

Once Human 411

Chapter 411

The qualified people were sent to the room from earlier . Out of thirty-six who joined, only sixteen passed the second level . The silver-haired woman, who was praised by the fairy creature, remained absent-minded, still processing what happened three minutes ago .

Never did she imagine losing against them and in such a manner .

...

Going back three minutes ago, when Arthur mumbled something to the princess, Lucy joined hands with the remaining teammate, who was a tall man with a thick brown beard .

He's good at Earth Magic, precisely Gravity Magic, so with his help, she caught the half-illusory ball, which was about to pass through her only for her fingers to lit up with a mysterious flame, which rendered the ball unable to pass as easily as before .

This came as a shock to the silver-haired woman, who expected the ball to hit its target . Before she could distance herself from the prepared Lucy, the four of them initiated their plan .

The ball became ten times heavier with the use of Gravity Magic, the princess strengthened it using her pink energy, as for Arthur, he appeared behind his wife and placed his on her back .

The ball, which was already spinning in Lucy's hands, was enveloped by thin black threads which could barely be seen .

Another type of thread, a bit thicker than the black ones, came out of Arthur's index . It was soft and golden, it acted like a connection, allowing Arthur to control the ball even when it's thrown .

In addition to the pink energy, the ball became boiling hot as purple fire enveloped it, adding it to its power . Lucy swung her hand toward her sister, throwing an unstoppable flying ball .

The ground was lit with the purple fire as the spinning ball made its way toward the woman, whose body shone with a violent light .

She planned to pass through it rather than block it . The lightning-fast ball wasn't able to hit the woman, who easily evaded getting hit, however, just as it passed through her, it suddenly changed direction and returned to the way it came from .

The silver-haired woman's reaction was fast as she jumped to the side, however, the ball followed her with an ever-so-increasing momentum .

When she dodged it for the third time, the woman was dumbstruck to see six balls . They all seemed so genuine but she know it was but an illusion .

They were too fast for her to locate the real one so she was forced to try and dodge the six of them, which was an impossible task even with her Physique .

In the end, she was hit shortly after, thus ending the game once and for all .

...

Since the four of them were cooperating, she didn't know who used the illusion . It couldn't be the tall man so it was either the princess, Lucy or Arthur .

Her view of the siblings changed, they were hiding their true strength . She didn't blame them nor get angry, quite the opposite, in fact, she was excited to fight Lucy, especially .

It'll be unfair outside of the Secret Realm, however, in here, they had the same cultivation so it'll be an exciting battle, or so thought the woman .

It's a shame that the disparity between her and Lucy is too big, more so in this secret Realm, where Lucy's stat only decreased by a small amount .

"Congratulations to all of you! Your contributions, big or small, are much appreciated and you have entertained me!"

The fairy waved her small hand, handing the rewards of the seconds level . Surprisingly, Arthur got a skill point, some more valuable than any item .

As for Lucy, she got another ring, however, this one was exceptionally overpowered .

The three-legged Ring(Unique): Increase the rank of the user's fire by one .

If the user's fire mastery is already maxed, he/she will be granted a special kind of fire .

Once she equipped the ring, a row of notifications popped in front of the pleasantly surprised Lucy .

You have obtained the fire of the three-legged Golden Crow .

Lucy became excited as she read the descriptions of her new skills . Not only did she obtain the special fire of the golden crow, which is by no means inferior to the Phoenix fire or the Hell-Fire .

She was given two AoE skills; [Engulfing Sun] and [Golden Purgatory] . If they're combined with Arthur's vermilion bird's skills, the results are unimaginable .

Arthur has two skills points available but he refrained from using them for now . He tried to upgrade [Eyes of Tranquility] but it didn't work, unfortunately .

"Now now please calm down and listen to me . "

She flew a bit higher and gazed down at all the contestants before continuing

"The third level isn't as easy as the first two so this is your chance to leave . "

Despite her warning, none of the sixteen people left or showed any hesitation . Although the second level was just a fun game, the first level was by no means 'easy' .

It was deadly and many already died in that big maze .

The fairy happily clapped her hands when she saw their resoluteness .

"Very well, dangerous places always give generous rewards . The third level will begin in five minutes . "

Emily, who passed the second level due to her high contribution, raised her hand and asked

"What's the third level?"

Although she appeared rather innocent and cute, this little devil is a born genius and is always scheming something. The reason Arthur didn't like her was because she always has ulterior motives and hides them extremely well.

It was the total opposite of Shu Ru, who's always calm and honest. It's no wonder many people call her a goddess or a fairy.

"Hehehe~~ Shrewd questions require honest answers!"

She put her index in front of her rosy lips and spoke with a low voice

"For the third level... you'll fight yourselves."

'Such a trial is common in the towers of the System's universe but I doubt it's as easy as it seems.'

Claud commented after he heard the fairy's words.

Were he to fight himself, Arthur had complete confidence in winning, especially if he uses the White Tiger or the Vermilion Bird.

Five minutes quietly passed, some became nervous and others remained nonchalant, like the ghost, who sat in an empty corner and carefully wrapped the bandages around his hand.

Just like the second level, the sixteen contestants were teleported to another place. Each person appeared in a place, Arthur found himself in a green valley with a relaxing breeze.

Lucy was in a snowy area, the weather was extremely cold but it didn't affect her as she had the Pure Yin Physique. Actually, Shu Ru appeared in a library, which dumbfounded her.

Arthur surveyed the area but found nothing strange, there's no sign of a copy of himself or any other monsters.

'Did she lie?'

'Maybe... maybe not. We'll find out eventually.'-Claud

The place was vast and peaceful, to say the least. The valley stretched as far as the eye could see and even with his sharpened senses, he couldn't discover any abnormalities.

Arthur walked up to a thick tree and sat under it, closing his eyes and enjoying this moment of peacefulness.

...

Unlike Arthur, all the others already started fighting, including Lucy, who was staring back at a woman who had the same exact appearance as her.

Inside this world, her altered appearance was erased, her hair and face went back to normal. The stalemate lasted for a few seconds before the copy dashed at her.

Just from her copy's speed, Lucy was able to guess that the enemy has the same stats as her . Unlike her copy, who made use of the environment and activated the Pure Yin Physique, Lucy's body burned with golden flames which melted the snow and got rid of the chilling air .

Two sides, one fire, and the other ice, clashed against each other, causing this field of snow to crack and vanish, leaving nothing but a bottomless chasm .

The fight continued for four hours, not because Lucy was struggling but because she used this opportunity to train herself .

The dark sky and the clustered clouds vanished as a miniature golden sun appeared, golden flames rained from above, covering the land and melting the snow .

The sun expanded until it exploded, causing unbelievable destruction and sending Lucy's copy flying miles away . Although this wasn't enough to finish her enemy, Lucy followed with a meteor shower, which destroyed what was left of this small world and killed her copy, finishing this once and for all .

Fifteen people fought their copy, only Arthur was excluded . He took a long nap and only woke up after everyone finished their fight .

'I think I get it . '

Claud spoke to Arthur, letting him know of his speculation .

'I don't think it's about fighting yourself but your inner demon, your fears, to be more exact . As a user of Dark-Anguish Technique and Dark Magic, your inner demon was reborn into a Tri-Spirit, which you have a harmonious relationship with hence the absence of any opponent in the third level . '

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Just like the first level, the less time it took you to defeat your inner demon, the better the rewards . Lucy was the third to finish . The ghost was the first and the silver-haired woman was the second . Shu Ru was the fourth, Emily and the Princess were 5th and 6th respectively . By the way, all sixteen contestants successfully completed the third level .

Arthur was the last since he didn't fight anyone and had to wait till everyone is done . It's kind of a shame as he'll get a trashy reward or none at all .

He glanced at the fairy, who stared back at him and giggled before turning her head away .

The rewards weren't handed by the fairy but chosen by the contestants . There was a list of sixteen artifact/items and the first place one will choose first followed by the second and so on...

The item they were looking for was a bead called the Calming Soul Bead, it was a 1st Grade Godly-ranked artifact . It was one of the top items in this list . Fortunately, the ghost also had an item in mind so he didn't take the bead, instead, he chose a unique spirit ranked item with the name of 'Solidified Black Matter' .

The problem was the silver-haired woman, who took her sweet time browsing the list and reading the description of all the fifteen remaining items .

Luckily, she picked a potion filled with transparent liquid, it was a 3rd grade heavenly consumable . Although many were curious about the potion effects, they weren't courageous enough to ask her .

Jace was the 10th, a decent place, which satisfied him greatly . He chose a weird green stone which didn't have a rank or grade . He threw it in his storage while smiling to himself .

Arthur was left with no choice but to pick the remaining item, which was a decent armor, something he doesn't need .

"The rewards have been distributed fairly! Let us proceed to the fourth level!"

The fairy clapped her hand as usual then resumed

"The fourth level isn't life-threatening . Plus, you can't leave unless you fail so please try your best!"

She clenched her little fist and cheered them while spinning in the air .

Arthur was planning to immediately leave with Lucy only for the fairy to utter those words . She would glance at him and Lucy then giggles, which was a very suspicious behavior .

