have any negative effect towards Demon . Honestly, he hated Humans much more than Demons, considering that his wife is half-demon, he leans more towards them, and that is one of the reasons he wanted Taliya as his temporary follower .

"She is a demon I brought, there is no need to be so cautious . If she tries anything, then I'll be the one to act but I'm sure she wouldn't try anything, right?"

As he finished his sentence, Arthur glanced at Taliya, who was looking at him with a reproaching expression and blaming eyes .

What happened just now was witnessed by Arthur and fortunately for the maid, he teleported in time or else Anastassia would have seriously killed the Demon as she is not someone who jokes around .

Not minding the looks of bewilderment from Jakob, confusing from Anastassia, Arthur picked an empty seat and laid on it comfortably then he gestured for them to sit too while folding his arms and patiently waiting . The thought of explaining his sudden appearance here never crossed his mind, anyone who knows him would know that he always appears out of nowhere .

Jakob didn't linger there dazing, he sat there with a smile hanging on his face . He matured from the first time he and Arthur met, he became a trusted leader and a strong warrior .

'My past choices were not for naught after all . '

As he glanced at the tall Jakob, Arthur nodded his head and shifted his attention to Anastassia, who was still hellbent on not leaving Taliya unguarded .

As he let a sigh of helplessness, Arthur couldn't help but be forced to use Telekinesis to move the unwilling Taliya to an empty seat and making her slowly sit on it . It was a difficult feat as he is not used to making people sit, just making objects or living being float at best .

He tried countless times going a bit deeper, like cutting off air from the opponents, shaking organs or reversing blood flow but that is not possible, for now at least, maybe if he ascends to the God Realm, it'll be possible but even at such stage, his gut told him that it'll not be that easy .

With a cold and angry look, embarrassed and enraged due to what has been to her, Taliya could only glare at Arthur with piercing eyes, seemingly going to jump and slice his throat at any second but she didn't even when the powerful pressure was lifted from her .

Anastassia reluctantly gave up after seeing that but she still sat next to the maid . She hid her daggers again and glanced at the Death Knight who was standing at a corner of the room, silent and motionless .

"It's not the time to bother with that . "

Arthur waved his hand, sending the Death Knight back from where it came from and forcing Anastassia to finally focus on him .

'She's really hard to deal with . '

Sighing yet again, Arthur resumed talking once all of them were listening attentively and not trying to act or do something in secret .

"First thing I want to ask . What were you doing near the Emperor's mansion? No matter how fast you were, it's not possible to come that fast . "

Logically, if Anastassia learned of what happened and the mansion explosion, it would need sometime before she managed to personally come, but he didn't stay inside that hellish world that much, two or three hours at best .

"We were investigating something . Following the disappearance of Mary, my sister also disappeared when she was sent on a mission, it has been a few days since I heard from her and apparently, she was last spotted near the Emperor's mansion . I along with Jakob decided to pay a visit to the Emperor and personally ask him . "

"Disappeared you said?"

Anastassia's eyes softened a bit as she remembered her sister, who volunteered to do a simple mission but went missing .

"Yes, her party was killed and only she was missing . We searched the whole perimeter but found nothing . On my way, I heard a loud explosion and after fighting countless crazy soldiers, I stumbled upon you and that monster . "

Remembering the four-armed monster, Anastassia felt a chill down her spines, it was imprinted in her mind and couldn't be forgotten, just its aura was terrifying yet Arthur was able to kill it . She also had the usual expressionless face but in all honesty, she admired and trusted Arthur, despite the first meeting which went horribly wrong and the conflict, they managed to become friends and she wouldn't think twice before risking her life to help him or Lucy . There was also little Saly, who Anastassia considered as her non-related little sister .

"When did Marry disappear exactly?"

Curious and worried about the female beastmen, Arthur asked again .

"Eight months ago . Miss Sonia pleaded countless times to send search parties so we sent six of them in five weeks but nothing was found, not even a single trace . "

We assumed she died or kidnapped by scheming enemies . Jakob, who was the one who just answered, glanced at Taliya on his right as he uttered the last sentence .

"Don't compare us to you lowly humans! We would not resort to such trickeries to win against you!"

Snorting, Taliya didn't even spare a glance to Jakob as she retorted with an angry tone .

With a hand stroking his chin and a pondering expression, Arthur remained silent as he tried to piece things together and make some guesses but he couldn't find any good leads, the Demons are not the ones who kidnapped Mary as there was no need to, as for the other clans, it was rather unlikely too . If they needed to exchange hostages for a treasure or power, they would have done so ages ago yet nothing happened, which led him to think of that hellish world .

Just like there was a teleportation leading to that world, there must be others leading elsewhere too, just like that hideous creature which was talking to the black mage .

Thinking back to the black mage, Arthur decided to head out to that cave to check things when he has enough time . The Death Golem didn't notify him of anything or he would have felt it but it's still better to see what's going on with his own eyes .

. . . .

As silence ruled and no one talked, the atmosphere became a bit awkward . Arthur was trying to remember something, maybe he missed a clue or something, as for Anastassia, she kept glancing at Taliya every now and then, assuring that nothing gets out of hand .

And last but not least was Jakob, who was smiling awkwardly and scratching the back of his head, trying to talk or lighten up the mood . After an unknown amount of time passed, this unusual atmosphere was at last broken when Taliya spoke

"Alina, did you find her?"

Obviously, her question was directed at Arthur, who was brought back to reality as he heard the maid talk .

As he shook his head helplessly, Arthur replied to Taliya, however, unfortunately for the desperate maid, he didn't speak words she wanted to hear and didn't reply with the answer she yearned for .

"No signs of her, not even someone who has an appearance that matches the picture you showed me . That world . . . it was not a place for Demons or Humans to live . "

Trying to keep a straight face, Taliya expressionlessly looked at Arthur and added

"That means you didn't finish your part of the deal . "

"Deal?"

Hearing that word, Anastassia shifted her attention to Arthur and stared at him with piercing eyes, questioning the meaning of that word and demanding an immediate answer .

"It's just a deal, no need to give me that look . "

A bit amused yet also fearful, Arthur waved his hands in innocence, he found that looks of hers similar to the one Lucy would throw at him when he talks to a woman, not even flirting or staring at a woman, if he talks to another woman who she doesn't know, he would be ditched by her and he is completely helpless, unable to defend himself or explain the matter .

"Y-you made a deal with the Demons?"

"That is right, I made a deal with her . Now would you get off my case? I'm not Human so I do not share your hatred for the Demons nor do I want to share it . "

Albeit a bit angry at his choices, Anastassia didn't pursue the matter further, he was her friend and he wouldn't do anything to harm her or the sect .

"You are the sect master, you are free to do anything you like, hahahahaha now now Anastassia, stop being so stubborn and let's change this topic . "

Still scratching the back of his head embarrassingly, Jakob joined the conversation and tried to smoothen things up but all he did was make Taliya flabbergasted .

She had wild guesses and most of them were that Arthur had a connection with the MoonStar Sect as they witnessed the sect master help him but now that she heard the vice-sect master said that Arthur is the sect master, all things were pieced together and things became much more understandable .

Still in disbelief to this sudden truth, Taliya looked at Arthur with a mix of surprise and anger . He never told her or the Demon Lord about his identity, maybe it was on purpose but if he did say it, they would have been a bit friendlier .

The relationship between the seclusive sects, clans and the demons was a bit weird and complicated, there were a few Human Clans that are cooperating with Demons and although the MoonStar sect is the dominant one in this continent and is not from the ones helping the Demons, it is not hated by Taliya or the Demon Lord herself!

Since Arthur's sect never attacked the Demons or their continent, they regarded it as a silent peace treaty and the Demon Lord was even willing to send a messenger to negotiate .

But what's strange is that albeit hating Demons, Anastassia didn't launch an attack at them but maybe it was due to not having enough confidence or boldness to do that . After all, it was not her sect, it was Arthur's and Lucy's, she was like a vice-sect master . Her Clan merged with the sect and she had a lot of authority but the couple is the original masters .

Anastassia harrumphed as she glared at Jakob, reproaching him for saying unnecessary things but she didn't speak further, she merely crossed her arms and remained silent .

As for Jakob, despite receiving angry glares from Arthur and Anastassia, he just awkwardly laughed it off as if nothing happened .

"Speaking of the deal, it is temporarily halted until further investigation . "

Another bomb fell on Taliya, who still didn't completely give up on her nephew .

"Halted? W-what do you mean by halted?"

"I have more important matters . It's just a deal for me and nothing more, I need to prepare things and recuperate . Moreover, the search of my friend is more important than a stranger . "

With a cold tone, Arthur voiced his thoughts, making Taliya feel even more depressed .

"Y,You!!"

"Resent me if you want but just like you care for that girl, I have people I care for too . "

Shrugging his shoulders, Arthur ignored the angry stares of Taliya and added

"For the Human Emperor matter, don't let it spread . Just send someone to talk to the Holy Church and tell them to control things before it gets out of hand, as for the disappearances I'll investigate that personally . "

Arthur was just about to conclude the short meeting when Taliya spoke after some hesitation

"Actually, there were a lot of disappearances from our side too . The locations are random but we never found a trace . "

This was a secret information that should not be known but Taliya was forced to say it to convince Arthur not to abandon the deal right now . Technically, he was not abandoning it but halted is like abandoned for Taliya, who wanted to get her nephew back as soon as possible .

"I'll tell you more if you agree to continue the deal immediately . "

As she said that, Taliya stared at Arthur, expecting a positive answer but he just smirked and said

"We'll see about that later . We have some friendly visitors at our gates . "

"Visitors?"

Whilst frowning, Anastassia looked at Arthur with confusion . Since they established the sect and spread all over the continent, there were no forces pressuring them, not with the three dragons, the death knights and her in the lead .

. . . .

The authority of the sect stretched all over the continent and a bit on the three others too but its main headquarters is not that big . With a radius of few miles and countless building and a tall wall around it . As the disciples of the Ma Clan were used to their style, some tall Pagodas and similar buildings were built for their sake . As for the main tower, where Arthur was talking with the others, it was located in the center of the territory, standing high and proud with three dragons circling around it every now and then .

It didn't take long for the four of them to leave the tower and head outside to welcome the visitors, who Anastassia and Jakob were curious about . On the way down, Arthur ordered the Death Knight accompanying Lissandra to act and to bring her to them immediately .

Anastassia had long since broken through the Spirit Realm so flying wasn't undoable, as for Jakob, he relied on his 'friendly' attitude to build a good relationship with one of the bone dragons on the course of the last year and whenever he needed a quick lift, he'll ask that dragon .

Being one of many which were summoned by Arthur, the dragons obviously would only obey their master but when time passes, they would become sentient yet not to the point of defying the original order that was given to them, hence the bone dragons became a bit more intelligent, obeying Anastassia and Jakob as they were the leaders and doing their job of protecting the sect's territory .

Arthur rode on his Dark Cloud along with the silent Taliya and Lissandra, who just joined them . Because Arthur forbade her from uttering any extra word earlier, she didn't try to talk and just kept an

expressionless face . Obeying his orders, she got on the cloud and sat on it without questioning her presence here .

As for Taliya, she merely glanced at Lissandra then turned her attention to Arthur, who was sitting at the front . Anastassia soon followed by flying on her own and Jakob was a bit late as he had to wait for the dragon .

With a constant speed, they arrived at the large metal gates of the sect, standing tall and having quite a domineering presence, fitting the sect's name .

A large circle with a star inside of it were engraved on the gates, they represented the sect's symbol and an emblem not many would be pleased to see as it's something to fear, admire or respect from afar .

The permanent guard for the large gates is the one and only unique red Minotaur which Arthur apprehended . The creature was a dungeon's boss but with a little trick, Arthur managed to subdue it and order it to protect the sect, just like the bone dragons .

It wasn't particularly strong compared to Arthur, Anastassia or the bone dragons but it's not something to be underestimated either . With a whopping Level of 872, a large blade and axe on its back and a five-meter height, it was a terrifying existence which made any enemy sweat from fear .

Usually, it just spends the hunting all kinds of desert beasts or just sleeping near the gates, Jakob would also spar with it when there's time but it could be said that all of its time is spent snoring near the huge gates .

After consecutive fights with Anastassia and experiencing her deadly and cold daggers, the minotaur never tried to rebel or slaughter any sect member, it did its job and defended whenever an enemy attacked . With such a horror guarding the gates, no enemy has ever gotten past that point which strengthened the creature's role and position in the sect .

'ROAAR'

As they approached the gates, a loud dragon roar was heard from behind the metal doors . If not for the three bone dragons being behind them, Anastassia would have judged that roar to be one of theirs since it sounded so similar . In total, Arthur summoned four bone dragons with the main one slumbering near the sky-high tower and two active ones helping in missions or circling the sect territory .

Jakob was currently riding one of those two and the last one was behind these gates . Arthur sensed it earlier and knew that Robin has finally come, but she was not alone . There were a couple of other individuals with her and from her distressed expression, you could guess it wasn't intentional on her part .

.....

Going back a few hours, as she was sitting on the dragon's wide back along with her secretary, they were met with an unexpected thing . The bone dragon was quite useful as it could fly with a fast speed and avoid terrestrial creatures but there was one problem, the thing that stopped their trip was neither a terrestrial monster nor was it even a dangerous beast . It was actually a group of black-robed people, with a shady look, ominous aura and chilling eyes behind those dark hoods .

She tried to avoid them but they purposely flew in front of the dragon's way . Robin was no dumb person, she had a bit of knowledge about flying people, like Arthur for example and one thing has to be known about them, they are insanely strong . She only saw a few of the Elders of her Clan capable of flight which means that these people, which most likely were not kind, are definitely at the Spirit Realm which is not something she could face .

Fortunately, the bone dragon threatened the black-clothed people a bit as it roared at them but that wasn't enough to shoo them off . One of them flew a bit toward the dragon which stopped in its track, the person took off his hood and showed his ugly old face and dirty yellow teeth .

