

Once Human 511

Chapter 511

Inside a gloomy and cramped cave, which, by no means, is a habitable place, there were four figures, all in a bad state, however, two of the four were laying on the rough earth, clearly unconscious .

Two days ago, Vyncent and Lissandra somehow managed to rescue the newcomers but ended up revealing themselves and using their trump card . They were planning to use their powers to flee East, where it's much safer than this forsaken land, infested with monsters .

When he saw the identity of the incomers, Vyncent decided to save them for he knew Arthur's powers and their necessity to get out of here in one piece . Lissandra didn't show any objection, she helped the young man and did her best push away the Cthulhu and teleport them from that battlefield next to the red gate, which had disappeared a while ago .

Approximatively a day ago, the cave they were in shook violently, alarming the two of them, however, it turned out to be a vibrating dark blade which cut everything in its way and stuck next to Arthur, stabbing the ground and releasing low, inaudible growls .

The man and woman remained silent, recuperating a bit of energy and waiting for one of the two to wake up .

...

Despite his new race, Arthur felt an unbearable headache which made it difficult for him to move properly, much less stand up . With a half-closed eye, he glanced at the two silhouettes a distance away from him, his pupil constricted, unable to believe the presence of Vyncent in this unfamiliar place .

It took him a few moments to collect his thoughts and try to speak only to find out that his mouth is inexplicably dry and the old yet familiar feeling of hunger assaulting him, making his stomach growl unceasingly .

Sensing this, Vyncent crouched next to Arthur, lifted his head and poured some liquid into the parasite's mouth . It was simple water but to Arthur, it felt like a heavenly elixir that completely rejuvenated him, giving him just enough strength to utter a few words .

"Where are we?"

Though Vyncent's presence is confusing, Arthur was more worried about his current situation . The last thing he remembered was being saved by a speeding figure then he passed out, probably from exhaustion . He over-worked himself and excessively used a lot of powerful skills . His foundation became unstable and if he doesn't solidify it, he'll return to being a Sovereign .

Furthermore, the mortal feelings he was currently feeling startled him . The pain, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and sleepiness, they are things he shouldn't feel thanks to his limitless Stamina and beneficial passive skills .

"A world called Riarravar... or, as others call it, Oblivion . "

"Hah! I thought as much . " A ridiculing laugh escaped Arthur's mouth, it wasn't directed at Vyncent but at himself .

Arthur tried to sit up only to be stopped by Vyncent, who pushed him on the ground and softly said:

"You need to rest, there is no need to rush things . "

Arthur moved his stiff head, trying to find Lucy and see if she's okay . It was at this time that Lissandra entered his line of sight, making him suck a deep breath and stared at her for a few seconds before retracting his gaze, seemingly uninterested .

"Lucy's condition is stable but her body is a complete mess . She needs more than a simple rest to recover . "

Lissandra moved out of the way, revealing an unconscious Lucy just behind her . The specter's body was covered with bandages, especially her arm, which was mangled... truly an ugly sight to behold .

After several failed attempts to get up and check on her, Arthur laid on the cold ground and asked with a softer tone:

"Is her condition that serious?"

In response, the frail-looking Lissandra nodded her head and explained:

"More than you could think . I'm a herbalist but this place lacks any kind of vegetation so I can only alleviate some of her pain . Fortunately, she has a good constitution or else she would've died..."

A bout of awkward silence flowed between the trio before Vyncent broke it by saying:

"We can't stay here for much longer . We'll live as soon as Lucy wakes up . "

"Where to?"

As far as Arthur knew, there was no safe place in Riarravar, at least not after it was invaded by the Cthulhu .

"East of here, there's a group called the Resistance, they have food, shelter, and enough forces to defend against the relentless attacks of both parasites and Cthulhu . "

When Arthur came here with Wolfram and Leiu, he read about a strong kingdom led by an unstoppable shogun . Not even Claudia dared to trifle with that kingdom as she knew that she lacked the necessary strength to face the shogun and his army .

"How far is it?"

Vyncent abruptly laid on the ground and put his ear against the ground, seemingly sensing something abnormal . Lissandra pushed back her long black hair, leaned against the wall and replied:

"Very far . We expanded our powers to rescue you two so getting past the hordes of Cthulhu outside will be harder than anticipated . It is for this reason that we require your powers, which is why you need to rest and recover a bit . "

"I'll need a couple of hours to he-"

Arthur was interrupted by a tremor which was followed by numerous cracks appearing on the roof . Lissandra quickly picked up the unconscious Lucy then started chanting, blinding radiance enveloping enveloped the two females, protecting them and distorting the space around them .