'Damn! Fairies are infamous for being pranksters! She's up to something . '

Claud clicked his tongue while inwardly cursing the cute fairy, who was lovely and energetic .

The sixteen people were teleported yet again . After a few seconds, they found themselves in a similar room with a large ring in the middle . This wasn't what startled Arthur, it was actually the fact that he felt much taller .

He glanced to the side only to see a silver-haired Lucy equally astonished .

Amongst the present cultivators, only their two appearances reverted back, which means all the other people weren't 'fakes' like them .

Angry, Arthur glared at the smiling fairy but didn't try anything . To attack a fairy in its domain is plain stupid no matter how strong he was . The fairy was like a host, there's another entity that rules over this garden .

Obviously, everyone but the couple was speechless when they saw the siblings' appearance change, especially Jace and the silver-haired woman .

As if she couldn't believe her eyes, she stared at Lucy with constricted pupils and half-open mouth . Jace was confused and flabbergasted too as he glanced back between Lucy and her sister .

"In the Paradise Garden, trickery and identity theft are prohibited!"

The Fairy proudly declared while patting her chest .

'What identity theft! You stupid bitch!'

Arthur couldn't control herself as he inwardly cursed at her . She ruined everything as everyone now knows their true appearance .

The problem was Angelina, Lucy's sister, who'll be able to piece everything in no time . Angelina wasn't a fool, she knew that the butler's main mission was to locate her missing sister .

Unlike her mother, she didn't know much about her little sister but she could vaguely remember her . She was eight years old when Lucy went missing and back then, she was a reliable big sister who frequently took care of her sister .

Once Lucy disappeared, Angelina's attitude dramatically changed for the worse, speaking every now and then and rarely interacting with others, except for her mother and father .

In addition to Lucy, Angelina had a younger brother, who was born three years after Lucy's disappearance .

"E-eva?"

Expressionless, Lucy retorted

"I'm called Lucy . "

Angelina walked to Lucy, who retreated while dragging the silent Arthur with her . The others kept their silence, simply watching the unfolding events .

Unfortunately, the fairy wasn't going to stay there and let this touching reunion continue .

"Hai hai! The fourth level is simple . Eight will pass and eight will fail . Easy . "

An illusory table with names on it appeared above the ring . All eyes were drawn to the table, each praying their opponent isn't strong .

It was a simple and quick tournament . The fairy spent half a minute explaining the rules . If one of the two parties is sent out of the ring, he'll lose . Forfeiting is possible, and losing consciousness is considered a defeat .

Arthur wasn't interested in the table nor the fourth level, he kept staring at Angelina, who walked up to them . Her indifferent expression was nowhere to be seen .

"Why?"

She totally ignored Arthur and asked the annoyed Lucy, who furrowed her brows and talked back

"Why what?"

"Why did you hide? Your mother has been looking for you ever since you disappeared . "

"Hmpf! Such things are meaningless now . All I want is to be left alone, so go away... while I'm still asking politely . "

Lucy was indeed a bit curious about her origins, however, she never wanted to go back there and enjoy the easy life . For her, a life without Saly and Arthur is not a life .

It's practically impossible for her family to accept Arthur and Saly, in fact, they'll try to separate them, which is something she won't tolerate .

Whether it's her sister or mother, she'll resort to everything to keep her family safe, even if it means killing them . For her, the only family she has is the one on Astria .

"I understand your resentment towards us but mother didn't purposely abandon yo-"

Lucy cut her off by coldly saying

"I don't care and I don't want to listen . I have a family and have no intention of being a good and obedient daughter . "

Angelina wanted to talk again but found no trace of the couple . They vanished and appeared at the end of the room and when Angelina wanted to head there, a weird black cube enveloped them, rendering anyone unable to hear, see, or even sense them .

"We've got the bead, I say we force our way before she tells the butler . "

Arthur voiced his opinion as he wrapped his arm around Lucy's shoulder . She wasn't perturbed or sad, just annoyed that they were discovered . She glared at the fairy from within the black cube and snorted .

"Forcefully leaving the garden will be difficult and may even attract the nearby cultivators . We'll finish the fourth level and leave, quietly, if possible . "-Lucy

The fourth level won't last long, it's just eight fights, two of which will end in seconds . Just like what she did to Lucy and Arthur, the fairy pranked two close friends and pitted them against each other .

The first fight was Emily against the princess . Neither backed away, they exchanged a few words before they went all out .

It lasted five minutes before Emily emerged victorious, sending her friend out of the ring . The battles smoothly continued until it was Jace's turn, whose opponent is the calm Shu Ru .

Surprisingly, Shu Ru lost to Jace, who drank his consumable, which tripled his Strength . Although she was quite powerful, the girl was no match for the monstrous strength of a body cultivator .

The fifth battle was between Arthur and Angelina, who glared at him . She didn't say anything and jumped at him the moment the battle started, however, it's quite a shame that Arthur backed away, leaving the ring and immediately ending the match .

He lost but he didn't care, their goal has been achieved and they need to leave . Lucy did the same and gave up on her match, which shortened the length of this small tournament .

From beginning to end, the fourth level lasted for forty-two minutes, the four winners were teleported to the usual room . As for Arthur, Lucy, and the six others, they found themselves in the platform in front of the garden's gates .

Despite being discovered, the couple changed to their fake appearances and immediately left that area .

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A distance away from the platform, the old butler smiled as his eyes landed on Lucy's figure . He immediately recognized from her specter smell, which was carefully hidden only to start emanating when the fairy canceled their altered appearances .

"Madam, I've finally found her . I'll safely deliver her to you . "

Just as he was about to chase after the couple, he was stopped by a middle-aged man with long black hair and a small beard .

The scarred old man frowned as he gazed at the person barring his way .

"Why are you in such a hurry, old man . "

Wrath snickered as he saw the ugly expression hanging on the butler's face . The old man didn't waste words and tried to force his way through only to be pushed back a dozen meters . Although he was an Overgod, he was still overwhelmed by one of the seven deadly sins .

"Oi oi did you really think I'll let you pass?"

Wrath crossed his arms and shook his head . The butler, angry and impatient, said

"Does his Highness really want to go against the White Specter Clan?"

The man shrugged his shoulders, unfazed .

"I'm only following orders . Plus, the stakes are high this time... so are the dangers . "

Chapter 413

It has been three months since the Joker started training Saly . The little girl still hasn't seen the light of day, every day struggling to land a blow on the eccentric man .

She got used to his mocking and berating but the pain was still as intense as the first day . Even before coming here, she was a good fighter but that was nothing compared to how she was now . She improved by leaps and bounds, she was still at the Spirit Realm but her strength was out of the ordinary .

Her beautiful white fur became erect as she leapt at the Joker, she spun in performed an axe kick, hitting the Joker, who crossed his arms to block . He tried to grab her feet but missed by hair's breadth .

She twisted her body and kicked him in his abdomen, successfully landing the attack .

Unfortunately, she didn't injure him as he remained unscathed and unperturbed . He nonchalantly retreated two steps before his figure turned illusory only for her to be sent flying back without managing to see or hear the attack .

Her senses were still sealed yet she managed to precisely locate him and hit her target, an amazing feat that very few can achieve .

The Magician clapped his hands while grinning then waved his hand, removing the blindfold and giving Saly all her senses back .

Startled, Saly looked around her, relieved to get her sight back . She focused on the Joker, who signaled her to sit down before taking out a card from his deck then crushing it .

A grand feast appeared before the hungry girl, who devoured it all in a few minutes . The man watched from the side and only talked when she's done

"Now, let's try to incorporate your skills to your fighting . This is the most important lesson . "

As she was given the green sign, Saly, finally started using all kinds of skills but to her surprise, found it much harder to fight him when she relies on her skills .

"You see, skills and techniques are not important . One shouldn't use them unless the situation calls for it . Take Leiu, for example, I haven't seen him use any skills for a long, long time . One sword swing is more than enough to finish his enemies, that's what I call perfection . "

Saly silently listened to him without talking back . She refrained from asking questions for they won't be answered unless she finishes the training, or so said the Joker .

"W-what about you? I always see you use your strange cards . "

In the end, she couldn't herself back and questioned him . In response, the Joker burst out in laughter . He appeared in front of her and retrieved his deck of cards, playing with it whilst saying

"These cards represent my very being . I only use them when I'm serious . However, I went through a lot to break my limiter and reach the apex of physical strength . I even dare say that my body is the strongest in all of the multiverse . "

If the Nameless Knight is the ultimate offense then the Joker is, without a doubt, the ultimate and unbreakable defense . His body is resistant to almost all kinds of Physiques and Magic . Very few things can injure him .

The long adventure of Lissandra continued . The caves weren't dangerous, just a few low-leveled monsters, however, the complexity of this labyrinth is mind-numbing .

She has been here for the past three months, checking for walls that have old paintings on them . She had enough rations to live, the only problem was the cold air and the encroaching darkness .

At some point, the woman arrived inside what seemed to be a room . She moved the torch around, inspecting every little detail only to witness flat walls which depicted several scenes, just like last time .

The first was a sea of bones, more than one could count . A blue-haired woman was walking on this sea . The next picture was of a dragon, a massive bone dragon that was sleeping, the same woman from before was standing before this beast .