The old man grinned hideously at Robin and her secretary and said

"Missy, you appear to be heading towards the Western Continent . "

Robin and co were currently at the far Western edges of the Human Continent, just about to cross the sea separating the Western continent and Human continent .

With her glasses pulled back and an expressionless face, she replied to the old ugly old man

"Our destination is none of your concern and if you don't get out of our way, I'll have no choice but to resort to violence . "

She knew that they had no chance if they fought against them all, none with just one dragon, however, she will not be a coward like last time and escape, not like it's possible anyways .

Taken aback by her aggressiveness and boldness, the old man's grin widened and his row of pointy yellow teeth was shown clearly .

"We are not here to fight, with the same destination, we could somehow make things works, that is what we intended to do . "

....

What happened next does not need to be known as the old man started spitting utter gibberish and nonsense as he and his shady party followed the bone dragon . He would also glance at the dragon but apart from that, he remained passive .

Not knowing what their purpose was and being completely helpless, Robin could only wish Arthur is in his sect so he can take care of them . She had a few guesses when she pondered about their identity but she couldn't confirm any of them .

After arriving at the sect's gates and noticing the shady black-clothed people still following them with the old man in the lead . Robin just snorted and headed to the gates, where the large red minotaur was sleeping .

Hearing close footsteps, the beast woke up and stared at the bone dragon whilst dazing for a bit then as if it realized something, it snapped out of its daze and stood erect instantly .

For it, the bone dragons were like its elders as it could never beat them, seeing one of its elders staring back at it, the minotaur started feeling a bit fearful as it was clearly slacking off and sleeping but the bone dragons rarely bothered with it so it felt confused .

It may not be able to sleep but after fighting countless battles and gaining more stats, its intelligence was not that low . It had a bit of wisdom and it could understand a bit of the Human language .

Seeing Robin getting off the dragon and staring at it, the minotaur thought for a second before turning around and opening the tall gates for this woman . It was smart enough to know that she's not an enemy, however, after letting Robin and her secretary enter, the minotaur closed the gates and stared at the incoming group of people, who ignored it and used their flight power to just bypass the gates .

With its long blade on its back, the minotaur clutched the sword and used all the strength on its legs to instantly jump toward the group of black clothes people and swung its sword at them, creating a twirling wind tornado that pushed all of them to the back except the leading old man .

The Bone dragon which was protecting Robin joined the fray and flew at the old man as per Robin's orders, it roared and spit an alarmingly powerful breath of black fog which dispersed in the air and made a couple of the pushed back people wail in agony .

The old man's grin transformed into an even uglier expression as he waved his hand, creating some sort of a black sphere around him and comrades . He waved his hand again, conjuring a dark staff which was pointed at the bone dragon .

"Insolent creature! Go face your creator!"

A black beam shot out from the staff, it was faster than the bone dragon's reaction, which only managed to lean its body a bit but it was not enough to completely evade the beam .

Such a creature as the bone dragon couldn't feel pain but that beam still managed to injure its right wing, completely shattering its bones and making the large creature fall near the minotaur .

What followed was a loud roar coming out of the dragon's mouth, from the looks of it, it was calling its nearby allies but what it didn't expect is that it's one and the only master happened to be here .

The familiar dark cloud appeared near the minotaur . Robin was elated as she saw Arthur on the front, with him here, she felt safer as his powers are unfathomable and his strength is extraordinary, she never doubted his strength, especially after witnessing it more than one time .

Arthur spared the old man a couple of glances before turning to look at the silent Lissandra and coldly saying

"Go take care of your dogs . "

Chapter 158

Upon hearing Arthur talk to her, Lissandra snapped out of her daze and turned her head toward Arthur, who was looking at her with a cold and reproaching look, after all, it was partially her fault that these black clothed people came here with Robin and from their look and aura, they certainly didn't come looking for peace . *In fact, just by the fact that the old man used one of his skill to damage the bone

dragon, Arthur had already considered him as an enemy that must be eliminated, the question was, how would he kill it .

Since Lissandra is considered their godly figure and she can easily command them, it would be the best choice to let her take care of things . Albeit becoming a Mortal, Arthur thought none of them would dare to oppose her or even raise his tone or mock her, their worship was not for show and they obeyed her orders letter by letter .

In fact, Lissandra didn't even need to raise her voice or utter a single word . The second the old man laid his eyes on her figure, his eyes turned into complete shock and disbelief .

"G-Goddess?"

Eyes wide open, shaken voice and utter astonishment, that was the state of the old man, he couldn't even keep his composure . He instantly descended from the sky and flew to Lissandra and jumped in front of her, prostrating himself . He didn't need an answer from her to confirm her suspicions, there was no way he was wrong, not with the proud demeanor and cold look .

Although he felt that something was strange, what was she doing here and why is the pressure he usually feels from here is gone but he dared not say that loudly for fear of punishment or even worse .

"What do you think you are doing? I did not order you to come here . Are you revolting against your master's orders?"

Seemingly startled but her anger and displeasure, the old man didn't dare raise his head, he kept kowtowing whilst replying with the still shaking voice .

"I, I dare not, master! We didn't receive any contact from you for more than a year so we thought you"

The old man realized what he just said and more sweat covered him as he became more nervous and stressful .

Whilst snorting, Lissandra got off the dark cloud and stared angrily at the old man, it was obvious that she didn't pay attention to what he just said, she was just acting like this purely to follow Arthur's orders as apparently, he was her new boss since she became a mortal . Moreover, she can't try anything with the death knight guarding her every second without even letting her breathe, she tried to persuade Arthur or removing the annoyance as she clearly isn't able to flee but he was still rejecting that, completely distrusting her, which is the right thing to do .

"Stop spouting nonsense and go back where you came from, I don't have the time to deal with you bunch . "

Although anyone can see she is but a Mortal if they have the necessary strength, none of the black-clothed people dared to reply or retort, they just turned around and left with the old man in the lead .

The process took just a couple of minutes and the situation was easily solved . Seeing the disappearing shadows of her subordinates vanishing from her sight, Lissandra turned around and looked at Arthur, waiting for some kind of reaction or an order .

She could have ordered them to attack Arthur or take someone hostage but that would be too idiotic and reckless, she knew more than anyone how terrifyingly strong he is so it was better to remain calm and just follow his orders like any normal prisoner .

It's a pity she couldn't warn him about what's bothering her but since he didn't want to hear it then even if he blamed her later on, she wouldn't care .

"Now that nuisance has been taken care of, let's welcome our guests . "

Arthur glanced at Robin, who was not far away from him, standing behind the half-closed gates . After she saw the black-clothed people disappear, she sighed and walked toward Arthur with a relieved expression .

"I apologize for the trouble . "

Heartily laughing, Arthur waved his hand indicating that it was okay and added

"No worries hahaha, it's just a small matter, now why don't you follow us to the headquarters, where we can talk . "

. . .

It didn't take long for them to return to the same meeting room with two extra people who were Robin and her assistant . She still maintained that cold look but Arthur noticed that she was less reserved than a few days ago when he met her in the Itas continent . Although it's a few days for her and everyone else, for him, it's been years, he just couldn't afford to enter another one of those crazy long dreams . Just recently, he went crazy and could have hurt Taliya, who was supposed to be his ally, and that alone proves how unstable he was currently .

"I'm glad to see you safe and sound . Now onto the more important matters, by coming here I presume you accepted my offer?"

Arthur would not mind spending time talking with Robin as she is a good ally and an important friend but he just had too many things in his hands right now and he could not afford to sit leisurely all day .

With Lissandra help, he is going to expand his search territory, first to look for the missing people such as Mary and also look for anything out of the place, anything that has relations with the black mage or the four-armed monster . The second plan was called 'Purification Plan' as it was his first step into cleaning up his home and making it a better and peaceful place . The war ongoing between Demons and Humans can be solved later but for now, he should focus on the more important matters .

--

Robin pulled back her glasses and glanced at the present people to ascertain about a few things then she stared at Arthur and replied resolutely

"Thanks for the welcome and helping me yet again . Just as you said, I discussed your offer and I'm willing to collaborate with your sect and build a future where my company and your sect can flourish further and further . "

Her tone held some excitement as she could think of countless benefits earned by their alliance . With their incredible manpower and strict laws, coupled with her company's wealth and materials she could provide, the two can help each other in many ways . Powerful guards or even dragons could guard an expedition, assuring that no attacks from bandits or such occur and vice versa, she would provide Gold, materials and so on for the sect to expand on all of the continents, basically, it's a win-win situation .

Arthur clapped his hands two times, indicating his approval, then without hesitation, he waved his hand and took out many delicious dishes coupled with rare juicy meats and unique drinks he made personally .

If we're talking about support-like skills, Arthur literally had all of them, whether it's cooking, liquor making, tailoring or blacksmithing, he had all of them in Advanced, moreover, he had few special skills earned from unique individuals . With the help of those skills and other skills he earned from ancient beasts, he was able to make a diluted liquor while adding a couple of fruit flavors .

Jackob and the rest didn't hesitate as they started devouring the luxuries . Robin also didn't hold back, she merely followed the noble etiquette and ate slowly . Only the reserved Taliya refrained from even lifting her hand as for her, Arthur could only shake his head and ignore her, it's her choice, after all, he's not going to force her to eat anything .

The silver-haired maid silently glanced around her only to see everyone enjoying a hearty meal, Jackob was even dumbstruck by the burning sensation and the strong flavor of the liquor, despite that, he took several gulps, never stopping and requesting Arthur to retrieve more .

After fully enjoying the meal, Jackob and Anastassia left to handle sect matters and Robin also went outside to tour the territory and familiarize herself with the new environment . The only two people left were Taliya and Arthur, as for Lissandra, she was ordered leave long before they began to eat .

Robin didn't forget to give Arthur 6 storage rings and explained how she divided the corpses .

'It's a good thing I decided to visit the Itas Continent' Arthur thought as he played with the six rings in his hands, each one had one thousand five hundred beast corpses with the worst ring having only corpses which had a Level ranging between 30 and 70 and the best ring having corpses which had a whopping Level of 350 .

It wasn't easy to acquire such corpses as Robin didn't have enough manpower to slay such a beast and at a continuous period, so the only thing he could guess was that she able to lucky find the corpse .

One more thing Arthur decided to do is fix his territory before embarking to the cave under the Demon City, he had to take care of his and Lucy's sect and make sure that it's properly managed and is totally safe . He also has to possess all those corpses since he didn't reach his limit yet . After a bit of pondering, he decided to sacrifice one week to do all of that, then when the time is right, he'll fly to where his Death Golem is and patiently wait for the hideous creature to teleport back, no matter how much time it takes, he was willing to wait for it but once he's there, he'll never leave the cave . It was a trip without return, he had to leave Astria!

The silence was getting on Taliya's nerves, Arthur was usually talkative and this atmosphere was quite awkward, especially when she noticed that the other party is completely ignoring her existence . After throwing some glares at Arthur, Taliya was forced to spit out her thoughts .

"About what we talked about earlier . "

Taliya's usually calm temper vanished whenever she's talking with him . When she saw that he was still lost in thoughts, dark and ruthless thoughts rampaged inside her mind .

'He's so strong, I'm sure he wouldn't die, right?'

Although she was hesitating at first, she could not hold back her anger and frustration anymore, with a swift and flawless movements, she withdrew one of her short blades and threw it at Arthur .

Unfortunately, nothing happened even after throwing her sharp blade, when it was about twenty centimeters away from Arthur, the short blade broke into small pieces as if it hit an unbreakable barrier .

What she didn't know was that Arthur constantly had a Dark Barrier around him, after so much time has passed, it became a habit of his . Furthermore, is Lucy was here, he would unconsciously create two kinds of barriers around her, making sure she's always protected from any sneak-attacks .

Even though the goal she wished for wasn't reached, at least her attack awakened Arthur from his deep thoughts . With a confused expression and tilted face, he looked at Taliya, demanding an explanation for her previous actions .

"You were lost in thoughts, it was the only method I can think of . "

'Only method my ass, if it was another person, he would have been dead!'

Keeping his thoughts to himself, Arthur coughed and added

"So you were saying?"

"A-ah, about our deal "

Whilst dismissively waving his hand, Arthur didn't bother giving an appropriate answer

"I think Alina most likely disappeared the same way the others did meaning is we find the source, we find all of them . As for the temporary pause, it'll last for one week, in meantime you go back to the Demon Continent and inform your sister and I'll send scouts all over Astria to search for clues, that is all I can do . "

Taliya knew that it's the best answer she could get for now . But what she was stuck in a dilemma, go back or not . Technically, he didn't do his part of the deal so she can't honor hers but he clearly tried to retrieve the little girl so she could only sigh and force herself to make a decision that she didn't want to take .

Taliya sat up and left the room after leaving one final phrase

"For now, I'll not leave, I will only leave when the deal is done as I promised to help you retrieve my niece . "

With that, the head maid left the room, leaving Arthur alone .

It was only after a couple of minutes that Arthur sat up from the chair and prepared to leave the room but once again, he was interrupted . A black shadow materialized in front of him until it formed the silhouette of an individual . It was, in fact, Anastassia, who was wearing her usual clothes which covered her appearance .

Knitting his brows, Arthur looked at the silent woman in front of him, expecting her to say something but the latter coldly glared at him for sometime before saying

"Lucy will kill you if she knew that you're making a deal with another woman . "

Seemingly carefree, Arthur shrugged his shoulders and casually replied

"It's just a deal . I'm not cheating on her and I do not have any thoughts of laying my hand on the maid . "

"I already asked the maid about the deal . You want her to follow you? That's even more of a reason for Lucy to kill you AND her . "

The relationship between Anastassia and Lucy was not that close but they were not strangers too . Lucy took care of her when she was injured and they would chat from time to time, as someone who witnessed how much Lucy loves Arthur, she also knew that she is an overprotective woman who easily gets jealous, even when Arthur talk to her!

So seeing that Arthur was traveling with a maid, and a pretty one at that, it didn't sit quite well with Anastassia, she first thought he was an unfaithful man but he doesn't seem to be that kind of person so she didn't immediately jump to thoughtless conclusions .