Lissandra cautiously walked to several creaking tables and checked the dusty books and documents . Amongst them, she noticed a white book, it looked strange amidst all the others . The frail woman picked it up and started flipping the pages and checking its contents .

She sucked in a deep and cold breathe of air as she saw the pictures and descriptions written on the book .

"Cthulhu Race?"

The Cthulhu race, also known as the Evil race . Arthur faced them once when he went to Bucama's world and was almost killed there . A malevolent and savage race that is the enemy of everyone .

Anyone who spots them will either call for reinforcements from powerful factions or kill them if they're strong enough . They're monsters that shouldn't belong in this multiverse, their existence is denied by both angels, and demons .

The language used in the book wasn't foreign to Lissandra, who studied many things throughout the years . It was the common language of the Buria Empire, a once prosperous and powerful empire that, at some point in history, dominated a third of the Cloud Sea Universe .

"Vyncent?"

She read the name of the author but still had no idea who he was . The other books also mentioned things that she never heard about before .

"Hour of creation... High Rules... The Eighteen Regions?"

The moment they left the snowy area, Arthur possessed the White Tiger and transformed into a bolt of lightning, grabbing Lucy and leaving that area . In fact, even if the old man tried to chase them, he might have been unable to catch up to them .

His agility is above 40B after activating [Transmutation] . Even when he passed by several cultivators, they only felt a small breeze . Arthur maintained that speed for six hours before stopping .

After they made sure no one followed them, the couple dived underground . The two only returned to the surface three days later .

Arthur was nowhere to be seen, as for Lucy, she transformed into a middle-aged man with a thick black beard . The bracelet was a bit altered so it could work Lucy .

She would travel alone and Arthur would remain inside of her, dormant and merely watching the unfolding events from her point of view .

If they traveled together, it would be too suspicious so they ended up doing this . It is unknown what Angelina would do when she's out of the garden and the couple didn't plan on waiting for her .

Their next destination is South, in a volcanic mountain . The second soul-protecting treasure is called the Raging Soul Bead .

Once she gets her hands on that, she'll be able to merge the two beads and create a strong artifact that can protect her from any soul-attack .

With a moderate traveling speed, Lucy made her way toward the base of this triangular-shaped realm . She met a few God and Sovereign Beasts but they were quickly disposed of .

The trip lasted six days before a sky-piercing red mountain entered her view . The heat it was emanating was suffocating and dangerous to unprepared cultivators .

Fortunately, her Fire Resistance is high and her physical body is strong enough to resist the heat . Thick steam lingered at the peak of the mountain, caused by the raging volcano inside .

Losha didn't specify where the bead was, however, it should be deep inside . Unlike the snowy area under the Paradise Garden, there were no signs of people lingering around the colossal mountain .

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It hasn't been a minute since she started climbing the mountain yet three Sovereigns Beasts blocked her way, hissing at her with murderous eyes .

Lucy, who had the appearance of the middle-aged man, took out Twilight's vow, her soft white saber, which was strengthened by Losha, and started fighting the enemies .

The three beasts were frozen and cut by the saber, their boiling hot bodies cooled down as ice-covered their limbs then froze them from head to toe .

She swiftly stored the bodies before heading upwards . As one would expect from such a dangerous place, there was an over-abundance of strong beasts, which weren't that difficult to deal with as Lucy wasn't weakened like everyone else .

Three hours later, Lucy appeared at the peak of the mountain, where the heat became much more intense . Her presence was greatly reduced with Arthur's help . She hid in a separate dimension while gazing at a group of people standing around the edges of the peak while peeking at the volcano down below .

This group wore either golden armors or white robes and was led by the Deacon . Not everyone was present, for example, Delia and a few others were nowhere to be seen, however, the main force of the group was here .

'They're all weakened, it's our chance . '-Lucy

'Indeed, it's like a pie in the sky . '-Arthur

There was no one present to witness what's going to happen so it's the best time to get rid of these annoying insects . They were here for Arthur so it's only normal for him to retaliate .

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"What's the situation?"

"There's a fire Spirit guarding it . We can't advance . "

A young man clad in golden armor politely replied to the deacon, who unhappily snorted and gazed at the volcano . If they go back empty-handed, all their previous would have gone to waste .

Moreover, their main target seemed to have vanished into thin air, unless he purposely exposes himself, there's no way they can find him .

The reason they treaded this perilous land and climbed this mountain is getting their hand on the bead and the dragon blood . Not many knew that this was but a normal mountain which drastically changed when a drop of blood of an adult Empyrian Fire dragon fell there .

The bead isn't as important as the drop of blood, which has countless benefits . It would allow anyone to obtain a small number of the dragon's powers and enhance the potency fire techniques . It's something sought by many people, especially those hailing from sects that rely on the Fire Attribute .

The problem was the Fire Spirit that was born from this rough environment, which is a perfect place for it to grow stronger the longer it lived here .

The Deacon included, there were twelve people, eight of which are God Monarchs and the rest are at the peak Sovereign . Their cultivation is weakened but they can still use powerful techniques .

With one hand on her temple, deeply pondering about her available choices, the woman(deacon)assessed her current situation and sent a few of her subordinates to scout the area and ascertain that they're indeed alone .

If they're going to fight the Fire Spirit, they must be united and wholly focused on the enemy, there must be no disturbance whatsoever .

The Deacon spent thirty whole minutes talking about their plan and repeatedly warning them to be careful . Unfortunately, no one noticed the invisible figure hearing them some distance away .

Lucy, who was ready to engage at any given moment, stared at the group of Holy Knights, who jumped below and took a favorable spot where there's a considerable mass of land, which is safer as the volcano can't reach it .

The drop of blood is supposed to be deep inside the volcano, as for the bead, it was growing on top of a blood-red grass, which sprouted from within the lava .

The Fire Spirit didn't show itself as they haven't tried anything yet . All of them were sweating profusely from the heat, even breathing became slightly difficult due to the suffocating Fire Energy lingering in the area .

'You don't have to act, I'll finish them quietly . '-Arthur

Arthur stopped Lucy, who was about to jump at them and slaughter them all . It was better to wait until they are a bit distracted albeit the little difference it would make .

They are way weaker than the couple and they can't be considered a threat . The Fire Spirit, however, is another thing .

Arthur planned to get rid of them when they started fighting and 'save' the Fire Spirit . The Deacon severely underestimated the Spirit, which was paying close attention to the Holy Knights .

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Once the white-robed woman gave the signal, one of her Holy Knights jumped on the lava and closed in on the bead, planning to snatch it . The man only took three steps before a huge entity appeared from within the magma, causing it to splash to all corners .

The man already expected it, he raised his shield to block the boiling hot lava before jumping back, landing near his comrades .

The Fire Spirit was literally made of fire, its two eyes were shining with blood-red as it glared at the invaders . It didn't bother talking and immediately started retaliating .

The 'safe' land they were standing on was covered with lava then bombarded with a raging wave of hot flames .

Just when it thought it had gotten rid of the annoying pests, a blinding white light vaporized the lava and pushed the flames away .

The light purified everything in its way, causing the fire spirit to retreat two steps . It raised its enormous hand and punched the tiny human, which formed a circular formation and raised their shield .

The eight shields expanded in size then formed a bigger golden shield which blocked the incoming flaming fist . The deacon waved her staff and cast a white blast which hit the Fire Spirit and caused a huge chunk of its body to disappear .

Although a powerful attack, it was useless as the Fire Spirit recovered in a few seconds . This place was its home and the amount of Fire Energy present was enough for it to heal itself more than a hundred times .

The Fire Spirit was about to attack again only for a big black cube to appear out of nowhere . The people from the Holy Dominion were even more confused .

Their world became that of darkness, not being able to see a thing . This, however, was but the beginning of a long, and painful nightmare .

The air soon became toxic, thick chains sprung from the ground and bound them bodies, breaking some of their bones and rendering unable to even lift a finger .

"USE YOUR HOLY HEARTS!"

The deacon hysterically shouted once she saw what's happening . Without a doubt, it was Dark Magic . Only a malevolent and ominous magic like that could do this .

Although her reaction was fast, her words reached them a bit too late as a weird liquid fell on them, melting their limbs and faces .

The lethal acid showed no mercy as it melted their shield, weapons, and even went through their condensed Light Energy . Only the deacon and another woman were lucky enough to spit a golden light which caused the thick chains to crumble .

They retreated to the back, barely avoiding the falling acid only for the deacon's last subordinate to stop coughing blood .

The highly toxic air quickly started showing its effects . Moreover, Dark Magic consumes its target, and such a process is faster when the targets are Light Magic users .

The Deacon cast a powerful healing spell to help the suffering woman but it was futile as wrinkles appeared on her face and her skin became paler .

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Arthur stood next to Lucy and watched the dying knights with a smirk on his face . He was pretty satisfied with his arsenal of skills . He's able to effortlessly kill them without having to personally show himself . Maybe the acid was a bit of an overkill but it was necessary to make their deaths painful and miserable .

'Fanatic believers, dogs that serve a non-existent God . '

Claud commented as he witnessed the occurring events with an emotionless face . Very soon, things quietened inside the black cube only for it to suddenly split in two as a golden light flew from the inside, destroying the roof and disappearing into the sky .

Arthur clearly saw a bloodied woman who enveloped by that light . Whatever she used, it couldn't be used multiple times . It seemed to be an ultimate escaping technique . Even if he uses the White Tiger, he won't be able to catch up to her, however, that didn't mean he'll let this matter go .

She's still in the Secret Realm and can't escape, sooner or later, she'll meet up with the rest of her group and that will be the perfect opportunity for him to get rid of all of them together .

Delia was together with them but her fate is unknown, it all depends on how she'll act .

The black cube soon vanished, Arthur and Lucy walked closer to the silent Fire Spirit, which stared back at them but wasn't as hostile as before .

"Master, I think this is a golden chance!"

The Tri-Spirit excitedly talked to Arthur and asked for permission to speak with the Fire Spirit .

Soon, a square composed of three differently-shaped triangles appeared in front of Arthur . The Fire Spirit immediately recognized the Spirit and was flabbergasted .

Its body contracted until it was three meters in height . It leaned its head closer to the Tri-Spirit and made some weird sounds .

"It is the first time I see Spirit with three attributes . "

The square bounced up and down while replying

"Pleasure to meet you . "

"It is nice to see another kin in this barren land . "

The Fire Spirit's tone became softer, the heat suffocating the environment greatly decreased too .

After they exchanged a short greeting, there was an awkward silence which was quickly broken by the Tri-Spirit .

"I'll cut through the chase and say what's on my mind . "

The Fire Spirit nodded its head

"I am listening . "

"I want to merge with you . "

Speechless, the Fire Spirit could only remain silent, unable to understand or believe what it just heard .

"Let me clearly explain my words . As you may have noticed, I am a special Spirit thus I have abilities others don't, such as merging with other Spirits to strengthen myself . "

The Fire Spirit snickered and retorted

"Isn't it more like absorption then?"

The Tri-Spirit spun in a circle while responding

"No, merging with me is becoming part of us, just like what I did previously . Believe it or not, I was once an Earth Spirit . I'm the controlling it right now because the other is still young and innocent . "

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"I refuse . "

The Fire Spirit flatly rejected the Tri-Spirit's offer, clearly unwilling to merge with another kin . it was surprising to see a Spirit with three attributes, however, that doesn't mean it wants to abandon itself and leave this place .

"Now now, don't be so hasty . I'm sure the benefits outweigh the cons, listen to what I have to say first . "

Arthur and Lucy retreated to the back as to give some 'privacy' to the two spirits . His Tri-Spirit assured him that it'll greatly help him and told him to wait for some time .

They already got the consent of the Fire Spirit so they went to retrieve the Raging Soul bead, which isn't that important since it can grow up again .

They won't take the whole flower but just the bead, which is more than enough for them . This was the perfect place for Lucy to try and merge the two beads . It was a dangerous place devoid of people, no one would dare to climb the mountain if they're not strong enough thus the couple decided to remain here for a few days until Lucy successfully completes the fusion .

The two sat at the top of the mountain, Arthur meditating and Lucy sitting cross-legged holding the two beads, each in one hand .

Strange-colored flames enveloped the two beads, slowly harmonizing with the energy inside of them . The process was difficult, to say the least, as beads of sweat trickled down her forehead as she tried her best to slowly achieve the impossible .

The mysterious flames which are composed of both Fire and Ice, would rotate between white and blue, slowly condensing around the beads, melting them .

Fortunately, Lucy had an incredibly large Mana pool so she wasn't afraid of consuming it all any time soon . After a few hours, Arthur finished his meditation and gazed at his wife, who was still meticulously forging the soul-protecting items .

Losha bestowed her a common technique which facilitated the fusion by a lot . Although it looked easy from the outside, to fuse two opposite attributes is impossible, more so if they're inside powerful items .

Arthur circled around her then started drawing on the ground, soon creating a supportive formation . Its only function was to smoothen the control of Mana and enhance its recovery .

Then, he used [Mana Transmission], [Mana augmentation], and [Magic Enhancement] to boost the quality of Lucy's Mana .

A short time later, an excited floating square hopped toward him while saying

"Master! It's done!"

"Good . What should I do?"

"Wait, not only will we fuse with it but you'll also be able to get the dragon's blood but only for one condition . "

"Condition?"

"It's nothing too dangerous . You'll have to take the mountain with you . "

Arthur's could've sworn he misheard the Tri-Spirit . He furrowed his brows and tilted his head in confusion, not understanding the meaning of the spirit's words .

"This mountain is like a home to the Fire Spirit, a sacred place . It agreed to merge with us if we take the mountain with us . "

"Take the mountain? How is that even possible . "

"I believe that the strange cube in your consciousness can do that . "

There are some treasures that have a separate dimension that can store worlds inside of them . Zodiac's storage is one of them, however, Arthur doesn't know how to do that .

The ARK, being controlled by Claud, is more than enough to store the huge mountain in that endless white space .

'Ugh... is that even necessary?'

The Prophecy Holder didn't object but he seemed unwilling and unhappy with the condition . Before Arthur could ask him, he started talking on his own .

'Well, since it'll be beneficial to you, there's nothing I can do about it... I'll take the damned mountain . Tch! Such a waste of space . '

Arthur was guided inside deep into the lava, exactly next to a drop of blood which shone brightly in that dark environment .

The Tri-Spirit and Fire Spirit faced each other, before the former starting emitting an unstoppable suction power, slowly absorbing the non-resistant spirit .

'Never did I think I would see a Spirit with four attributes . I guess this is a huge gain for you . '-Claud

Arthur patiently waited as the Fire Spirit slowly became integrated with his Tri-Spirit . The three triangles, which merely made up one attribute each, separated themselves as a new red-colored triangle appeared .

A long amount of time passed before the four triangles joined together, forming another complete square, the new form of the Quad-Spirit, formally named Beelzebub by Arthur .

Although his stats didn't increase, his cultivation leaped from Little Sovereign to the peak of High Sovereign . It was still locked due to the restrictions of the Secret Realm, however, he could see the changes through his Status Window .

Fire-oriented skills will do 20% more damage to all enemies .

The user 'Arthur MoonStar' will receive 30% less damage from the Dragon Breath of Empyrian Dragons .

The user 'Arthur MoonStar' will receive 20% less damage from the Dragon Breath of Geo Dragons .

The user 'Arthur MoonStar' will receive 10% less damage from the Dragon Breath of Black Dragons .

+100 Creation .

It is now possible to create Red Spirit Stones with [Lost Magic] .

Cooldown: none

Cost: 1 Mental Power or 1m Mana or 500,000 Nether Energy .

The user 'Arthur MoonStar' can create several new things with [Lost Magic]

LIST: Very small Atomic bomb - Advanced Combat Lasers - ...

The new additions were much welcomed by Arthur, who read everything then stretched his hand, creating the Atomic Bomb . It was barely the size of his fist, however, its might isn't to be underestimated . Although Sovereigns and God Monarchs use Nether Energy to shield themselves, an Atomic Bomb can still cause considerable damage .

An atomic bomb gets its energy from fission - or the splitting of an atom . It doesn't use any Mana or Nether Energy and it can kill an unprepared Sovereign .

For example, a Wind Rinotsu can cause the same damage as this small Atomic Bomb . A Wind Rizaki can cause ten times the damage . To be precise, a Fire Rizaki cause three times the destruction of an Atomic Bomb .

But... what if an Atomic Bomb is infused with Energy? Arthur quickly got his answer as the small bomb crumbled into dust .

'Science and Magic are not compatible . To use them together is nothing but wishful thinking . Although Magic is an easier way to reach the apex, Science is definitely superior . In the System universe, there are airships that can obliterate stars and slaughter Overgods then again, they are pretty sparse and difficult to create . '

When all was done, much of the lava that boiled inside of the mountain vanished, leaving only the unbearable heat . With anticipation, Arthur gazed at the drop of blood before him .

To absorb the drop of blood is easier said than done, fortunately, he can turn [Pain Immunity] so he doesn't have to go through the agony .

'A dragon's blood is precious . Not only does it remodel the body, it greatly enhances the consumer's cultivation and the attribute related to the dragon . In your case, your body is already beyond powerful so it will not be remodeled, however, the increase of fire affinity will drastically the damage done by any fire-oriented skill . The Vermilion Bird's skills will be able to totally annihilate any God Monarch, even Half-Over Gods will suffer . '

'Do you think I can face an Overgod right now?'

Claud burst out in laughter when he heard that .

'Do you think Overgods are that simple? They can destroy whole planets and pulverize stars . I dare say you can survive one or two blows from them but to defeat them is impossible, for now, at least . There are also 8-star or above God Monarchs, they can demonstrate a power that transcends their realm . The world is filled with many wonders, Overgods are not the only powerful beings in the multiverse . Each Universe has a different system to gauge a person's strength . In the System, it's by level . For example, a person who reaches Lv10,000 can face an Overgod . While the first thousand levels are easy, it becomes much, much harder to level up after that . Reaching Lv10,000 is harder than becoming an Overgod . '

'What about the Heaven and Hell Universe? How do they gauge someone's power?'