"I only love two people and they are my daughter and wife and I know you are fully aware of that, right?"

His tone was still casual but a hint of seriousness and resolution could be felt from it, Anastassia retracted her cold glare and sighed .

She was not an expert in communication but she was able to see the loneliness in his eyes, even though he kept a carefree attitude, there is no doubt that he is missing his family .

'It seems I was overthinking . '

Yet again, Anastassia's figure blurred and disappeared from the room .

"Don't forget that you always have a friend to speak to . As my benefactor and friend, I cannot let you fall into a despair or else Lucy would never forgive me "

The very first day Arthur literally did not leave his room . Anastassia and the others didn't come to bother him in his private room . Although they don't know his Race or just presumed he's a Human, they know at least that he has countless secrets and didn't insist on knowing the truth .

With so many corpses to possess and stats to gain, Arthur didn't hold back when he got back, he immediately started possessing corpses left and right and then he absorbed them using [Death Touch] .

The thing is, he is probably getting experience by using that but it was so meager that it's basically useless right now .

He tried reading the content of the letter again but it didn't help at all . Such a skill cannot be this limited, especially if it's compared to [Faster Than Death] which is a godly skill that never betrayed Arthur's expectation .

The thing is, this instant movement skill is not that perfect, it's certainly helpful in many ways but some enemies such as the dragons, can predict where he will teleport to, he also cannot spam it in a short amount of time .

It is possible to activate it after a second or two but in close-range combat, a second is enough for a God to pierce his heart or finish him .

There was also strong skills such as [Bear affinity] or [Fierce Calling], the first was helpful if he possessed a bear but he would rather possess a unique body of a Griffin than an ancient bear due to the accumulated passives, they would bring much more advantage to him than 50% bonus stats, especially if his stats reach a certain limit .

As for the latter, which conjures an image of a bear, the cost is simply too absurd, just ten seconds would consume 5 Million Mana points . This amount is but a drop of his Mana Pool but it's still outrageously high which is why he refrained from using it against Bucama .

The list goes on and on, numerous skills, forbidden spells or mysterious techniques, he had so much that it became mind-numbing, so he focused only his primary skills and would rarely use the other ones, to conserve Mana and attack more efficiently whilst doing more damage .

Overall, he can be considered both a physical and magical oriented fighter, it depends on the enemy and environment . He would rather fight in a long range to avoid deadly attack such as Bucama's last desperate attack but that could only blame himself as he dropped his guard and was exhausted .

He longed for his wife and daughter so he sought for more power, it's only logical, however, he didn't forget his friends residing on Astria, for this purpose, he decided to sacrifice this week to prepare things for Anastassia and the rest .

After he finishes possessing all those corpses, he would clean the territory from any possible enemies, spies or anything, they may be insignificant for him but Arthur doesn't know how much time he would be absent . He also needs to make this land a bit more convenient . Unfortunately, the western continent was a wasteland covered with dry earth and mountains of sables, it was literally a hot and dangerous desert which is exactly why the other powerful factions ignored it and didn't think of conquering it .

But Arthur thought of it differently, with the use of his Nature and Plant Magic, along with his Earth Attribute and other special skills, he was going to create something worth fighting for, not just a desolate territory that people take shelter in for fear of the unknown laying all around them .

It took Arthur 7 hours to possess 9,000 corpses, he would look at his stats every 1,000 corpses possessed . As for the skills, he either already possessed them or earned a few ones but none was worth

mentioning . This was to be expected since he possessed so many species that it's unlikely to get a new skill, so that means if he stays on Astria, the probability of possessing a powerful being or obtaining a new strong skill is very low .

When this boring job was done, Arthur was bewildered to see that his stats still didn't reach a limit, but the result was truly not bad .

TITLE: MEAT GRINDER / SEEKER OF KNOWLEDGE / ONE WITH THE SWORD / ARK HOLDER

Level: ???

Class: Dark ARK Parasite

Realm: Immortal 9th Grade

-

Strength: 195 . 6M

Intelligence: 207 . 6M

Agility: 179 . 1M

Wisdom: 156 . 7M

Vitality: 153 . 9M

Dexterity: 150 . 2M

-

Health:162 . 4M // Health Regen: 77941/s

Nether Energy: 145 . 6M // Nether Energy Regen: 90500/s

Mana: 244M // Mana Regen: 141378/s

Stamina: Infinite /Stamina Regen: ???

Creation : 125

Attack: 288 . 8M

Defense: 209 . 4M

Magic defense: 50 . 4M

Enigma abilities : Telekinesis / Ancient Threads / Sixth sense / ARK(Activated)

Mental Power: 1999

Elemental Resistances:

Darkness: 100%

Wind: 35%

Water: 75%

Earth: 75%

Light/holy: 5%

Shadow: 30%

Lightning: 100%

Ice: 30%

Death Count: 1 (2 more to obtain 'Unbound')

With an average increase of 10 Million points, that was enough for Arthur to feel his muscles itching and his bones hardening, immense power covered him and a strange yet stimulating feeling surged inside of him . The black orb inside of his Dantian was emitting a strange black light and an almost invisible talisman was rotating around it, it was burning with black flames and had runes that were incomprehensible for Arthur .

Seeing his body in such a state, Arthur knew that with or without Nether Energy, his body will soon reach its limits and will force itself to evolve and become a Divine Realm, however, he didn't know if that's a good or bad thing .

After spending an extra hour trying a few things, Arthur left his private room and began his work . First, he circled around the sect main territory a few times to get a better view, then he floated near the central sky-high tower of the sect and closed his eyes .

Endless amounts of Mana were gathered from his Dantian, emptying it bit by bit, Arthur slowly raised his hands upwards and concentrated on channeling his Mana toward the specific location in his mind .

His focus was totally on put on this process, so he was defenseless but that wasn't a big problem as a Dark Barrier was around him and his loyal main bone dragon was surveying the surroundings, moreover, to make it even safer, Arthur summoned the Book of the Damned made it the rotten hand stick out of it and float next to him, protecting him from any sudden attacks .

Very soon, the main territory of the MoonStar Sect, which was undoubtedly huge, began shaking violently . The earth seemed about to shatter at any moment and gloomy clouds covered the shining sun, making the atmosphere ominous and dark . People panicked and some experts retrieved their weapons and cautiously stared at the sky . Even Anastassia and Jakob hastily left their rooms and looked at the sky only to see Arthur standing high up in the sky, with his two hands stretched high and a strange book with a hand floating next to him .

Anastassia sighed upon seeing this and returned to her room as if nothing was happening, as for Jakob, he stared at Arthur in awe and admiration . His dreams were to be able to fly like Anastassia, soar the sky and look at the sect from above, that feeling of freedom is what he sought, along with the absolute strength of course .

--

From a corner of the tower, in a room that was specifically given to Lissandra, the woman was silently sitting on a chair and staring at the gloomy sky . Due to her extremely low stats, she wasn't able to see Arthur who was hundreds of meters above, she only saw a black dot but she didn't need to see that to know that he was the source of this sudden change .

'Just what are you '

She kept staring for a couple of minutes before she resumed doing her experiment . From the point of view of an outsider, she was merely mixing useless materials but more than anyone, Lissandra hoped that this desperate experiment works or else everyone will be doomed, including her .

She had no choice but to rely on such a stupid idea that she previously thought to be just nonsense and it was all Arthur's fault, who didn't even spare a couple of seconds to listen to her .

Gritting her teeth, Lisandra took a simple iron knife with one sharp edge and stabbed the tip of her finger, making some droplets of blood drop into the wooden bowl and mix with the salt and the other ingredients .

Changes were occurring all over the edges of the MoonStar sect territory, the walls that were made out of weak stones and simple mud were slowly but surely replaced but an enforced black earthen wall with thorny vines stuck on it . The consumption was enormous but thanks to his incredibly high Mana recovery, Arthur was more or less able to cope with this . Walls as high as thirty meters were raised from all the edges .

Thirty meters in height, four meters thick along with thorny vines that had paralyzing poison glued to the walls . He only left the roofs of the walls empty of such plants so the members of the sect could defend from there . This was but the first step yet it was not an easy thing to do .

Drops of sweats appeared on Arthur's forehead, it wasn't Physical fatigue but Mental exhaustion, he wasn't consuming Mental Power but to simply spread his magic as far as dozens of kilometers in all direction and fusing two attributes, it wasn't an easy thing to achieve .

As he was doing this, chaos covered the sect as they thought their territory was under attack . Fortunately, Jakob snapped out of his long daze and commanded the army made from the past warriors and such to calm down and organize themselves, as for the disciples of the Ma Clan, they were much calmer and experienced, one word from Anastassia was enough to settle things .

There were two main armies the sect possessed, one belonged to Anastassia and it was called the first army, and the second one belonged to Jakob but overall, he was the commanding general and even had the authority to command the disciples of the Ma Clan, Anastassia would only step out if there's an enemy stronger than Jakob, or something that he could not cope with, such as leaders of other seclusive clans or sect for example .

The Sect had fought many battles, since they suddenly appeared on the western continent, many tribes and clans were not so pleased with that so they made alliances and attacked in succession but all of that

was totally futile, with the assistance of the red minotaur and the prowess of the disciples, the sect didn't suffer any big damage and even the mud and weak stones walls remained unscathed until now .

The mud and stone walls were only ten meters tall but now these walls shattered and now, a glorious and enormous wall replaced them .

"W-what is that?"

One of the stationed guards near the gates dumbly stared at the towering wall in front of him with a stupefied gaze, he stretched his hand to touch the thorny vines only to feel a sting in his hand which was followed by a strong numbness .

He was only shaken off his daze when his friend, the second guard shook his shoulders violently and slapped him a few times before warning him to not act recklessly and do stupid and unnecessary things .

"Stupid fucker! Not only do you look like a monkey but you also act like one? Pull yourself together and come with me to guard the gates or what was left of them!"

With that, the burly tanned guard held his bronze spear and darted to the falling gates . Even the red minotaur, which was guarding the main gates situated at the North, was panicking as it saw the wall rising from the ground and feeling the heavily shaking ground, making it unable to stand properly .

At first, it was confused due to not knowing what's happening, however, its limited intelligence at least made it able to grasp its sword and turn around whilst staring at the empty and deserted horizon . Steam came out of its two nostrils and some blood veins appeared as it tightened its hold on the sword, seemingly fully ready to fight, its only thought was to defend the sect territory and it thought the shaking was due to a huge monster coming or an unimaginably big army of enemies heading its way .

By the end of the process, which took a quarter of an hour, all the guards were standing near the newly constructed gates and walls, in revelation and shock, they couldn't fathom what's in front of them, even the red minotaur was dumbfounded at it raised its head and stared at the two black gold gates, they were towering and inconceivable, as if they were not just gates, but Holy gates leading to a superior world .

The same symbol was engraved on all the gates with the biggest one being on the main gate, a circle with a red star inside of it, it didn't seem like anything special at first but for those who were part of the sect, they knew it was the sect's one and only symbol .

"By the three gods "

The monkey-looking guard stared at the walls in amazement, wide open mouths and eyes full of disbelief . Again, he couldn't help but touch the gates, which were made from a special black gold material, extremely hard but smooth when touched . It was a unique kind of Gold that can be used when mixed with a few minerals . Using the Metal Attribute along with a bit of fusion with the Nature Magic, Arthur was able to create 4 of those gates and a big one . It took him a lot of effort and by the end of all of it, he completely emptied out his Mana Pool . Although in just a few seconds, it regenerated greatly but nonetheless, creating this protective walls and gates was not doable if he didn't have that much Mental Power and control over his skills .

All the main territory of the sect was enveloped by the black earthen walls with thorny vines stuck into them . There were four gates with a fifth one being at the North, which was the main one leading to the sect .

This was his home and he wished that when he brought back Lucy and Saly, he'll prepare a proper wedding, it'll be the greatest wedding ever done on Astria . They are officially married right now, that's for sure, but he didn't want it to be just an exchange of rings, he wanted to be more special and a memory that shall never be forgotten .

Later that day, when night has fallen and the sky became jet black, Arthur stood at the top of the tower, contemplating the starry sky with a strange look . It was so peaceful yet lonely . As families were either eating dinner in their homes with the illuminations of the candles, he was standing alone, reminiscing about his happy memories with Lucy .

Now that he thought about it, he didn't pass that much peaceful time with her . Every time they wanted to settle for some time, an accident occurs or danger knocks on their door . He wanted to tour Astria slowly with her, visit every possible place and enjoy their life as much as they can .

He didn't want such life for her, truly! From fighting the church to invading the Underworld, facing Medusa and many troublesome enemies, he didn't sign for this and neither has he the power to protect everything .

'Why couldn't life be as easy as on Earth? Just with a little bit of money, you can live peacefully . . . '

Endless fortune and never stopping gain of strength but that wasn't enough to compensate for the danger and fights they had to handle . In all honesty, he wanted to bring Lucy and Saly back and then establish the sect with his wife, never bothering with other affairs, however, such a wish is not reasonable, at least not right now .

He made a deal with the World Tree, and there are many mysterious things happening on Astria and adding that to the plans Fate has prepared for him, having a peaceful life should be the last of his concerns yet despite all of that, he still longed for it .

...

After one final sigh, Arthur was going to return to his room when all of a sudden, an overwhelming amount of power suddenly covered him, in every muscle bone . It resembled the feeling of strengthening when his stats increased but this one was more intense and even a bit painful .

He had a strong urge to release all this pent-up power, in any way possible but without even trying it, he knew it'll be dangerous and there will be a lot of casualties .

"Argh"

While half kneeling and clutching his abdomen, exactly where his Dantian is, Arthur's half kneeling soon transformed into squatting, almost laying flat on the ground .

The feeling was soon replaced by an unimaginable stomachache as if it was going to explode at any given second, his facial complexions became paler and even though he tried to hold it, a groan couldn't help but come out of his mouth .

Seconds passed slowly and no matter how many times he tried to teleport out of the territory or fly high up in the sky to release this sudden power, he couldn't even properly stand up much less fly, even summoning his Dark Cloud didn't work .