'Well... it's their method is strange and unorthodox, plus, not many people go there due to the conflict between angels and demons . '

After readying himself, Arthur stretched his hand and grabbed the blood droplet, pulling it towards him with all his strength . At first, it strongly resisted him but quickly succumbed once he used the ancient flames .

To consume the dragon's blood, he just has to swallow it, literally, which proved to be a more difficult task than he had imagined .

He could feel a scorching heat go down his throat only for it to disappear when the pain immunity was activated . He could, however, still feel uncomfortable as his body started shaking .

The ominous dark aura around his Dantian reacted to the incoming blood and enveloped it, forcefully dragging it to the center, where a malevolent black energy started to consume it, slowly weakening it and merging it with Arthur's body .

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West of Green-Leaf, precisely in the wasteland, a royal airship just appeared above Kang Amidel's city . Its golden radiance and majestic aura attracted a lot of attention . Everyone knew that someone from the Royal family came here, as for what reason, nobody could guess .

Amidel personally welcomed the visitor, a friendly smile plastered on his face . He politely bowed to Isadore before guiding him to his castle .

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Your Highness . "

"Oh stop with the polite talk, I feel like vomiting each time I hear you . "

Isadore waved his hand in annoyance while sitting opposite to Amidel . They can be considered acquaintances and their relationship aren't harmonious but they can't be considered enemies either .

Hearing the prince talk like that, Amidel laughed but didn't say anything . After fully enjoying and savoring the hot tea he was served, Isadore looked at this unusually calm man, who still hasn't asked him for the reason of his visit, and said

"I came here to ask a favor from you . "

Amidel glanced at the nonchalant Dan, who was dozing off in the corner, then said

"If it's for your Highness, I'm prepared to do anything . "

'This two-faced prick! Each and every one of them is a damned sly fox . '

The Crown Prince inwardly cursed Kang Amidel, who was genuinely didn't know why Isadore came all the way here . There are not many things Isadore can't do on his own so this left him curious about this favor .

"Please spare me your nonsense . I want to know a few things about Arthur MoonStar . "

The moment Arthur's name was uttered, Amidel frowned and his countenance changed . His gaze narrowed as he stared back at the unfazed Isadore .

"I wonder where your Highness heard of that name . "

"Just like you have your birds, I have mine . "

The blond young man unconsciously tapped his finger on the table while talking:

"I am interested in him and wish to cooperate with you . What I mean with 'you' is your Kang Clan, which is desperately trying to conceal everything about that man . "

After what seemed to be an eternity, Kang Amidel let out a long sigh before replying

"I am afraid I can't divulge anything regarding him . I'm in no position to take unnecessary risks, if you know what I mean . "

"Oh come on! We already know the Kang Clan is in a tight spo-"

Dan angrily butted in only to be stopped by Isadore, who raised his hand, signaling the straw-hat wearing dude to shut up and back away .

The prince's lips curved upwards as he continued:

"He's a dangerous dark horse . Moreover, his wife is no less deadly than him, I wonder why the Kang Clan chose to bet on him... are you guys that desperate? Or do you know something we don't?"

Amidel's eyes flashed with a cold glint before it quickly disappeared . He stood up and said

"I believe we're done here . "

Without waiting for the Crown Prince, he turned around and left .

"I'm going to stay here and sightsee for a few days . Do let me know if you change your mind . "

"Truth can be elusive and fickle as the shifting sands yet you must know it regardless of the consequences . "

Saly, who was incredibly happy since the fighting has finally ended, was sitting on a desk and listening to the Joker, who was holding a long and thick stick .

He was actually giving her some lessons while she carefully listened . After talking for three to four hours, he would ask her questions and if she fails to answer, her hands will suffer a harsh punishment by the stick, which was normal in every way yet it caused a stinging pain that dug deep into her bones .

"Now tell me, what are the types of dragons . "

Like a good and hard-working student, she stood up and began talking

"Yes, teacher . There are four types of dragons, Geo Dragons, Empyrian Dragons, Black Dragons, and Hybrid Dragons . "

"Good, then what are the Hybrid Dragons . "

Saly took a second to collect her thoughts only to hear the harsh and rebuking voice of the teacher enter her ears

"Really now? Your answer is nothing but silence? And here I thought you were listening to me . Raise your hands!"

Startled, Saly hesitantly retorted

"B-but teacher, I was just about to answer you..."

"Nonsense! I said raise your damned hands!"

The little girl was unwilling to raise her hands but when she saw his chilling glare, she was left with no choice but to comply .

She got hit a total of six times, three for each hand . Her petite hands became a mess of bloody and messy flesh with some exposed bones .

"Two seconds to think about your answer? My fart is faster than you! A thousand push-ups... no powers!"

"T-thousand?"

Discontent with the punishment, Saly pitifully stared at him with puppy eyes .

"Three thousand push-ups . You've got twenty minutes . "

The Joker angrily left the room, slamming the door behind him .

...

"Rough times huh..."

Leiu started gloating as he saw the irritated look of the Joker, who was throwing his cards at the wall, trying to vent his accumulated frustration .

"She's as dumb as one can get! I have to repeat everything so she can understand me! All her talent went into fighting, everything else is just awful!"

"Every time you take a student you always say that . "

The young man chuckled as he leaned on the chair and closed his eyes .

"If it's so tiring, why are you still here, teaching her?"

The Joker's hand, which was about to throw another card, halted for a split second . After a moment of silence, he said

"This and that are different . Once I take a student, I teach them till the end! Fuck! Do you want my reputation to crumble?!"

The knight lazily opened his eyes and glanced at the annoyed man before adding:

"I see that you want to blow off some steam... fancy a spar?"

Just as he said that, you could hear the Joker gulping some saliva while shaking his head

"Fuck no! You're a merciless bastard, you know! You've beaten me black and blue countless times and I don't want to experience that EVER AGAIN . "

He hastily got up and left the room as if he was pardoned .

It took Arthur a whole day to completely absorb the dragon's blood . Some would seclude themselves for months to absorb it but it wasn't the case for him as his tenacious body was strong enough to handle the burst of thick Fire Energy that circulated through his Meridians .

His stats rose by 500m, a decent increase but negligible compared to the other benefits . He obtained a skill called [Empyrian Wings], which, as the name suggests, spawns a pair of wings that boosts his Agility . It was yet another skill that increases his speed and increases his stats by 5% .

Furthermore, he gained another cheat skill called [Dragon Words] .

[Dragon Words][Active][Lv50]: Use the ancient dragon language to force your foes into submission .

Cooldown: Three months .

Cost: 10,000 Mental Power .

The cooldown cannot be negated by [Blood for Blood] .

The sheer length of the cooldown seemed exaggerated to Arthur, who was harshly berated by Claud .

'Dragon Words are commonly used when two dragons fight together . They are similar to Pride's power but affect the will of the person and not the soul . It weakens it and makes them temporarily obedient . This skill can be used as a trump card and a very last resort, don't abuse it . '

Feeling refreshed and reborn, Arthur exited the underground area and headed to where Lucy was . Coincidentally, his wife was at the final stages of her fusion .

The two beads disappeared and a new one appeared, white-colored and emitting a thick, almost suffocating amount of Pure Mana .

Lucy's face was a bit pale, clearly showing how mentally exhausted she was . She was but a step away from completion, she remained focused and poured everything in her power to successfully forge this item .

The scorching hot ground of the mountain became half-red half-blue, affected by Lucy's Ice and Fire Magic . There was a circle of white flames around her, making it difficult for Arthur to approach her .

The Fire Spirit integrated with his Tri-Spirit, becoming a Quad-Spirit . He absorbed the dragon blood and reaped generous rewards . This unexpected trip to this Secret Realm was fruitful, to say the least . However, there is still danger looming on the horizon, waiting for an opportunity to strike .

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Just when Lucy was reaching the final stage of the fusion, dark and ominous clouds clustered above the sky-high mountain . Arthur was able to recognize them with one glance, they're the same clouds which appeared in Astria when he was fighting the Divine Beasts .

Thunderclaps resounded in the area, scaring the nearby beasts and causing a frown to appear on Arthur's face .

'The heavens are not happy?'

'What do you think? Of course they're not . However, this can barely be called a minor Celestial Tribulation . It should be a piece of cake to overcome it . '

While Lucy was busy finishing her business, Arthur stood a distance away from her and spread his two wings, one white and the other black . He raised his head, gazing at the thin red lightning that covered the sky like an intersecting spider net .

This level of tribulation can only hurt Sovereigns, at most, furthermore, it shouldn't attract too much attention, or so thought Arthur, who wasn't able to sense the invisible figure staring at him and his wife from a safe distance .

The young man, wearing a grey robe and smirking evilly was the Black Rose executive, Artid . The commotion caused by the awakened Fire Spirit attracted his attention .

He traveled two-thirds of this secret Realm, searching for any signs of Arthur . He still hasn't gone to the Paradise Garden so he didn't know the small ruckus that occurred there .

By no means did he harbor any malicious intentions toward the couple, he was genuinely interested in this enigma, who's the target of many powerful factions . Krauk was never a person to exaggerate so, since he was already in Green-Leaf, he decided to meet with this candidate and personally hear his answer .

When he saw the fleeing Deacon, who was bloodied, Artid was sure that Arthur was inside the mountain so he patiently observed the changes without revealing himself . In terms of cultivation, he was the second weakest out of all the seats, however, the 'Unbeatable' titles wasn't there just for show .

'Celestial Tribulation? Ah Krauk, you really do have an eye for people . '

His pair of eyes locked onto Lucy, inspecting her from head to toe before nodding his head and mumbling

'It just so happens that the White Seat is going to be empty pretty soon but... she's a White Specter hm... whatever, it matters not . '

The sounds of the rumbling thunder became ear-deafening, scattering every being that was courageous enough to try and resist Heaven's will .

The first series of thunderbolts descended on Lucy, who didn't pay them any attention . A black silhouette jumped in the air, grabbing the thickest bolt and crushing it with his fist, which was enveloped by an everlasting darkness .

There were more bolts than he could handle, nevertheless, none of them managed to hit Lucy, who was protected by an awfully powerful defensive formation .

The barrier of the Brave is an ancient formation that was used by the ancestors of the Mirage Era Hall Sect . Being a Gold Formations Master, Arthur was able to create since the materials needed happened to be present in Zodiac's storage .

The only reason he jumped and clashed with the previous bolt is to see if his Physical is strong enough to resist Heaven's lightning .

He barely felt anything from that which means that even without formations, it'll still be easy to defend Lucy . He landed next to Lucy and waved his hand in a mysterious pattern, either placing some crystals around them .

His hand moved fast as they scribed on the scorched ground, causing the drawn symbols to shine with a peculiar green light .

Coupled with the Barrier of the Brave, Arthur set up a self-sustaining formation that counter-attacks any outside forces . Purge was a Peak Gold Formations that can kill any God Monarch trapped inside of it . Its powers are limited for those who're outside of it but it shouldn't be underestimated .

As a final precaution, a sturdy half-illusory dark barrier that looked like a sphere enveloped the couple . One wave of lightning bolts after another kept hitting the first formation but was unable to scratch it, much less shatter it .

In retaliation, the 'purge' formation with unleash a destructive blast toward the sky, causing more bolts of lightning to clash with it, wasting more time for the tribulation, which can't remain here for too long .

This continued for ten minutes, more or less, before the tribulation prepared its last attack . The dark clouds dispersed, making way for a lengthy lightning arrow made of purple and red lightning .

Arthur remained unfazed, he just smirked and closed his eyes, entering meditation . Artid, who was also witnessing this, was actually speechless .

The information he had about Arthur was incomplete, just the formations he just used elevated his status in the executive's eyes .

'He can transform into the Divine Beast, the White Tiger . Can use Dark Magic, Gold Formations, lethal poisons, and his speed is unequaled . If this is not the perfect candidate then I don't know who is . Then again, is he a Druid or a shapeshifter? He can't possibly be human . '

Like a heavenly punishment, the lightning arrow, with incredible speed, struck the Barrier of the Brave, causing countless cracks . After three seconds, the formation shattered but a powerful blast from 'Purge' managed to cause half of the arrow to disappear, weakening it by more than half .

The arrow kept getting closer to Lucy only to clash with the Dark Barrier, which was strengthened by jet black talismans . Unlike the formation, the barrier remained unscathed as Dark Magic crept toward it, slowly consuming it .

Within five seconds, the arrow turned jet black before it became smaller size, quickly disappearing into a small black whirlpool, which, in its turn, also vanished .

Having exhausted all its power, the tribulations turned into nothingness and the dark clouds returned normal, making the sky clear again .

Just when the tribulation ended, Lucy completed her soul-protecting item at last . A blinding radiance enveloped the silver-haired woman, who bathed in this gentle light, which circled around her before condensing into a multi-colored bead that entered her chest, resting in her consciousness .

'A Mysterious-ranked treasure, it's been a long time since I saw one . '

Unexpectedly, the one who just talked was Curtis, who usually remains silent, guarding Arthur's soul and being a dutiful guardian .

Her ever-so-slightly floating silver-hair finally went back to normal once the blinding radiance disappeared . With a peaceful and pleased expression, Lucy got up and gave a deep hug to Arthur, who smiled back at her .

This moment of happiness was, unfortunately, cut short as a young in a grey robe appeared on the peak of the mountain .

He didn't look hostile or emit any killing intent, nonetheless, Arthur remained cautious despite knowing the other party's real identity .

"Came to hear my answer?"

Artid was a bit startled before he resumed his friendly smile . He leisurely walked to the couple while saying

"I didn't expect you to know who I am . This makes it easier for me . "

He performed a short bow while formally introducing himself

"I am Artid, an Executive of Black Rose and one of the nine seats, the Green Seat of Justice . "

Arthur nodded his head while Lucy remained indifferent . Artid didn't mind their attitudes, he spread his hands while stating

"Honestly, I'm impressed by your powers, both of you and, again, I humbly invite you to join our organization . Currently, one of the nine seats is vacant and I believe you're the perfect candidate . Moreover, soon enough, another seat will be emptied, which, I believe, is a seat reserved for Madam

Lucy, what do you two think?"

He studied their expressions while adding:

"Please do not worry, as long as you're of the nine seats, there's no one who can order you around . Major decisions are decided by a majority vote so it's fair . You shan't be mistreated and the benefits will surely satisfy you . We have very accurate information about the White Specter Clan, the Holy Dominion, or any other power which interests you . "

Arthur crossed his arms and retorted:

"I can't help but feel curious about your persistence . I'm sure there are countless other candidates who are more suitable than me . "

Artid, still smiling, shook his head while giving a truthful reply

"That's where you're wrong . The members of the Nine Seats rarely change if not never . To find a suitable candidate, we have to look everywhere and barely found someone eligible for the position . We want someone who's not affiliated with strong powers, someone independent and strong enough to stand above his peers . In my honest opinion, I think you're the perfect choice . We can shield you from your numerous enemies and as long as you have the money, anyone can be killed, anyone!"

Chapter 418

In a complex web of caves underneath the Itas Continent, East of Astria, Lissandra was holding her mouths with both of her hands while trying her best to not make any sound . As she was engrossed in reading the ancient books laying in that old room, a strange orange portal appeared at the center, freaking her out .

Previously, she accidentally discovered an extremely small room that could only be accessed using a mechanism on the wall, where the paintings were .

As she peeked through the small cracks of the room, she witnessed monstrosities enter the room, one by one . They had four, six, or even eight arms, jet black skin and an appearance that would make anyone horrified . They were of the Cthulhu Race, as for why they appeared here and now, the mortal woman didn't know .

Lissandra was never a believer yet she continuously prayed not to be discovered, she was but a frail woman who can do nothing against such evil creatures . Were she to be discovered, her fate will be worse than death .

'What are they doing here?'

She silently watched numerous monsters appear from within the portal, dragging blue-colored crystals that had varied sizes .

'Those are... Mana Crystals? What do they need them for?'

Such crystals were common and practically useless in Medium or High-Realms, they only serve as a means to recover Mana, a type of energy which is rarely used as it's inferior to Nether Energy .

The monsters conversed with a language unknown to her hence she was unable to know the reason of their arrival at this ungodly hour .

The fallen God remained in that cramped room, barely breathing due to the lack of air and the fear surging inside of her . Only after a whole day passed did she relax but was still trapped in there, drinking water and eating food while hearing the unpleasant laughter of the Cthulhu .

Several days later, the Itas Continent was thrown into total chaos . The Elven Village, the most populated place in this gigantic forest was invaded by evil creatures, which slaughtered and tortured everyone .

Very few managed to survive by escaping amidst that bloody battlefield . The ground was dyed red and the pitiful cries of the elves or humans could be heard from miles away .

In the end, the World Tree had to personally act, using its magic and body to kill those evil creatures . This, however, came at a great cost as these monsters, despite their weakness, managed to summon an evil god using the very same blue crystals they dragged from the portal .

This Evil God had was 40 meters in height, three pairs of eyes and three red horns on its forehead . Everything about it was grotesque and ugly, whether it's its row of pointy teeth or its crooked nose . Its wielded some kind of lantern which started an inextinguishable fire in this forest, killing its subordinates and the fleeing elves .

Although the evil god wasn't the World Tree's match, it still managed to cause considerable damage before it was killed . More accurately, its avatar was killed, it was still alive somewhere else .

Fortunately, the MoonStar acted fast and sent reinforcement, helping the remaining survivors leave the continent and tried its best to extinguish the ominous fire, which had the color of blood .

Jackob and Sonia were dispatched to the Itas Continent . The general of the sect's army accompanied the Ice Magic user and protected her while she poured everything she got to get rid of the quickly expanding fire, which was but a few away from the World Tree .

Although she wasn't able to extinguish it, her high-leveled Ice Magic did slow it considerably, however, the Cthulhu Race was relentless, appearing from out of nowhere and ambushing their group .

As Sonia was repeatedly casting a minor version of [Absolute Zero] to freeze the scorched ground and block the fire, Jakob was crouching behind of her . He held the sniper rifle, Ace, and would shoot every few seconds, taking down one or two monsters, which were miles away .