In the spur of the moment, when he felt that it was going to explode at the next second, Arthur spontaneously entered the ARK as it seemed the wisest and safest choice he currently had .

*Welcome to the ARK . *

The usual robotic voice rang in his ears, making breathing in relief as he didn't sense any discomfort and the unusual pain residing in his stomach, precisely his Dantian, has disappeared .

He got rid of that feeling for now but he didn't completely get rid of it . Moreover, Arthur had to instantly enter 'Phase Mode' to stop the flow of time outside, he still had to pass the beginner Phase again but at least that'll buy him sometime .

Entering the ARK is something he couldn't fully comprehend yet because if he didn't enter the 'Phase Mode' then the time won't flow faster but it'll stop if he enters the 'Phase Mode', he just couldn't find any clue on how this cube or whatever it is was doing this time-stop thingy .

It'll surely be a golden skill if he could stop time, he would literally never lose, even against a powerful enemy, especially if he can stop it as long as he can, however, all of that remained just wishful thinking on his part .

*Please choose your weapon . *

The good thing right now is that he can use this small loophole . Although it specified him to choose a weapon, it didn't specify when so he can remain silent for hours and it'll still not force him to enter the first Phase .

If this thing was really artificially made, then its creator surely would not miss this loophole but then, did he purposely let it be? So many questions about this ARK were unanswered inside of Arthur's mind but for now, he put them all to the back of his head and focused on the urgent matter, which was this inexplicable surge of power .

He possessed the corpses earlier today and he did indeed feel his body strengthening but although this feeling was a bit similar, it was too intense, especially the pain .

Maybe it's because he didn't activate the pain immunity but when he activated it, nothing happened, it's as if he never did a thing! Which is why he could only lay on the ground and groan for a bit before entering the ARK .

First, he thought his body automatically evolved to the Divine Realm but that possibility is rather meager and it was soon rejected when he opened his status Window and saw his himself being at the peak of the Immortal Realm .

...

One hour was wasted wracking his head over all the possibilities of this sudden trigger but he couldn't come up with a good guess or even a logical theory . It couldn't be an enemy attack, neither could it be a soul attack as it was clearly happening around or inside his Dantian .

Sitting cross-legged and frowning from time to time, Arthur kept thinking for three straight hours before he decided to give up trying to solve the matter by himself . He searched through his memories and re-read the notes of Zodiak and the ancient books but he found nothing similar, which confused him even more .

With nothing to do, he decided to give it a try and ask the ARK .

"Do you know what's happening to me?"

Several seconds passed without hearing any answer and when he was going to sigh and continue searching, the robotic voice was talked

Negative, unable to inspect the surroundings of the user 'Arthur' due to locked options . Possible inspection can be issued by the user 'Arthur'

"Explain what's an 'inspection' . "

*Detailed inspection of the user's physical body . "

After pondering for a few seconds, Arthur nodded and said

"Execute the inspection . "

Affirmative . Inspection beginning in 3 . . 2 . . 1

Even with the countdown reached '0', Arthur felt nothing happening to him or around him, there was just the endless white space with only him there and the cubic object was still rotating and floating a couple of meters away from him .

He didn't rush things and waited for this 'inspection' to finish which it did just when he was about to ask when it'll be done .

*Inspection finished . Results will be displayed in 3 . . 2 . . 1

Result:

Bones : 206 (Undamaged) (condition 100%)

Muscles: 50,100,000,701 (17,417,579 Damaged) (Condition 70%)

Nerves: Undamaged .

Meridians: Undamaged .

Acupuncture points: 649 (6 Opened) (Undamaged)

Dantian: Excess energy, over burst . *

Arthur gawked as he saw the results, the last one gave him a shock and made him stare in astonishment for some time before he was able to recover .

"What do you mean by 'over burst'?"

*The energy inside the user 'Arthur' is running rampant, damaging the Dantian and invading unnecessary body parts . *

"Isn't there a way to stop it? Maybe try to forcefully absorb the Energy or push it out of the body?"

*Negative . Such things are not possible, by mathematical calculations, the over burst will only last six more seconds before the body of the user 'Arthur' is going to explode to 12 . 481 pieces . *

Arthur's face stiffened as he heard that, even hearing it made him sweat but what's more terrifying is albeit knowing the cause, he doesn't know how to solve it .

"Do you have any solutions . "

*Affirmative . Using a magnetic energy field can suppress the over burst, however, the user 'Arthur' will suffer two: consequences . One: Sealed body due to the evolution of the physical body . Two: Physical seals limiting the movement of the user 'Arthur' . *

Without even thinking about it, Arthur spouted

"Just do it!"

Chapter 159

As Arthur gave the order, a strange, almost mechanical voice started ringing in his ears and after a few seconds, it seemed that the source of the ringing was coming out of his body .

A strange occurrence yet he didn't fret about it, it was not that coincidental, especially when it started happening after telling the ARK to fix the problem .

The sound was getting louder and louder and after only half a minute, it became almost unbearable, even his superior stats were not negating the numbing feeling he was experiencing .

Then, drastically, the sound disappeared instantly, in place of slowly dissipating, it just vanished, he could hear or see nothing in such a place, his view was covered by white except a small rotating cube not far from him .

. . . .

By the time Arthur opened his eyes, he was relieved to see that his body was still intact and the absence of the agonizing pain . He stared at the sky, which was still jet black with countless stars, some were bright and others could barely be seen .

Feeling his body full of vigor and life, Arthur exhaled a long sigh and thought back to what the ARK said

*Operation: 100% success . Restricting physicals seals were put on the user 'Arthur' . The physical body has evolved to the God Realm . Mismatch with the Mental Real=> forceful restriction . It is unadvised to break the physical seals or the user 'Arthur' will experience an overdrive and die 17 . 4 seconds later . *

He asked a few questions but he didn't get the answers he expected, which was unfortunate but at least the urgent crisis was solved .

The most important thing he needs to remember is that to break the seals, he needs to match his body Real with his Mental Realm and that is only the minimum requirement . He had a small guess that this accident happened due to the overwhelming stats numbers, however, when he asked the ARK about that, he was met with an incomprehensible answer that he would rather not remember .

A few seconds passed and when he completely grasped control of his body again, he felt a certain heat coming out of his Dantian but what was more astonishing is the existence of chains . Not illusory chains but literal ones, two thick chains restraining his hands and feet, as if he was a death-sentenced criminal . There was also a thick metal wrapped around his abdomen, covering almost the half of it . Surprisingly, it appeared under his clothes but his hopes were crushed when he tried getting up and heard the unpleasant sound of chains crackling and feeling the restriction of his feet and hands .

Basically, he can't free his hands, he can't get them away from each other, same as the feet, if he wore orange clothes, he would be regarded as a prisoner on Earth .

Arthur tried exerting some strength into his hands and try to distance them from each other again but to no avail, nothing happened . For a moment, Arthur stood there, dazing and not knowing what to do . Obviously, with those chains, he would literally be unable to fight properly, especially for close-range .

He can't even perform a normal kick or punch . Heck! Even wielding Makaze would be hard this way . If not for witnessing his status window in front of him and showing the high stats, he would believe that he became a weak mortal by no means to defend himself, a helpless mortal!

'How am I supposed to fight like this?'

The chains around his feet were a bit loose so he can walk but running is not an option which made him more irritated . Arthur was not something to fess about things for a lot of time so he calmed down after some time and teleported back to his room .

With these chains, albeit keeping his stats, fighting close-range would be disadvantageous, so he has to rely only on his long-range magic attack and only uses Makaze and such if the enemy manages to come closer .

He tried possessing a few Humanoid corpses but the chains never disappeared, what's worse is that the chains still existed if he used another beast's body . If the beast doesn't have feet or hands, then it'll be wrapped around its body .

It gave him quite the headache to even think about the upcoming fights but he shrugged these thoughts off and sat cross-legged on the bed, meditating .

It may not be very effective in raising his strength, but it's an extremely useful skill for calming the mind and entering a serene-line state . Plus, he would rather meditate rather than sleeping as without Lucy's presence, he'll only suffer from more loneliness and possible nightmares .

...

The night passed in the blink of an eye and Arthur only opened his when he heard the knocking on the door . It took but a split second to sense who's behind the door . He was not in the mood to talk to head maid, who always had something to say about him, nonetheless, he opened the door and let the silver-haired woman enter .

Seeing her figure, his focused landed on the hair which was a lot similar to Lucy, however, that only made him reminisce about his times with her . Shaking his head to get rid of these thoughts, he gestured for Taliya to enter .

...

Taliya wore a startled expression when she noticed the chains around his feet, the ones on his hands were covered by the clothes by the one below were quite thick and with only a simple movement such as raising his hands, the crackling could be heard .

After a moment of surprise, she shifted her focus to the deadpan faced Arthur and started speaking without further delay .

" . . . "

Her mouth opened but no words came out, she seemed to hesitate then she shut her mouth and stood there, silent and motionless like a log . The atmosphere obviously became awkward with him sitting on the bed and her standing there and staring at him .

"What?"

Unable to comprehend such strange behavior, Arthur looked at her and furrowed his brows, seemingly confused as he thought she's going to tell him to search for Alina or demand something .

A few seconds passed and the hesitating Taliya finally uttered something .

"I, I come here to fulfill my duty, since the deal has been done . I'm required to follow you everywhere, right?"

"Yes, but I didn't find your niece yet . "

Whilst shaking her head and showing a resolute face, the maid retorted

"You started doing your end of the deal and even dived into the Human Emperor's mansion, it is natural for me to begin upholding my promise too . "

Looking at her expression and tone, Arthur began to question himself and the reason he even chose her . It's not like he hated her but she was just too serious, nonetheless, he isn't going to refuse something like this, especially in such a dire time .

"Nevertheless, following me as a companion doesn't mean following me to my room . I meant that we'll be comrades . "

Taliya, as if she reviewed a certain script a hundred times, replied instantly again, without stopping to think or anything .

"No, that is not what I heard when you were speaking with the Demon Lord . It was clearly stated that she'll give 'me' to you . "

"As far as I remember, the deal was made NOT when the Demon Lord was present BUT when you came to the cave underground . "

Taliya was just going to retort again but she was cut off as Arthur added

"Furthermore, I'm not looking for a slave or a dog who follows me wherever I go, I just need some company until I achieve my goals, then you'll be able to return to the Demon Lord or do whatever you wa-"

Just as he was going to finish his sentence, Arthur received a signal from the Death Golem, which he left to guard the encircled cave in case the hideous creature teleported back to the same place .

Arthur didn't hesitate as he summoned the Dark Cloud and jumped on it, ready to depart to the Demon Continent immediately . Taliya, on the other hand, was startled by his sudden actions and only reacted when he turned to look at her, clearly expecting her to hop on too .

...

With a Dark Barrier around the black flying nebula, the two of them passed mountains and rivers in seconds and bypassed many farms, cities, and villages . Everything around them was blurring and Taliya was flabbergasted as this traveling speed was considerably faster than last time .

Arthur was thinking about the situation inside the cave, he already put a cage made of thorny poisonous plants and with the Death Golem's defense, it shouldn't be hard to apprehend the monster, as it is only at the Spirit Realm . But there is always the chance of something unexpected happening .

Arthur put all his efforts into traveling faster to not miss this opportunity . He could still sacrifice his Mental Power to gain more Agility, which will lead the Dark Cloud to travel faster, however, the cost was Mental Power! That is not something easily gained if we exclude the ARK of course .

Furthermore, there is the chance that the rewards of the ARK won't give him any Mental Power, and with the absence of Nether Energy, he wouldn't be able to regain the lost Mental Power Possessing countless corpses may lead to increasing the Mental Power, but the amount increased would be too meager and not worth the time but it's not like Arthur will reject any free corpse that is left unpossessed .

The two remained silent but curiosity got the best of Taliya and after glancing at the chains several times, she could not hold back and asked

"What is the deal with those chains?"

Arthur, who was pondering in thought and spreading his sense as far as he could, heard Taliya talk and only now did his mind focus back on her .

He raised both his hands, making the chains crackle then he replied with a smirk .

"Ah, those? They are just a countermeasure, you can ignore them . "

Taliya didn't speak another word but she was still feeling curious . She wasn't totally convinced by what he said .

'Countermeasure? For what? And didn't you say we were comrades? Comrades should be honest with each other'

She didn't dare voice out her thoughts for some unknown reasons, however, she didn't follow him out of her own free will, she just had to follow the deal as after seeing how he went to the royal mansion, she had to act too or else it would look like she's just using him for her own benefit and she wasn't that kind of petty person .

.

No conversation occurred for the rest of the trip and within six hours, Arthur and Taliya arrived in the city . Without delaying any second, both of them dived underground and appeared in the underground cave in a short time .

The place was still as eery and gloomy as before, the plant walls around the Death Golem were still intact but just as he entered the cave, Arthur was dumbstruck as the small signal between him and the golem suddenly disappeared .

[Faster Than Death] was used and Arthur's black figure appeared next to the tall wall made of thorny plants . Abiding by his will, a small gap was opened in the wall, it was barely enough for him to pass .

The first thing that his eyes laid upon was a tall hideous figure holding a suspicious orb and panting heavily some distance away . With the help of his Sense, Arthur was easily able to discover another presence which was invisible and dashing straight at him, or more precisely, it was trying to pass through the gap that was closing behind him .

Unfortunately for this invisible presence, a thick green thorn was suddenly erected from the wall on its right side, instantly penetrating its body and forcing it out of its invisibility . Upon a closer look, the creature looked similar to the hideous one a distance away . It was not literally the same appearance but they resembled each other, more or less .

They were probably from the same Race, or so thought Arthur . The one who was pinned down by the thorn wailed in agony as a lethal poison invaded its organs and slowly killed him .

No matter how sneaky and fast its skills were, it was just at the middle stages of the Spirit Realm and Arthur was way stronger than him .

'They must've thought that the wall of plants was harmless, heh!' Arthur was joyful as he saw the orb in the creature's hands, it was the same one that it used last time for teleportation .

"Who are-" Before it could finish its sentence, Arthur teleported in front of the creature and used his chained hand to grip the creature's neck and crash its body on the wall of plants .

Then, almost harmoniously, the plants wrapped around its four limbs and waist, completely binding the hideous looking creature . The only thing it could do right now was either speaking, breathing or just staring fearfully at the gray-haired man in front of it .

There was a blue bruise on its neck, from the force impact done by Arthur and its eyes showed fear, especially when Arthur's cold piercing eyes landed on it, it felt its body turn cold and a shiver down its spines .

It didn't take a genius to know that it was going to die soon, just like its comrade . After confirming with his sense that no extra presence was hiding and that the monster was fully bound, he willed the wall made of plants to dissolve, which it did .

Slowly, the sphere cage made of plants started descending and melting with the ground and within seconds, it all disappeared except the part where the hideous creature was .

Arthur did not want to underestimate his enemy, especially when he knew nothing about this thing in front of him so he injected paralyzing poison into its blood veins, making it completely unable to lift a finger .

Since his Wisdom was soaring high in the hundred million, his control over the several magic skills is also flawless, it was no problem for him to make the monster bound from neck to toe whilst still maintaining its ability to move its mouth and talk .

As the monster laid in front of his eyes, Arthur could have a closer look at his appearance and the details . The face looked a bit similar to an orc, or a pig? A row of ugly teeth, a pointy nose exactly similar to a pig's and ears that had no difference to a human .

It had large eyes, which would terrify any kid and the most striking point was its skin, this one had a green-ish skin as for the other one which died not too long ago, it had purple skin .

"What's this?" Taliya maintained a straight face as she walked towards Arthur and stared at the bound monster with a surprised and curious look .

She didn't seem to be afraid of it, at least not as much as she felt afraid of Bucama . This monster and the ones from Bucama's race were both horrors but there was something about Bucama's Race that made Arthur feel uncomfortable, as if . . they were born from pure evil and nothing else and later, this was confirmed when he saw their horrible and nightmarish means and the way they laughed and danced when they were torturing the Humans .

Even Arthur, who experienced a tragedy after another, could not forget that scene, especially the one inside the castle .

"That is something I want to know too . " Arthur held the mysterious orb that he took from the monster in his hands and appraised it .

Warp Devise: The user can open it and close it at will with a cooldown of five minutes between every opening or closing . Can only warp three users at most, and between two specific locations which cannot be changed unless this item is upgraded .

Requires: Mingal Ore (10 Kg for each use) .

As he read the appraisal multiple times, Arthur understood its function, although he didn't know how the process was, at least knowing how to use it is enough, for now .

What's left is this Mingal Ore, he never heard of such Ore and if it existed in his storage ring, he would have remembered, after all, with his photographic memory along with the sky-high intelligence, there is no way he can forget anything he read or saw .

It's just that all the information has been put in the back of his mind and would only resurface when he tries to remember a specific thing, such as a name for a material or a weapon .

"Who are y, you?"

Not bearing the silence, the creature finally talked, it knew that it's the final day of its life yet it didn't want to die a miserable death like its comrade . If there is a way out, then why not take it? It didn't hold any special loyalty to its tribe and if not for fear of the leader, it wouldn't have come to such a dangerous place .

It knew that invading a foreign world without further inspection and planning things without fully knowing the situation is a dumb move and it tried to tell its thoughts to its superior but to no avail .

However, their ignorance will bite them at last, when people with this man's caliber strike back and annihilate its tribe .

Its name was Gutcha, a warrior, a spy and a scout for its clan and has been since as far it could remember .

Arthur heard the prisoner's voice so he looked back at it, only to make it shrink back and not dare to look at him anymore .

"I think you're not in a place to ask questions, right?"

"Let me handle the questioning, I'm quite good at getting answers from stubborn people . "

Taliya took a small silver dagger and advanced toward the monster but she was soon stopped by Arthur, who was honestly surprised by her actions .

'The prisoner didn't show any stubbornness or anything similar, the interrogation didn't even start yet she jumped to conclusions and wants to begin the torture? 'I pity all the prisoners she interrogated, really . . . ' . While shaking his head, Arthur tightened the bound around the creature and asked

"What's this?"

He pointed at the orb in his hands and looked at the hideous creature with an expectant look .

He liked cooperative prisoners and if he's really telling the truth then he wouldn't mind letting it live . Obviously, he wouldn't set it free but any prisoner would feel grateful if his life was spared, no matter what it had to do, it's better than death as no one is unafraid of dying .

Even he, when he was told that he has to die to begin a new life, hesitated for a split second but the torture and the mental break led to him committing suicide .

"W-wait! Please wait! I know that . It's a warp device!! I can even tell you how to use it . "

Hearing a positive answer, Arthur's mood increased by a bit, having an enemy life this every once in a while is not a bad thing .

If Gutcha continued being honest, then obtaining some information about this creature's world, its forces and such would be beneficial for Arthur, who was planning on heading there .

"What's your name?"

"I-It's G . . Gutcha . "

Gutcha didn't hold back at all, no matter what Arthur asked or was planning to ask, he was willing to reply honestly .

Although the other party didn't particularly say that he'll let it live if he was honest, but it's better than keeping its mouth shut and suffering from torture and then dying in a dark and gloomy room .

What gave Gutcha the chills was the woman beside Arthur, she was staring at it with a piercing cold look and it made the prisoner feel more frightened, its voice couldn't help but become shaky .

"Alright Gutcha, how come you can speak our language . "

"W-we captured a few people from t . . . this world and made them teach us the basic and most common language . "

Gutcha felt a tap on its shoulder and that made its heartbeat fiercely as if it was at death's door but in the end, it was just Arthur who tapped on its shoulder to encourage it in answering the remaining questions with the same amount of truthfulness .

"What about your world, where you came from, tell me more about it . The more details, the better . "

Arthur grinned as he looked at Gutcha, which didn't hesitate and spit out everything it knows .

"I don't know everything about my hometown . My tribe is called the Pigolo and we are one of many other tribes . I didn't venture far from my tribe's territory as it's forbidden unless you're a scout and I don't like being one unless it's f-forced . "

I know that we're only a part of our world as our ancestor often said that beyond the wall of flames, there is a fertile land that is like a Holy Ground but no tribe managed to overcome it . "

Arthur attentively listened to the explanation and didn't miss anything .

'It seems that this wall of flames it like a barrier? Or maybe it's a seal separating them from the outside world? Nevertheless, it's worth the try . '

The thing with interrogation is that you can never be sure the other party is always saying the truth unless you have a lie detector skill or something remotely similar . Unfortunately, Arthur doesn't have such skills, however, he has high Dexterity and that leads to having a superhuman hearing capacity, almost to the point of hearing Gutcha's heartbeat .

It's obvious that his(Gutcha) heartbeat would be fast as he was in a dangerous situation, plus he was afraid of dying and receiving Taliya's torture .

But, there were many odd occasions where the prisoner would have a calmly beating heart, or there will be slight change whenever he or she tells a lie . It requires a very close attention to the heartbeat to notice these changes, nevertheless, it is possible .

Arthur relied on his superhuman hearing and Gutcha's expression to judge whether he was hearing all the truth or it was just 50/50 .

"You said you kidnapped people to teach you the language . How many did you kidnap, from where and when exactly, I want to know all about that . "

Taliya, who was focused on Gutcha, frowned and seemed to realize something . If Alina, Sonia and Mary's disappearances had to do with these, then there is a high chance that she'll find her niece sooner than she expected .

Gutcha didn't pause, he didn't even want to anger or displease Arthur or he will let Taliya have her way with him so he wracked his brain and spit everything he knew about the kidnapping operation .

"W-we kidnapped a hundred person . T,The locations were random and we would not wander far from the place we warped into as to not attract attention . "

"Tell me everything about the kidnapped people, their name, age, appearance . . . "

Every question answered would lead to another being asked, this continued for another thirty minutes before Arthur finally stopped . Gutcha was panting as his mouth was dry and his body totally numb, even this kind of interrogation felt a bit like torture with his body bound and paralyzed and him forced to answer over and over again .

What's relieving though, is that he answered everything with all honesty, he wasn't particularly close or attached to his tribe, his life was way more important than a couple of information that they'll know sooner or later .

. . .

Out of the hundred people kidnapped, thirty-six were uncooperative and were killed on the spot, as for the rest, they were still held in a prison under the tribe's main Hall .

The sixty-four remaining hostages were apparently from various races and Gutcha couldn't remember their appearance or name quite well but when Taliya barged in and stretched her hand and rubbed the dagger's smooth and sharp edge over his neck, the hideous monster pleaded for another chance and then closed his eyes for a minute or so, trying to remember some faces .

Presuming what he said was true, there were two individuals that stood up from all the others . The first, when she was mentioned, the dagger that was next to Gutcha's neck, uncontrollably shook as Taliya was startled by what she heard .

The person that was described resembled the so-called Alina, a young girl with long silver hair, a calm temper but the most outstanding thing is that many people from Gutcha's tribe treated friendly due to her cooperative and kind attitude . Not only that, she also used her Healing Magic to cure some injured warriors .

As for the second person, it was a young man, he apparently was kidnapped in the West of the Human Continent and his eccentric behavior along with high always smiling face is what made Gutcha remember him .

He wasn't sure but it was rumored that he was tortured multiple times because he mocked the tribe warriors but that torture didn't even make him flinch, the smile never left his face .

'Right now, he must be locked in the furthest room in the prison . ' or so said Gutcha .

None of that matters if they cannot go there, but simply teleporting there using the Warp Device is a dumb idea . From Gutcha's description, there were a lot of warriors stronger than him and they didn't know about the concept of Spirit Realm and such, they gauged their strength using a stone that showed a specific color .

Going to an unknown land with this much information didn't seem right and if it's really a big world, then he isn't planning to return soon, he needs a way to go to Earth and check if Lucy is really there . What about Saly and the rest, did they teleport to the same location? So many questions that need to be answered and the only way for that to happen is to go to Earth!

Furthermore, the Death Golem was sent to the location where all the warriors that were coming back from Astria appear on, so currently, many warriors must be uniting to defeat the Death Golem .

Simply going there when all their forces are on high alert would be foolish .

"We need to go there immediately, the princess is in grave danger!"

Taliya protested and snapped at Arthur, bugging him to go there immediately . He tried explaining the situation but she didn't listen . She even proposed going alone to scout things and assure that he can come but it'll only be a suicidal attempt . With her strength, there is no way she'll survive, even a Heavenly Realm is unlikely to survive if there is a batch of Spirit Realm people ganging up on him .

She kept glancing at the orb in his hands but she knew that she can't snatch it from him, it's an impossible task . With a final piercing glare, Taliya turned around and headed to Gutcha to release her frustration .

Fortunately for him, he didn't suffer brutal torture but he was still punched a few times in his stomach, which he couldn't feel at all due to the poison .

As for Arthur, he pondered about what to do right now, it's either go or not go . For now, he needs to finish the preparation for his sect then he'll go there, but knowing Taliya's character, she's won't let him go alone which will complicate things . If he could alone, then just possessing the dead comrade of Gutcha would be enough to fool the rest of the tribe but if she came then that's another whole deal .

And to add more oil to the fire, there was the problem of the chains which are hindering his combat abilities and making things a bit more troublesome . He could hide them under clothes but they would still produce the crackling noise, that is if we exclude how much they limit his movements and making him absolutely unable to do a punch or a kick, or even wield Makaze, which is one of his strongest weapons and even a simple slash with the black katana is enough to injure a Divine Realm or even a God .

...

The very next day, early in the morning, Arthur headed back to the MoonStar sect after informing Taliya to guard Gutcha and prepare herself before they depart, exactly six days later .

As he was riding the Dark Cloud toward the South-West, Arthur waved his hand, making blue lightning condense at a rapid pace in front of him until Astrith's figure appeared before him .

The lightning wolf was as domineering and big as ever, with two red eyes and wide back, its appearance is becoming more and more ferocious .

Having a spiritual link with the lightning wolf, Arthur was finally able to summon it back a few days ago but he refrained from doing so unless he needs him as the wolf seemed to be evolving .

In fact, he didn't want to disturb him right now but this matter was urgent and it needs to be taken care of . Arthur laid a map in front of Astrith and pinpointed six locations all over Astria .

"Look around these places, if you find any creature similar to Gutcha, capture them and kill if they resist . "

Anymore kidnapping would be troublesome, they could also be building outposts or underground caves, which is a no-no, especially when Arthur is planning on uniting Astria .

Astrith bowed his large head a bit and replied

"This one obeys . "

Without delaying any further, the lightning wolf transformed into a blue streak that vanished into the horizon in just a few seconds . Although he was weaker than Arthur, his strength increased with his master's so Astrith could be considered quite strong .

What's strange is that evolving state, it's like a slumber and it started the second he returned to Astria . He refrained from summoning him against Bucama and the rest due to this, maybe if he was interrupted, a backlash would happen .

This state seemed to be reaching its final state, so Arthur decided to give the wolf one final mission before the real revolution begins .

...

The journey back the sect was smooth and fast, once he was there, Arthur started clearing things again and laying what's needed .

He called for Anastassia and Jakob to the meeting room at the top of the tower and when they were all gathered, he retrieved three objects from his storage .

As he laid the three small objects on the table, the tall Jakob was excited to see something new . Since he got 'Ace', he didn't stop using it for hunting . What's good about it is that the bullets are self-conjured if you inject a bit of Mana, the cost is too small to the point that it can be ignored .

The efficiency, power and precision of this sniper rifle pleased Jakob a lot, so he was looking forward to the next thing Arthur is going to introduce to him .

"Boss, what's this!"

Even Anastassia looked curiously at the three objects, she was acknowledgeable enough yet she never saw such things .