At first, they were successful in repelling the Cthulhu but the situation quickly worsened when dog-like beasts appeared . They were either the mounts or the cannon fodder . Individually, they were particularly dangerous but the problem was that they usually attack in big groups .

Sonia, who was assisted by a few more mages, couldn't handle the continuous Mana consumption and finally fell unconscious after four days . The other mages didn't fare well either as some were killed and others captured .

Four figures were jumping from one tree to another, fleeing from lion-sized dogs that had messy flesh and bloodied heads .

Jakob was holding Sonia under his arm as he swung down his big axes, dismembering four dogs then jumping back . Although they tried everything they could, they couldn't defend the Itas Continent, which was doomed .

The fire burned half of the forest, which covered the whole continent, plus, the number of Cthulhu increased every day, no one knew where they came from .

In the meeting room atop of the High Tower, the main HQ of the MoonStar sect, several elders were pleading Anastassia, who was incensed and worried .

"Vice-leader! Please don't go!"

More than three thousand died in the Itas Continent . None returned alive, she didn't even know whether her sister and husband are still alive or not .

She never thought things will escalate so quickly . It was supposed to be an easy job, just like last time . They will kill the invading race and be done with it .

The several old men were kneeling in front of Anastassia, blocking the exit and banging their head on the floor .

"Th-there's nothing you can do, please stay, Vice-leader!"

Anastassia glared at them and used Nether Energy to push them away . Just as she was about to leave, a young man with a flushed faced barged in the room . He panted heavily and talked only after locating Anastassia, who was but a few steps away .

"V-vice leader! An army... an army is marching toward us!"

She frowned and told the youth to calm down and only talk after he drank a bit of water . After taking a deep breathe, the youngster continued

"The Xi Clan betrayed us, an army of monsters is marching toward us . They'll arrive in three days, their number is unknown . "

His tiredness and pale face was proof that he ran all the way here the moment he saw the army . It wasn't an easy feat to continuously run without a rest, especially for a mortal .

Anastassia ordered him to go rest before leaving the room, ignoring the desperate elders . She went to the roof of the High Tower and stared at the cloudy sky . She gritted her teeth and clenched her fists, unable to come to a decision .

After a few minutes, she looked down to the creepy pendant hanging on her neck before hastily flying South . After a while, she appeared above the uncountable army of undead . She ripped the necklace and clenched it with both of her hands, applying all the strength she could muster .

"I must do it..."

She wholly focused on the pendant, pouring all her Nether Energy inside . Her gaze was focused on the motionless undead .

"Move move... come on MOVE!"

Despite her desperate shouts, the undead remained unresponsive . Nonetheless, the woman didn't give up, her pool of Nether Energy depleted yet she kept sacrificing her vitality to cause a reaction from the pendant .

Only after three hours did the pendant started emitting a purple light which covered her body . Her beautiful dark red hair became jet black while her skin turned whiter than snow .

She coughed mouthfuls of blood but she didn't stop . The purple light stretched to all direction, bringing an illumination brighter than the sun behind the cloudy sky .

Anastassia's figure, which was enveloped by the ominous purple light, fell from the sky, heavily crashing in the ground . She grabbed her head as unimaginable pain assaulted her, causing her to shout hysterically like a crazy person

"ARGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH...aHHHHHHHHH!"

The purple light stretched to all direction, covering the whole army within minutes, then it suddenly vanished into nothingness . This was nothing but the silence before the storm as the whole Western Continent shook violently .

A black miasma covered the sky before it transformed into a humongous whirlpool that attracted every being's attention .

As if ordered by a mysterious force, the undead's creaky bones moved, their feet started banging on the ground, all at the same time, in a cyclic manner . The dormant bones dragons awakened, roaring loudly and shaking the very being of Astria .

The pendant Arthur gave her was nowhere to be seen, it had turned illusory before entering her body, becoming a part of her . Back then, when Arthur crafted this simple item, which summons undead, didn't know that it would cause the birth of an entity he couldn't fathom .

The continuous exposure to thick death energy and the use of the pendant, coupled with her indomitable will and necessary sacrifice were the main causes for such a result .

Chapter 419

"Say we accept, what do we need to do exactly? It can't be for free . "

Artid laughed and replied

"Of course, nothing is free in this world . Once every two months you'll have to complete a request . As to what request is, it's usually assassinating someone of high importance . However, these requests give extravagant rewards, excluding the loot you get from the targets . Assassinations aren't the only requests, you can steal, escort, or protect someone, it varies but they're not easy, at the least not for the 'run-of-the-mill' cultivators and that's where your abilities shine, from perfect disguise to lethal poison and let's not forget Dark Magic, unseen and deadly . "

He glanced at Lucy and continued

"Although I'm not exactly sure what Madam's powers are, I'm certain she's no weaker than you, which is more than enough to assure me . Furthermore, you two are avoiding the old butler from the White Specter Clan so I assume you do not plan on going back 'home' . "

After saying his part, Artid remained silent, waiting for the couple's answer . He backed away and left them some time to discuss the matter .

Fortunately, it didn't take long as Arthur walked up to the young man and stretched his hand, to which the green seat amicably grabbed it and shook it .

"Pleasure joining you . "

Although Arthur's expression remained deadpan, Artid wasn't bothered as he said

"Oh no no the pleasure is all mine! Believe me when I say you won't regret it . Make sure to come to our Headquarters when you're done here . From now on, you're the Red Seat of Blood . By the way, Zodiak once took the position of the Black Seat of Death, though only for a short while . "

He handed him a small map which pointed him to where their next meeting will be . With nothing else to do here, Artid prepared to depart only for Arthur to stop him .

"Since I'm part of Black Rose, I can also issue requests, right?"

The grey-robed youngster was a bit confused but he still nodded his head, explaining the process .

"Anyone of the Nine Seats can issue requests and anyone from the organization can complete them, if they meet the strength requirements . Usually, requests issued by one of the Nine Seats are hard so they're only taken by one of the other seats . "

"If it's like then I would like to issue a request, right now . "

Artid forced a laugh while replying

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"Haha well... issuing a request involves some paperwork and it needs to be done in the Headquarters but since you're new I can help you . "

An evil smirk appeared on Arthur's face, who sneaked a glance at Lucy before saying

"I want someone dead, preferably sooner than later . It just so happens the target is in this Secret Realm... what do you say, will you help me?"

...

Twenty or so minutes later, Artid left the mountain, leaving a delighted Arthur, who managed to solve one of his problems . All that's left is to take the mountain with them . He didn't know what to do and he didn't need to as Claud was the one doing everything .

As per his copy's request, a black cube bigger than the whole mountain enveloped the area, blocking any outside sense and making it impossible to see what's happening inside .

The strange cube left Arthur's consciousness and rapidly spun in front of him, causing steam to emanate from the weird object . The ARK started expanding and constantly changed shapes until became a large mechanical hand with countless numbers engraved on it .

As if plucking a flower, the two gigantic fingers pinched the mountain, causing it to vanish into thin air, leaving nothing but a larger crater in its place .

In the endless space inside of the ARK, a red mountain appeared . It seemed out of place in this dimension, which made Claud grumble angrily . He waved his hand, causing the mountain to be sent far away, becoming a small black dot, barely noticeable .

On Astria, the situation, which was completely out of control, was suddenly reversed . An innumerable army of undead was awakened . As for its commander? None other than the Vice-Leader of the MoonStar Sect . The Undead, which populated half of the entire Western Continent, started marching toward the Itas Continent . A very small portion headed toward the MoonStar Sect, obliterating the army of evil monsters .

The invaders stood no chance against the undead, which felt no pain or exhaustion . The army of Cthulhu Race which was about to attack the MoonStar City numbered ten-thousand yet they were slaughtered in one hour . A hundred thousand undead were positioned around the city, protecting it from all sides .

At first, everyone was shaken by the appearance of the undead, however, they quickly calmed down when Anastassia appeared, leading the undead and assuring them of their safety .

Just after the enemy forces were killed, the Xi Clan suffered the same fate . The Clan was slaughtered, sparing none . Although it was a bit too much to kill everyone, Anastassia used this as a warning to other clans .

With her new powers, Anastassia was able to summon Ghost ships which the undead boarded to travel East .

The distance between the two continents was big and the numbers of undead were astronomical so it took three whole weeks to arrive albeit the fast ships .

Five thousand Bone Dragons arrived earlier than the rest, laying rest a third of the Cthulhu hiding in the burning forest .

The Demon Lord also dispatched a few thousand soldiers to assist the MoonStar Sect .

The once peaceful and calm forest of the Itas Continent became a bloody battlefield . Unbeknownst to Arthur and Lucy, the struggle of supremacy for this world began, bringing with it a great change...

Green-Leaf, Amidel's city, a cloaked figure was randomly traveling between alleys with no destination in mind . A hood was covering her head, hiding her appearance but you could notice her long silver hair .

The once proud and powerful maid, Taliya, was anxious and impatient as she tried her best to locate Arthur, who wasn't here, unfortunately .

Left with no other choice, the head maid decided to seek Amidel's help . She knew that the Kangs were an acquaintance of Arthur and they probably can contact him .