"These are called bombs, grenades . They are something I can mass produce but they must only be used in urgent situations . "

While stretching his hand and grabbing a sphering green grenade, he explained

"Just pull this metallic trigger and throw this to a specific target and it'll automatically explode after five seconds . It's quite simple but if someone is not careful, they can be injured by the aftermath of the explosion so don't throw it randomly . "

"Isn't it like a fireball . "

Anastassia was not that impressed, in contrary to Jakob, who wanted to snatch the grenade from Arthur's hand and try it immediately . As for the vice-sect leader, she was more curious about the chains around Arthur, the way he moves his two hands in sync and the crackling couldn't be ignored .

"If someone has high intelligence, producing a fireball stronger than the explosion of the grenades is possible . But that requires strength and an experienced mage, as for this, even a kid can use it, it doesn't require Mana nor Qi . "

He soon put down the grenade and grabbed the gray cylindric object and said

"This is also similar to the grenade but they are used as traps . Covered by dirt and put in places that are likely to be stepped on by enemies, it'll explode the moment a small pressure is put on them, their damage is considerably higher than the former grenade . "

Arthur then grabbed the last object, which was black, circular and a bit lengthy in size . It had a metal trigger just like the grenade and had some strange symbols that Jakob couldn't understand engraved on it .

"As for this, it's flash grenades and the most important one of those in my opinion . As for its use, I'll just demonstrate it . "

As he finished his sentence, Arthur just pulled the metal trigger and let the bomb roll on the wide table . Of course, he didn't forget to close his eyes and smirk .

Anastassia instinctively activated her defensive technique, as for Jakob, he just eagerly stared at the flash grenade with wide open eyes, full of excitement .

After only a few seconds, a low voice was heard followed by a numbing sound ringing in Anastassia and Jakob's ears . Especially the latter, who was so close to the flash bomb, what followed a total blindness covering their eyes . The ringing and the blindness brought dizziness but what was more surprising is their absence of vision . All they saw was white everywhere this lasted for a whopping thirty seconds before the two of them could see again .

Jakob regained his vision after Anastassia but that's due to being so close to the impact . Arthur smirk became wider as he saw their dumbfounded expressions . This could be a revolutionary weapon if it could be mass-produced . No enemy would expect such a thing, which will lead to them not closing their eyes and that will cause their death .

In a fight between Spirit Realm and above, a second can change everything, so thirty or so seconds can allow the user of the flash grenade to either escape or cut his opponent to countless pieces without suffering from retaliation .

"T-this is . . . "

Anastassia stretched her hand and held the black object, she inspected it several times but she could not sense any Mana or Qi and that startled her even more .

"You can mass-produce this?"

Her voice had some excitement in it . As a former clan master and a powerful leader, the thing she yearned for the most is a safe place for her clan disciples and family to stay in . Such useful weapons can give them a humongous advantage if the enemy ever attacks . Even a Deity Realm would suffer from such a grenade if it's stacked of course .

Last time, Arthur used thousands of flash grenade to blind the present Gods at the Grand Banquet, although the cost was high, it nevertheless was useful and managed to win him some precious time .

"If I have enough time, I should be able to produce a fair amount . "

Without beating around the bush, Anastassia held the flash grenade and stared at back at him while adding

"How many?"

"I'm going to leave in five days, so I'll probably manage to create around one thousand three hundred and sixty, and if I had the current ones I have, then it'll be two thousand five hundred . That should be enough, right?"

To be honest, such an enormous amount is more than enough to last for a long time . Unlike him, who fights random enemies left and right, they are a sect and besides competing with outside forces, they won't be needing that . Moreover, such objects should be used only by strong individuals as they cannot give every person flash grenades until they can be mass-produced at a faster rate and the most important fact is that they have to be used only in an emergency situation . Flat out using them at the beginning of the battle is a foolish move and any person who wants to do that should not be given such a precious weapon .

Anastassia nodded her head enthusiastically and Jakob just stared at the flash grenade with wide eyes and half-opened mouth .

The rest of the meeting was just talk about procedures and what should and should not be done . Anastassia was given all the grenades for fear of Jakob using them all just to satisfy his curiosity .

He is no doubt a trusted leader but he isn't a match for Anastassia . She really is good at handling sect-related affairs and on the course of one and a half years, she took care of the sect quite well .

. . . .

Arthur retired to his room at noon and took out the best furnace he had in his storage and some tools and then proceeded in creating a weapon . He was going to use his advanced blacksmithing skills along

with all the useful other skills to forge a weapon for Anastassia and Jakob . It's true that he gave them high-leveled weapons not too long ago but he decided to personally craft them weapons to match their skills and needs .

With his Ancient Flames, raising the temperature to a high-degree was no problem, adding that to his swift and precise hand-skills, blacksmithing skills, and forging skills, the process was done quite smoothly .

First, he took out two kinds of metal, one is called [Substitutue High Metal] and the second is a rare hard ore also known as [Meteoric Iron] .

Substitute High Metal: (Spirit 2nd Grade): A special Metal that changes by the will of the user, it can transform to the desired attribute willed by the user .

Quality: High

Meteoric Iron: (Spirit 1st Grade): A metal that is much stronger than regular iron and often has magical properties as well .

Quality: High

Although they were not the best materials he had in his storage, he was certain that they would match with Anastassia, with his skills, it wouldn't be difficult to create a perfect weapon even reaching the Heavenly Rank with weak materials .

Arthur put the two metal into the melting furnace which burned with an intense heat that none with sufficient Fire Resistance could sustain . Usually, the crafter has to wait for the materials and melt in liquid but this process happened in merely one minute for Arthur, who used his flames to personally melt them with the help of the Furnace, which facilitated this step .

Very soon, an orange liquid came out of the furnace and laid on a metal table in front of Arthur, who began doing the next step . Since he was going to begin by crafting a two-handed axe, he had to make it big enough for Jakob and easily wielded .

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With a bronze rusty hammer, Arthur hammered the orange liquid which was transforming into a hard material . He shaped the axe with two sharp edges and each strike was strong enough to achieve the desired state . With a Strength like his, he didn't need to hammer it thousands of times like any normal blacksmith but albeit that, he kept hammering for an hour as it is the heart of the forging, it could be considered the most important factor of making a perfect weapon .

At the end of the hour, the shape of the axe could be seen but this was but the beginning . Arthur then started heating the axe again and when it was hot enough, he allowed it to cool down slowly whilst he sat cross-legged on the bed and started meditating .

The annealing process takes twenty-four hours and there is no need to rush so Arthur breathed periodically and calmed his mind as he absorbed Mana from the surroundings to replenish himself and relax .

After silently meditating for a few hours, Arthur finally opened his eyes and stared at the chains binding all his body . Every time he felt the cold sensation around his hands or waist, he would just sigh . It's so impractical to fight like this and he was still hesitating on whether to go to Gutcha's world or not .

He should not have any problem fighting a peak Divine Realm even with the chains, but if it's a God then it'll be a tricky situation . Normally, the completed Heavenly Arrow will certainly erase a God from existence, even a miniature version of the arrow can heavily injure a God but just as it can hit a God, it can be evaded or blocked as its power is not that strong compared to the original, especially if it's not created using Void Magic .

Up to now, he can create Heavenly Arrows made from Lightning, Void and Fire with a bit of Dark Magic . The main structure of the arrow has to be either Void or Lightning, anything else would make it self-explode . As for Rizaki or Rinotsu, its potential is incredible but it is self-harming .

Fortunately his recovery is incredible as he healed from all the injuries of the spatial tears in just five full days . But the matter of those creepy and ugly monsters still couldn't leave his mind . Sooner or later, he's bound to face them if he travels around . Something about Bucama gave him the creeps, he wasn't a fearful person but it's like meeting a natural archenemy, an abnormality that should be erased from this world .

It's good that he got rid of them before they invaded Astria or else it would have been catastrophic but for that four-armed monstrosity to survive the spatial tears with just being at the peak of the Divine Realm, how is that possible?

Arthur barely survived but it's only after sacrificing one precious corpse and using forbidden Mental Power costing skills to escape, however, that didn't apply for the monster .

'That horn Makaze couldn't even scratch it . there was also that red light back then '

For now, Arthur put that at the back of his mind and raised both of his chained hands . In just a second, a small plant sprouted from his palm and started growing until it was twenty inches tall .

Arthur opened his mouth and spit a purple liquid which fell on the plant and started melting it and resulted in a steam with the same color to appear .

'Not much resistant to poison '

He would always experiment with his Plant Magic as it is not as useless as it sounds . Its efficiency is boundless and its usefulness is endless . Whether its paralyzing or lethal poisons, plant cages or strengthening plants, he could grow them all and with the help of the Nature Attribute, it's way easier but their power, for now, is still weak for some reason .

It's weak in Arthur's opinion as he always compared his things with an attack from Gods and no less . If he used all his Intelligence in launching an attack using Wind or even Earth Attribute, although he doesn't specialize in them, the attack can be quite powerful and may even hurt a Divine Realm but it's better using low-cost and stronger attributes that wasting Mana on weak magical attacks .

Plant Magic is granted by the World Tree, an existence that the so-called angels venerated and searched for all over their universe, it's not something that should be underestimated, however, its use is not easy too .

Arthur's main purpose is to try and merge it with another attribute, preferably Void but it always ends up being eaten by the bottomless purple orb that he conjured .

Fire would burn it and Lightning would do nothing, so all that was left was Dark Magic .

To the far East of Astria, specifically on the North-East of the Itas Continent . There was high mountain surrounded by a dense forest but on a closer look, you could see several pagoda-looking buildings and a high white tower in their center . Stretching a mile to each direction, there were some small houses, neat and ordered . This was where the headquarters of the Yan Clan was . Known to be the descendants of the White Tiger of the West and to have an extraordinary physical power along with powerful legendary techniques .

Previously, they suffered in the tournament and the explosion killed two high-elders .

Inside the sky-high white tower, at the top floor, there existed a wide Hall with golden pillars at both sides . The Grand Elder of the Clan, the Patriarch, and two other Elders were currently discussing something with a tall individual who wore a big black coat which covered almost all of his appearance .

"W-we tested the effects of the pills . T-they were beyond anything we've seen!"

The Grand Elder talked with an excited voice as he stared at the black-coated person in front of him, sitting at the other end of the circular table .

"Of course, that is to be expected from our Demon Strengthening pills . . . hehehe, the cost to make them is quite worth it too . "

While creepily chuckling, the coated person talked with a deep and unpleasant voice .

The Patriarch was also full of smiles as he inspected the red pills in his hand, they were quite ordinary in appearance but once consumed, the user would experience a tremendous increase in all stats along and the pain immunity will have risen to its maximum .

Such pills are considered very precious yet this coated individual was willing to hand them thousands of those pills . Of course, as a Patriarch, he wasn't that stupid so he didn't accept immediately, that is why, last week, when this individual came, he asked him to stay at the clan until they thought about their offer .

In return for the pills, the black-coated person said that the Yan Clan has to provide him a constant amount of Aether Crystals each week .

Aether Crystals are a material used to recover Mana, it is similar to the Mana Potion but what's different is that it can be charged again after consuming it, it's limitless if you wait a sufficient amount of time . The Yan Clan happened to have a mine of Aether Crystals just at the foot of the mountain, so it shouldn't be too hard to provide fifty kilograms of crystals each week .

"We have tested the efficiency of the pills and discussed your offer . As long as the amount of the Aether Crystal we should provide does not increase then we accept . "

Honestly, they could even provide 200 kilograms each week and still have a large amount of stock but the patriarch didn't want to be taken advantage of albeit the fact that such pills are too godly to pass on them, this is a golden opportunity .

'With such pills, the continuously growing force of the MoonStar will finally end!'

Although the two forces didn't clash directly, the influence of the MoonStar Sect has exceeded the Yan Clan, especially after it established its foothold on the deserted continent and unified all the rebellious tribe, all of that under the command of a former warrior of a tribe and Anastassia, the former leader of the Ma Clan . That is of course not enough to make the Patriarch of the Yan Clan fear the MoonStar Sect, the main reason is the flying undead dragons and the terrifying skeletal knights that exude a cold and death aura around them .

....

When the deal was done and the black-coated person left, the Yan Clan elders began celebrating and planning what to do next, as for the mysterious individual, he took a ring which had fifty kilograms of Aether Crystals and left the territory of the Clan, promising them to come back after a week .

When he was a fair distance away from the Clan, the black-coated person took off his hood and the appearance he had was a horror to behold .

It was a monster exactly similar to the one Arthur saw in that hellish world, not a bit different . It had two arms and with two ugly eyes, a hideous face, a unique skin color and a foul stench around it, it grinned as it played with the ring in its finger while laughing maniacally .

Chapter 160

The testing with the Dark Magic was strange, at first it left Arthur confused but the more he tested the more confused he felt . The test was quite simple, before successfully growing a plant, he would fuse a bit of Dark Magic into it and try to merge them and if that doesn't work, he would try to fuse them together after the plant grew .

The latter is the method he used with the last few attributes as the first one rarely works, even in case of the Heavenly Arrow, he has to add the attribute after the core of arrow is created .

The simply grown plant wriggled on top of Arthur's hand, seemingly happy to be born, it wasn't completely sentient yet it was not unsentient too . When the most important part occurred and the Dark Magic slowly entered the plant's small body, the wriggling became fiercer and surprisingly, it started emitting screeching noises that were not so pleasant to the ears .

A few seconds passed and the screeching finally stopped with the death of the plant . This process made Arthur furrow his brows and watch in confusion and surprise . To make sure he didn't mess anything up, he tried doing it again but the result was exactly the same .

The third time he tried that, he possessed the plant he just created and just laid dormant there, without taking over the incredibly small body of the plant . He noticed that the Dark Magic that invaded the plant's body was eating away its body and slowly but surely, trying to possess it but that only ended up in the plant yet again . It seemed that the more forceful the Dark Magic was in possessing the plant, the stronger the backlash which will automatically lead to the death of the invaded body .

Arthur didn't know why the Dark Magic was not trying to merge but wanted to take over the body, maybe after so long, it started imitating the actions of its original master?

Some time was spent pondering about what just happened and then Arthur decided to do a few more tests . He created a dark red fireball the size of his fist . The fireball floated in front of him and burned with intense heat . It was just a small fireball yet the temperature of the room rose to an alarming degree .

A black fog came out of Arthur body and encircled the fireball, gradually merging with the ball of flames . Arthur couldn't believe his eyes as he witnessed this . Such a thing would never have occurred in the past, no matter how many times he tried, normal fusion like Lucy did was impossible for him unless if it's inside the Heavenly Arrow .

There was the case of the Eclipse Magic but that is something he obtained, as for right now, the fusion was happening smoothly and in normal cases, the Dark Magic would be just repelled just like pulling two magnets with the same sign close to each other .

A few seconds passed and the system notification rang in his ears .

'ting'

You have successfully fused [Ancient Fire] with [Dark Magic] .

You have created a new skill(Active): [Sensor Detonator]: A special fireball that chases its target and detonates, dealing huge destructive damage . Please note that the user can detonate it at will, no matter the distance . Please note that it will automatically detonate if the user is unconscious or dead .

Cost: 1,000 Mana (Please note that the more Mana is injected into the skill, the bigger and the stronger the Sensor Detonator will be .)

Cooldown: None .

For Successfully fusing two Attributes, you gain +500,000 Intelligence / +400,000 Wisdom .

The Dark Red flaming ball received huge changes . First, it was its size, it tripled in size and but the heat intensity dramatically decreased . There was also its appearance, two dark abyss-like eyes appeared on it and a grinning mouth was just under the eyes, it looked creepy and adding its massive size, it could by means be compared to a normal looking dark red fireball .

It seemed as if it was laughing but no sound was emitted by it, its color drifted a bit toward orange and only the top of its head had some red flames burning as for the rest, it looked like a big ball .

Although there were no flames burning on its body, with naked eyes, anyone will see that its insides are like raging red flames of hell .

'Just what exactly is Dark Magic '

Arthur stretched his hands to touch the Sensor Detonator and in response to his movements, the strange-looking fireball floated under his hands and kept staring at him with its two eyes while still maintaining the motionless grin .

Its body surprisingly felt soft as if he was touching a teddy bear .

With but a thought, Arthur called back the Sensor Detonator and was left alone in the room . He let out a sigh and tried fusing the Dark Magic with the rest of the attributes but as he guessed, it didn't work .

It must be that either because the flames were special that the fusing working or because his affinity with the ancient flames is stronger than the rest .

The meditation was resumed when a couple of extra tries were done but naught was discovered, however, the creation of such skill is not bad too . He didn't try it yet but it's bound to be strong, especially if he pours enough Mana, furthermore, it chases its target and detonates on contact or by his will, so it may be good to bait someone and with these damnable chains, obtaining more powerful magical abilities would only make things easier for him if a fight ever breaks out .

...

The darkness brought by the fallen night disappeared with the appearance of the sun rays and the blue sky . Arthur was in deep meditation, preparing himself and waiting for the hot Material to slowly cool down . He could have used Ice to fasten the process but doing it the old-fashioned way it better . If he wanted it, he could create one in an extremely short time but the more effort you put into forging a weapon, the better it'll be when it's done .

When the twenty-four hours mark passed, Arthur finally got up from the bed, making the chains emit the noisy crackling noise but unlike the usual reaction, Arthur was not annoyed . More than ten hours were spent meditating, he was in a serene and calm state, a calm temper and strong heart is needed to craft the best weapons .

The next step is Grinding, the blacksmith usually needs a grinder to work out the edges and the point of the desired weapon, this would also when any engraving could be added . This is not a completed version of the weapon as it is still soft but Arthur didn't miss this opportunity, he took out a normal grinder and started meticulously grinding and when he was done, he didn't forget to engrave the very symbols of his Sect on the huge axe .

When this step was perfectly finished, Arthur took out a quenching tank and heated the axe to a terrifyingly high degree and then put it in the tank . This reservoir looking tank is used to cool the heated axe and harden the metal or any material the weapon is made of .

This step shouldn't take much, he waited for fifteen minutes before he took out the axe and inspected it closely while rotating it in the air using telekinesis and observing every inch of it .

Its color changed to brown and had some red spots randomly scattered on its wide body . The long hilt was still not made and will only be added to the overall axe when everything is done .

After this quick inspection came to the tempering phase, it is basically a repeated cycle of heating and quenching but a much lower temperature, this will help the weapon to be strong yet not brittle whilst also providing it with a certain amount of flexibility but still maintain the sharp edges .

The cycle was repeated 27 times, using a unique skill he got from one of the thousands of humanoid corpses he possessed .

[Heart of Fire: The 27th Tempering]: The user activates the skill and the skill, the tempering cycle should be repeated 27 times, no more, no less . The stats of the created weapon will increase by 40% whilst grant a bonus of 10% critical hit to it .

Please note if the temperature of the 27 repeated cycles is exactly the same, the weapon will have 100% chance of obtaining the passive skill (Blessed By Fire)

Blessed By Fire: All kinds of attacks will deal Fire Damage over time .

Once this final part was done, all that was left to be done is the completion part where the hilt of the axe needs to be added .

In contrary to what anyone would think, Arthur retrieved a red looking wood from his storage, cut it using a sharp dagger and shortened it to a good length and attached it to the axe . As he contemplated the finished product, he couldn't help but feel a bit proud as it is the very first weapon he created on his own . It's a shame that he doesn't need one with the presence of Makaze and its extraordinary power and sharpness, but that didn't stop him from having thoughts about crafting some special ones for his daughter and wife .

Congratulations! You just crafter a Mystic first Grade Two-handed axe . Please give it a name .

Arthur held the axe and swung it a few times, creating small airwaves . The grip was firm and the movement was flawless, of course, there is the part where his advanced axe mastery played a huge part but nonetheless, the finished product was pretty good, just from its rank, you would know that .

'Let's see I'll name it Skullcleaver . '

Are you sure you want to name it 'Skullcleaver' Y/N?

'Yes'

'ting'

Skullcleaver(Mystic 1st Grade): A two-handed axe created by a master blacksmith . Received the effect of 'Heart of Fire' and 'Blessed by Fire' .

Stats: +75,500 Strength / +40,000 Vitality / +5,500 Agility / +5,500 Dexterity .

Heart of Fire: +40% stats / +10 Critical Hit

Blessed by Fire: All kinds of attacks performed by Skullcleaver will deal Fire Damage over time .

Perfect Foundation: If it is used to block, 25% of the damage will be negated (only applies to frontal damage) .

With the blue window laid in front of his eyes, Arthur felt ecstatic as he saw such a good weapon . Of course, if it is compared to Makaze, the stats bonus are hugely different but for a Lv800 warrior, an increase of 75,000 in Strength is like increasing his attacking power by another fold, who would refuse that .

Unfortunately, Jakob can't this window like Arthur but he'll surely feel the immense strengthening when he uses it . With a few more tests, Arthur was satisfied so he wrapped the long axe with a red

cloth and put it in a large box that he took out from his storage . The box was put in a corner of the room then was completely ignored by Arthur, who wasted no time and proceeded in crafting a pair of daggers for Anastassia .

For those, he used only one very special material to create the edges and the sharpness . As per Zodiac's notes, the black rock in Arthur's hand was called Shadow Stone and is created by the formation of large densities of a small liquid mineral called Pondium . It is formed only after a very long time has passed and the rock is fully condensed when an enormous amount of liquid was solidified over the passing years .

Arthur didn't have a large amount of these shadow stones, barely two rocks the size of a football, it was a meager amount but he doesn't need them currently and using one to craft a friend a good weapon isn't a bad decision .

The process was similar to the crafting of an axe but there were a couple of steps that are done differently . Unlike the Axe, since the stone couldn't be hardened or melted, he had to forge it using a different way .

...

It was only a few hours later that he was done, a pair of two jet black daggers with a gray hilt were being inspected by Arthur . The symbol of the MoonStar sect was engraved on both hilts and the daggers were curved at the end, revealing a sharp pointy edge and an appearance that instantly merges with the darkness .

Anastassia was like an assassin, attacking from behind and hiding in the shadows, a fitting weapon for her it a weapon who matches her abilities and this pair of daggers would be considered weapons only meant for her, or people like her at least .

'Appraise!'

Shadowfall, Blades of the MoonWalker(Mystic 3rd Grade): A pair of daggers made by a master magic blacksmith . Received the effect of 'Heart of Darkness' and 'Shadowfall' .

Stats: +175,000 Dexterity / +250,000 Agility / +35,000 Strength / +12,500 Vitality .

Heart of Darkness: +75% Agility bonus (Can be activated once every 10 minutes) (Duration: 20 seconds)

Shadowfall: If the user is in the shadows, he gains an additional 15% in Dexterity and Agility and upon leaving the shadow area, the effect Shadowfall is activated .

Shadowfall(active): The user deals a huge amount of shadow damage over time . (35 seconds)

Since the material used and the method were a bit different, the grade of the weapon was obviously higher, Arthur couldn't properly slash with his two daggers when his two hands are chained, so he refrained from testing them and hoped Anastassia will like them .

Now that these were done, the last weapon was for him but he'll not craft it right now, he needs to take care of other things first . Just as he was about to teleport out of the room, his sense caught a running presence coming straight to his room .

It was actually a disciple of the Ma Clan, he knocked a few times before barging in and hastily saying "S-sect master, sorry to bother you b-but it's about Miss Lissandra . . . s-she's . . . "

The disciple hesitated for a few seconds and only finished his sentence when Arthur ushered him too "She's turned crazy and tried to kill herself!!"

Upon hearing to the Ma Clan disciple, Arthur frowned as he found it strange . His retracted Sense spread instantly and located Lissandra, who was struggling as two Ma Clan disciples were restraining her but since they didn't want to put too much force, the grip was not strong and at this pace, she would break free soon . From her desperate look, it was obvious that she wants to jump off the balcony which was over ten floors above ground .

She lived in a private room in the main tower of the Sect . The Death Knight didn't stop her from suiciding as an order like that was useless, or so thought Arthur as he didn't need her much at this time so if she really wanted to kill herself then so be it, however, that was a couple of days ago, in the upcoming expedition, he needs her to come with him for various reasons with the main one being her vast knowledge about other worlds .

Arthur's figure teleported away and with just two teleportations, he was already next to the struggling Lissandra . He motioned to the two disciples to let go of her and said

"Thanks for your help, I will take it from here . "

The disciples nodded and left, leaving only Arthur and Lissandra there . With a little use of the Telekinesis, it wasn't that hard to restrain her movements .

"Let me go!"

Lissandra didn't even spare him a glance, she kept struggling but to no avail, the Telekinesis was freezing her mid-air with no way to move an inch even if she was a thousand times stronger .

Witnessing the weird behavior of the usually obedient Lissandra, Arthur used [Eyes of the Noble Sea] to inspect the Energy inside her but there was no poison, infection or any entity controlling her . The only explanation is that she willingly attempted to kill herself but why would she do something like that, furthermore, right now of all times?

'Could she not cope with being a Mortal anymore?'

Arthur remained silent as he waited for her to stop resisting the pressing force and calm down .

. . . .

It was only a few minutes later that the ex-God managed to calm down a little . With an emotionless expression and deadpan face, she stared back at Arthur without uttering a single word . It's as if she was dead on the inside, it was the same expression an emotionally devastated person would have, however, there were no reasons for her to become like this, at least not any that Arthur could think of .

She was the calculative type who never cared for anyone but herself and she doesn't have any close relatives or anyone she tried to protect or loved, the biggest loss she suffered could be considered when she became a Mortal and lost all her accumulated efforts of the past centuries .

"So, care to explain what happened and why do you want to kill yourself?"

Ten seconds passed yet he heard no reply, not even a word came out of her mouth . She just vacantly stared at him with a strange look, it contained neither hatred, blame nor sadness or rage .

Arthur tried to touch the subject from another perspective so he added

"I'll let you do whatever you want if you tell me why you wanted to kill yourself . "

" . . . It doesn't matter, it's too late anyway . "

And those were the last words Lissandra said before resuming her silence, no matter what Arthur said, whether it's setting her free or anything, she didn't even show a reaction, with the same look, she looked at the ground and stuck to ever-so-long silence .

Reaching no success, albeit he was quite curious about why she would try to commit suicide, he couldn't get answers from her lips so he gave up and withdrew his telekinesis .

As to not let her do more foolish actions, Arthur told her to follow him to his room so he could keep her close and would be able to immediately react if she tried to kill herself in any way . He still needed her knowledge and losing such a resourceful person would be a waste . In her current state, she wouldn't be able to retaliate and what would be bothersome is to get her to talk as torture probably wouldn't work anymore .

. . . .

As the two of them were heading to Arthur's room, Anastassia and Jakob met them in a four-way intersection inside the tower . From the look of it, Anastassia called Jakob and went to look for Arthur to see what's going on .

"Follow me . "

Arthur only said that and kept walking toward his room . Jakob followed Arthur with Ace on his back, which replaced his axe's place, he also seemed to have the used shell of the grenade on his belt . His eyes were shining and eager to see the next inventions Arthur is going to show them for he assumed that Arthur told them to follow him to show them new powerful weapons .

Soon, the four of them with the Death Knight previously which was previously protecting Lissandra standing at the far back, entered Arthur's room .

Arthur gestured with his hands toward the two boxes, one small and a large one .

"The big one is for Jakob, the other is for Anastassia, test them and see if it's good and if there is a problem, tell me so I can fix it before I go . "

The second he finished his sentence, Jakob leaped next to the large box and used his large arms to open it only to be welcomed by a sharp-looking, strange-colored huge axe .

Instinctively, Jakob picked the axe only to find it a bit heavy which surprised him . For someone with his body and Strength, there were very few things he would find heavy .

Unlike the impatient Jakob, Anastassia stared at the axe in his hands and turned to look at Arthur, who looked at Jakob's surprised expression with a proud look and a smirk hanging on his face .

"This is?"

The only reply to her question was a shrug from Arthur so she could only walk to the small box and open it . There, under a smooth looking purple cloth, laid a pair of daggers, their hilts were made from a gray material but what caught her eyes is the sharp jet black edges . They were a bit too long and curved a bit, she also noticed a circle with a seven-edge star inside of it .