The situation on Astria couldn't be worse so she hastily came here using the device Gutcha once used . The problem was entering the castle, which was heavily guarded . She was but a mortal, trying to bypass their senses is nothing but wishful thinking .

Lissandra, still trapped in that cramped room, was forced to leave as her rations were running dangerously low . The number of Cthulhu coming from the portal significantly increased . She was sure that a great number of them is still residing in this labyrinth so her only way out is that portal . As to where it leads, even she, doesn't know .

It's either risking it or dying here, either by starvation or by their hands .

The woman patiently waited and calculated the interval of time in which they appear from within the portal . At the fourth and last day, when she decided to finally leave her hideout, her food finally ran out .

Her clothes became dirty, she had a foul stench emanating from her and her body was uncontrollably shaking . To think a God would fall to such state, it was pitiful, to say the least .

Twenty minutes after a few hundred Cthulhu appeared, Lissandra activated the hidden mechanism and exited the hideout then darted toward the portal .

Her unsteady legs and extremely thin body showed how much she suffered, nevertheless, she resolutely jumped into the portal only to feel a strong dizziness assault her .

When she regained her senses, she saw a world covered in blood . The sky was jet black and the heat was suffocating . The ground was littered with blood and dismembered bodies .

She glanced around only for her face to turn pale as several Cthulhu noticed her arrival . They were momentarily startled before showing their hideous grin .

They weren't worried she would escape as they greatly outnumbered her . One of them, which had four arms, each holding a long bloody hook, appeared in front of her .

Before she could retreat back to the portal, a hook came flying at her, ready to impale her abdomen . Lissandra, knowing that it was the end, closed her eyes, accepting her fate, as miserable as it was .

However, the pain didn't come, instead, she felt a large amount of disgusting liquid splatter on her face and body . When she hesitantly opened her eyes, she became dumbstruck as the monster who was about to cut her was nowhere to be seen . It missed its upper body, which was sent flying a distance away .

Before she could process what happened, a person grabbed her body and madly ran to the direction where there were fewer monsters .

The woman fell unconscious a few seconds later but she was able to see the face of her savior, a bearded young man with a very long hair .

Chapter 420

Arthur and Lucy didn't remain in that area too long . They achieved what they came here to do so they should leave, or so thought Arthur . However, it wasn't as simple as that . If it was just to do this much, he wouldn't have come all the way from the future to specifically tell Lucy to travel to this secret realm .

Sure, they got discovered but as long as they're not caught by the old man, everything should be alright . Before he left, Artid told them some interesting things, it appears that the Holy Dominion sent even more people after him . They arrived here a few days late, nonetheless, their motives were clear and from the looks of it, they dispatched more than just a Deacon this time around .

Furthermore, leaving this world isn't easy, to say the least . If one is powerful enough, they can forcefully break their way out but it is advised to wait until everyone is exiled back to Green Leaf .

Although the entry portal doesn't disappear even after some time, which gives some of the cultivators to catch up, the way out proves to be a troublesome . In a way, the cultivators are trapped here, willingly, of course .

Since they had no specific destination in mind, the couple decided to go the center of the realm, where the pregnant female dragon is .

Almost all of the powerful cultivators are sure to be there, however, the butler would try to find Lucy and he won't bother looking in that place . The most obvious hideout are usually the best . Even if they encounter that powerful old man, Arthur would improvise, after all, the butler is weakened and he can't take them both that easily, even if he's an Overgod .

Claud also assured him, telling him to be careful and if things go south, blow everything using the Vermilion Bird's body . With the addition of the Fire Spirit and the Empyrian Dragon's blood, coupled with the divine beast's skills, the destruction he can cause is unimaginable .

Honestly, Arthur was a bit interested about the Space Dragon but he wasn't greedy for its treasures as he couldn't care less about its wealth . He wanted to see what a true powerful dragon looked, a dragon that lived a million years .

The couple journeyed together, Arthur possessing Lucy while she took the appearance of a middle-aged man . Arthur used a miniature concealing formation to lower her presence and make the specter scent minimal .

Surprisingly, in their way to the dragon's lair, the stumbled upon a fierce yet familiar girl . Wielding her red sword and viciously slashing a golden rhino, which was, in fact, a peak Sovereign Beast . The thick murderous aura emanating from her made her easily recognizable .

Jian Si, seeing a middle-aged man stop a distance away from her, was a bit startled as he appeared out of nowhere . After a simple glance, she paid him no heed, after all, there's no lack of powerful cultivators roaming this land .

Noticing that he kept staring at her, she furrowed her brows, about to question him only for a telepathic voice to enter her ears .

"It's me . "

Cold Sword immediately knew whose voice it is . She sheathed her sword and looked at Lucy with a strange look . Every time she meets him, he has a different appearance, she can't even feel the ominous aura of the Dark Magic .

"What are you doing here?"

'Heading to the center of the realm since the dragon is there . '-Arthur

Lucy didn't talk but Arthur replied to the curious Jian Si through telepathy, make her even more confused to why he refuses to openly talk .

'The one you're looking at is Lucy, I'm hiding... somewhere . '

Cold Sword didn't ask too many questions, after nodding her head, she resumed her long hunt . However, it didn't seem that Arthur was going to let her be . Lucy followed the girl around as her husband questioned the latter

"Do you know when the dragon will give birth?"

"I don't know . "

"Then what about who's currently there?"

"I don't know . "

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"What about your juniors, where are they?"

"I don't know . "

It's either she really didn't know or was purposely doing that . In any case, Arthur said something that made her completely change attitude .

"Hmmm you don't know... here I thought about teaching you a sword technique . "

The walking Jian Si suddenly halted, turning her stiff head toward the middle-aged man a distance behind her . A beautiful smile was plastered on her usually cold face, making even the indifferent Lucy speechless .

"Teacher... I just remembered a few things . Apparently, the entrance to the dragon's lair is weakening every day . In four to five days, it'll shatter . As for who's there... there is that annoying pink-haired girl, the Flame Crown Prince, the Sacred Priest, the Water Cloud Sect, the Mirage Era Hall Sect, my sect and a few others . "

She answered everything in one go, and in such detail too . When she heard about the sword technique, it's like she became a completely different question .

"So everyone is there? What about the Holy Dominion? Or the woman from the White Specter Clan?"

The dark-haired girl thought for a moment before speaking

"I've heard cultivators talk about that woman, apparently, she completed five levels of the Paradise Garden and failed mid-way through the sixth . The Holy Dominion's activities are strange, I've seen them roam around everywhere, probably searching for teacher . "

Cold Sword was no fool, she knew that Arthur was a user of Dark Magic and ascertained of her guess after the fight in the Imperial Capital . Either way, she didn't care about his powers, she just wished to learn from him as his sword skills are unique and are perfect her sword dao .

"Good, what about the old man accompanying that White Specter?"

This time, Jian Si didn't need to think as she replied instantly

"There's been a huge fight near the White Paradise . From what I've heard, that area turned into rubble as the head butler of the White Specter Clan clashed with Wrath . "

'Wrath?!'-Claud

"Wrath as in one of the seven deadly sins? What's he doing here . "

The girl shrugged her shoulders and answered:

"I don't know but someone like him doesn't need anything from this place . Moreover, he's the Crown Prince's personal guard, it's the first time I see him leave his side . "

As if remembering something, Jian Si added:

"Oh... that was confidential information... I wasn't supposed to say that..."

She didn't seem too bothered by spitting such crucial information . As the next leader of her sect, she was eligible to know some of Green Leaf's top secrets, like the one she so blatantly said

'One of the sins was so close to us? Damn!'

Arthur was honestly startled . The Joker already warned him to stay away from them, fortunately, Wrath didn't discover Makaze as the blade wasn't in his possession, or so thought Arthur, who knew naught about the prince's plans and the amount of information he dug about him and Lucy .

'Relax, I doubt Wrath is hostile toward you . I don't know his reasons but he must have been ordered to stay still . There's no way such a powerful individual wouldn't have discovered you when you first came to the city . '

"Do you know why they fought?"

"Unclear . " She shook her head while saying that .

After he was done with the questioning, the girl looked at him with a slightly excited expression, clearly waiting for him to do what he promised .

Arthur sighed and left Lucy's body, appearing a few inches away from Jian Si, who, by reflex, was about to back away only for his index to touch her forehead .

Learning a technique from scratch is way better than having it imparted to you, however, Arthur's didn't want to waste much time teaching her . This method wasn't that efficient but it did the job and as long as Jian Si is meticulous and perceptive, she shouldn't find any problems mastering the skill .

The sword skill he imparted to her was [Heavenly Slash] his second strongest sword skill . He had three ultimate sword skills which are the very strongest of his whole arsenal .

[Heavenly Slash] is composed of one simple slashing move but its prowess is unimaginable . It contains a dense amount of Sword Essence, which either unleashing in its raw state in some form of a burst or is turned into one of the attributes, granting additional effects .

This skill wasn't obtained from a corpse but is the fusion of exactly six hundred and twenty-four max Lv sword skills . It may seem simple and lacking on the outside but it represents the apex of sword mastery . Sometimes, the simplest moves are the deadliest .

Taking the Nameless Knight as an example, he just stabs or slashes his sword to kill his opponents . No flashy moves, weird dances or domineering skill names .