Just like Jakob, she stretched her hands and held the daggers, the feeling was smooth and opposite to Jakob, the daggers were as light as feathers .

To begin with, Shadow Stones were a liquid, even after solidifying, their weight diminishes the older they are, it was noted that in some chaotic worlds, these Stones would be found floating high-up in the air in place of deep underground .

Recently, Arthur noticed that she broke through to the late stages of the Heavenly Realm, only a step away from being a Deity . For someone who doesn't rely on possessing, it's considered a good cultivating speed, although compared to Lucy, she's a bit lacking .

Lucy managed to do what no one could do, fuse two opposite attributes and use that result to fight, the potency and effectiveness were extraordinary and albeit the high cost, it still allowed her, an Immortal to fight on par with Lissandra, who was a fully-grown God .

There was also the case where her stats are augmented due to the soul-link, nonetheless, it was by her own efforts and skills that she withstood the attacks of a God and assisted him in his operation .

...

"This is incredible! I can feel the infinite power surging in my body hahahaha! I want to smash things now!"

Jakob happily swung his new axe but in mid-swing, he was stopped by Anastassia who appeared in front of him and blocked the axe with the tip of the black dagger .

She knew that he was rather reckless and just that swing would destroy this room if he is not careful .

"Thank you for these weapons . Even without any tests, I can feel that they are totally fit for us . "

Anastassia seriously bowed at Arthur, showing her gratitude but that only made Arthur wave his hands and moving the chains with them whilst laughing and replying

"Hahaha there is no need to thank me, we are long-time friends . I took your skills in consideration so they shouldn't hinder you if you get used to them, especially you Jakob, with a bit of effort, it won't be a problem to fight a Spirit Realm with Skullcleaver . "

Jackob nodded continuously as he scratched the back of his head embarrassingly . Not only did he swing without holding back, he also swung at the direction of Lissandra, who stood there motionless and dead silent, he couldn't help but feel guilty and awkward when he realized what he had done .

"Then we'll be off . "

Anastassia glared at Jackob, clearly telling him to leave with her as he was still nodding with his two eyes glued to the axe in his hands . As for her, she sheathed her daggers and put them under the dark sleeves on her waist . She didn't show it but she was honestly pleased with this pair of daggers as it was true, the moment she held them, she could feel the boost .

She just needs to sheath them for the system to activate the stats of the weapon equipped .

As they left the room, Anastassia stopped Jackob and coldly stared at him while smirking

"Look, you have a new weapon so let's have a friendly spar . "

The joyful smile on Jackob's face stiffened and the hold on his axe tightened, a drop of sweat appeared on his forehead as he looked around in panic . He didn't give any reply, instead, he grabbed his axe and darted off the place .

It is, however, unfortunate for him as Anastassia softly smiled and disappeared from the hall in hot pursuit

Two days later, Arthur finally completed his preparation and did whatever he needed to do . Lissandra remained dead silent and except eating whatever Arthur handed to her, she literally did nothing .

He tried asking her a few more times but it was totally futile so he busied himself with the plan and didn't pay her any more heed .

He didn't need to warn Anastassia about enemies or Sect affairs as he knew she could handle them all so he just gave her the batch of grenades, mines, and flash grenades and departed to the North with Lissandra .

Arthur didn't specifically organize a small meeting to say farewell as he hated them so he just went to Robin and talk over a few things with her but he was surprised to hear from her that she left the management of the E-clips Company in the East to the little boy Rey who insisted on doing that . Honestly, Arthur didn't trust the devilish boy at all but it was Robin's choice so he wasn't going to interfere .

"Why do I think that it'll be a long time since we'll see him again?"

Jackob muttered those words as he watched the disappearing Dark Cloud on the horizon along with Anastassia, who was silently standing next to him .

"Instead of worrying about that go train with your toy as you can't even wield it properly, it's a waste in your hands . "

Anastassia snorted and disappeared into a black mist that soon dispersed due to the whistling wind .

. . . .

At noon the very same day they departed to the Demon Continent, the Dark Cloud entered the perimeter of the Demon City and in just seconds, it had already dived underground and arrived inside the cave . To make it easier, Arthur had already dug a special route to not circle around the countless rat-infested tunnels . He made a large hole from the first tunnel underground going all the way to the cave, one jump would suffice to arrive there, but that only applies for those who can survive that jump .

The only presence he felt in the cave was Gutcha, who was still pinned down by the vines and paralyzed by the poison, Arthur wouldn't let such a dangerous foe roam free even if there is a cage made of thorny vines around him .

Taliya didn't seem to be here but from the appearance of Gutcha, he noticed that the head maid used some torture means to get some information out of Gutcha's mouth albeit the fact that he forbade her to get near him .

'Ha! Talk about a stubborn woman, at least Lucy is stubborn but will listen to me if I tell her not to do something . . . "

Arthur shook his head while letting out a long sigh, at least she didn't straight out kill him or the plan to take her along would never work . He needed Gutcha as he is extremely crucial for the plan .

He wasn't sure how strong the enemies were, if the leaders of Gutcha's tribe is a God and adding the countless warriors with him then it'll not be easy for Arthur to save the prisoners, he would be able to escape and would also be able to annihilate the whole territory with a Rizaki but that would injure him and most definitely kill everything as it did not discriminate .

"Hey, are you still alive?"

He could feel the heartbeat of Gutcha but the latter seemed to be unconscious . He had multiple blade wounds on his arms and legs and an unpleasant bloody hole in his left shoulder . Taliya was really merciless, maybe it was a dumb move to leave him exposed to her treatment .

Seeing the hideous monster in such a state, Arthur was forced to take out High Healing Potion and feed it to the unconscious Gutcha . The warm red liquid entered the huge mouth of the monster and in just a few seconds, the miraculous effect of the Potion began showing .

Even to Arthur, an injury suffered from a God would heal Gradually with or without a Potion but it's certain that it'll fasten the recovery by a fair bit .

In fact, Arthur's Vitality is insanely High, even a God wouldn't have that high recovery as it is one of the hardest stats to increase . It is only thanks to his High Vitality that he recovered in merely a few days after being injured by the Spatial Tears and the enormous explosion .

The blade scars began healing bit by bit and the bloody hole was slowly but surely closing . Arthur didn't pay any more attention to Gutcha and walked to Lissandra, who was still in a dead-like state .

The woman was always looking down since her black hair was quite long, it covered her face and made her look a bit scary, but with a well-proportioned body fitting to a God which is probably the only thing she kept, no one would think she has an ugly face .

Since talking to her wouldn't help him, Arthur just retrieved a small bed and a table filled with food and put them near Lissandra . She doesn't react but she still eats her fill every day and that at least showed that is not completely broken .

...

The day of the departure is growing near and the final preparations are almost done, what is left is something that Arthur wanted to craft for himself, it'll be impossible to use with these annoying chains on but he'll keep it just in case .

With the use of his blacksmithing, Lost Magic, rare and unique materials and many miscellaneous skills that are helpful for crafting, he began at last .

Material after another was taken out of the storage rings, some were melted some were used immediately, Arthur was so busy that he didn't notice Taliya, who had arrived a few minutes ago but as to not disturb him, she stood in a corner and simply watched .

His sense was retracted and his attention was wholly focused on what's before him . At some point, when an unknown amount of time has passed, sweat drops trickled down his forehead, indicating how Mentally Exhausted he was .

This long and certainly burdensome and tiresome process was done exactly five hours later when a long string of notifications popped in front of him .

Congratulations! You have created 'Star' .

For creating a special weapon, you obtain +50 Creation .

...

Arthur calmly contemplated his new creation with a soft smile on his face . He didn't even bother to test it, he just took out a small red cloth from his storage and wrapped the weapon with it then he put the weapon in the one storage ring he never used .

It was his engagement ring, Lucy gave him one and he gave her one too . It was a low-quality silver ring but for Arthur, its worth is much more than any other storage ring .

He tapped the silver ring as he dazed off, lost in thoughts and was only woken up when Taliya walked up to him .

"Ah, you're here?"

Taliya cast a glance at the healed Gutcha and replied with a snort

"Hmpf! I have been here since a few hours ago . "

She didn't want to admit it but seeing Arthur craft something with various unknown techniques and skills, she was quite engrossed and didn't sense the time passing, it was only when he was done did she remember that she was standing for five straight hours .

She caught sight of Lissandra, who was quietly sitting on a bed at the side but that only made her annoyed as her opinion of Arthur kind of dropped a bit, seeing another woman with him, she thought that he's collecting them on the purpose of having 'a comrade to pass the time with' .

"Alright, enough useless talk, I'll start explaining the plan so you better listen up closely, and if you are unwilling to follow it to the very letter, I'll not bring you along . "

Arthur walked to Gutcha and gestured to Lissandra and Taliya to come . He was only afraid that Taliya would lose control and start rampaging if something were to happen to her niece, that would ruin her plans . There was the possibility of Gutcha backstabbing them but fortunately, he found a way to counter that .

With a strong enough slap from Arthur, Gutcha was woken up from his unconsciousness, he looked around dazedly and the moment his eyes landed on Taliya, he couldn't help but curse at her

"You crazy evildoer!"

He already told Arthur everything he knew but when he left, Taliya started torturing him and asking him questions that have no sense or simply cannot be answered by him yet she still persisted until he fell unconscious .

Taliya maintained an expressionless face as if she did nothing and stared at Gutcha with cold eyes, forcing him to shut up .

Arthur didn't mind and ignored what just happened when everyone calmed down and he could hear nothing but silence, he started explaining the exact process of the operation .

"The plan is simple if you follow what I say . We three are hostages brought by Gutcha when a fight occurred which resulted in the death of his comrade . Since we're hostages, I don't think they'll kill us but will imprison us with the rest, which will let us confirm the identity of all the other hostages . "

Lissandra didn't show any reaction but Taliya wasn't totally convinced so she retorted

"What if they decide to kill us instead?"

"They won't, unless you purposely provoke them and at that time, I will not step out to save you, each their own when we are there . "

Gutcha was flabbergasted as he heard that Arthur and co were planning on letting themselves be held prisoners . He found the idea idiotic and too favorable for himself, however, before he could have any malicious thoughts, Arthur raised his hands and an orange creepy looking thing appeared . It had flames on its top and its insides burned with raging flames . Its size was small than a fist and the second it appeared, it dived straight at his chest and entered it . He closed his eyes, expecting to feel pain but naught came, it's as if nothing happened .

"W-what did you do?"

Gutcha didn't know what happened but he wasn't dumb enough to think that the creepy thing with scary facial features that entered his chest was nothing but a small show .

"It's just a precaution and a warning . If you try anything out of place, say anything which does not comply with the plan, I assure you that by the next second, your body will exist no more . "

The bound monster gulped his saliva and stared fearfully at his chest, he could feel nothing but that was for the best as Arthur implemented a ticking bomb inside of him, the one and only Sensor Detonator .

He was able to successfully reduce its size and potency, it can enter a target's body and wait for him to detonate it . He ordered it to detonate if the distance between him and Gutcha reached a certain limit as in this way, Gutcha can't escape or act against him or he'll just meet his own demise .

. . . .

Arthur passed the next hour to fully explain the plan to the very last detail without forgetting to warn Taliya to not act rashly again and again . Gutcha didn't dare oppose anything and would continuously nod his head whilst swearing to do his best to let them successfully infiltrate his tribe without bringing any suspicions .

The long talk just ended and when Arthur was going to take out the Book of the Damned to try something, A blue streak of lightning flew straight at him and entered his consciousness .

Astrith had returned from his missions and instantly resumed his evolution after telling Arthur that he disposed of every single member of Gutcha's Race that was hiding on Astria . He didn't search every corner of Astria as that would take a very long time even with his extreme speed, however, with the help of Gutcha, who provided various hideouts of his comrades, the wolf was able to easily locate them .

To Arthur's surprise, all of the other comrades of Gutcha resisted and fought to their last breath, which made him think .

'Is this Gutcha a smart person or is he just so cowardly and afraid of death that he would denounce his comrades?'

He saved his own life by telling the truth but at the same time, he had forsaken his own tribe and comrades . Arthur didn't know that Gutcha didn't hold any special connection with his tribe so he presumed that this hideous looking monster is just a coward who, like everyone else, would do anything to not die .

With the threat of these monsters gone from Astria, Arthur felt a bit of relief as another invader was taken care of .

. . . .

Arthur took out the Book of the Damned and summoned the rotten hand, which stretched out of the yellow and old looking page and wriggled in the air . He sat in front of the book and closed his eyes, crossing his legs and putting his hand down, he focused and would take out a few materials out of his storage every now and then .

The concept of the rotten hand is easy, it would block any incoming attack if possible then store that energy and release it when the user wills it . The released energy is usually a big blast or some kind of beam, but Arthur wanted to store energy but release a small concentrated result .

He took out a small red ore and raised it to the hand whilst unleashing astronomical amounts of Ancient Fire . The Red Ore and the Flames released by Arthur were fully absorbed by the rotten hand, which in return pulsed with a red light . Arthur patiently waited for the result to come out and only after an hour did a small red object come out of the disgusting skin of the hand .

Seeing that the result was what he wished for, Arthur felt ecstatic and without further ado, he took out another Red Ore and repeated the process .

The morning of the sixth's day, Arthur opened his eyes after a long meditation and said with a voice neither too loud or too low but enough for the people present to hear him .

"It is time to depart . "

Gutcha said that if he wasn't defeated he had to go come back to his tribe to report every week and if something happened, the delay can be prolonged to ten days . The ten days didn't pass yet but Arthur didn't want to stretch it to the last second as the plan would seem plausible only if he came back right now .

He was ambushed and lost his comrade but he managed to get rid of the opposing parties and caught those who surrendered . As for Arthur, he was one of the ambushing enemies, however, he was apprehended by Gutcha and chained to restrict his movements .

Quite a simple plan indeed but it all fell on Gutcha's way of describing what happened . Taliya also needs to hold back her anger and act calmly, it would be perfect if she acted like the current Lissandra .