As for Vyncent, he picked Arthur and melted in the ground . They had a consensual agreement and it was definitely not a wise idea to waste time talking about what to do or where to go . The best and safest option is to separate so they can distract the attackers .

Just after the four vanished from this dark cave, two silhouettes appeared, one was a tall and burly black-skinned man, a thick beard and two sharp swords hanging on his waist . The other was an elder wearing tight leather clothes, his skin covered in flames, though, strangely, this fire didn't affect his surroundings or his clothes .

"Tsk! They escaped again . "

The burly man clicked his tongue and examined the bloodstains on the ground and sniffed the air, smelling the aura of two additional individuals .

"We must capture them before those barbaric and brainless monsters . "

The elder, hands behind his back, gazed at the location Lissandra and Lucy were at, then whistled, resulting in a dog-like flaming beast to appear next to him . The beast growled in annoyance, not pleased to be given such a trivial and boring task, nevertheless, it followed its master's orders and started tracking the targets .

Unfortunately for Vyncent, the place he appeared at after using his secret technique wasn't the least bit favorable . Along with the suffocating heat, the savage aura lingering in this world, there were dozens of Cthulhu running at him, all armed to the teeth and madly roaring at him .

He put Arthur on the ground and faced the incoming enemies, his hands forming a golden seal which was pushed against the ground, raising sturdy walls which blocked the Cthulhu and hindered their crazy advance .

After ensuring Arthur's temporary safety, he was about to jump over the wall to face them only to be stopped by Arthur, who grabbed his ankle .

Vyncent glanced at Arthur's suspicious behavior and frowned, clearly wanting an explanation .

The parasite panted heavily and held his right hand, pressing his thumb on a jet black ring, causing it to shine with an ominous black light that sucked everything around it, like a black hole .

Although his energy pools were depleted, Arthur forced himself and somehow managed to retrieve a few rings from Zodiak's storage . These storage rings rolled on the ground, near Vyncent's feet .

"U-use them . "

After he said that, Arthur coughed some blood then fainted, unable to resist the pain assaulting his mind or the sleepiness dominating his consciousness .

Without any hesitation, Vyncent picked those rings and injected a bit of his energy in them, trying to see what's inside . To his astonishment, there was an abundance of artifacts, armors, and weapons . All of them were of good quality and priceless, furthermore, in this dire situation, they're literally life-saving .

In less than three seconds, Vyncent chose what a few items that were compatible with him and immediately equipped them . His body shone with a magical light and his tattered clothes were replaced by a golden armor, not too thick but like what knights wore but sturdy enough to block heavy attacks .

He discarded the rusty sword he used to fight and held a long one-handed sword that emitted pure Earth Energy . Last but not least were special boots which made his body feel lighter than ever and supplied him with Nether Energy . Those three items all had special formations which facilitated his use of energy and lowered the consumption of his techniques, including the secret one he commonly uses to escape .

Fully equipped, Vyncent jumped high in the air and brandished his new sword, slashing multiple times in the air, which caused golden stricks to descend on the Cthulhu, cutting their bodies into pieces and paving a clear way for the young man .

He stepped in the air as if it was a staircase while holding Arthur under his arm . Countless arrows flew at him but they were blocked by his armor which would release a burst of Earth Energy every time it sensed any incoming danger .

Vyncent was lucky as there was only the normal Cthulhu, there were no signs of the giants or the special bow-wielding monsters which were the deadliest of them all . A while later, Vyncent managed to carry the parasite to a relatively safe location, devoid of any life . The place reeked of blood, mountains of corpses scattered all around him, severed limbs and head in every corner and, surprisingly, a complete absence of any kind of energy .

This was a place not even the Cthulhu dared to tread for it affected them too . Vyncent too, wasn't keen of this lifeless area, however, it was better than being discovered by the higher Cthulhu, those who could threaten his life . Furthermore, the parasites were on their trail so they have to constantly keep moving .

'X' was inspecting this disgusting prison, still in a very bad mood . The silver dragon next to him maintained its silence, neither commenting on their situation or complaining about its current state .

"Enjoying your stay?"

Out of nowhere, a graceful figure wearing traditional Chinese-like clothes appeared in front of the duo's cell . Her face covered with a veil and her hair, just like her clothes, snow-white . She had flawless curves, hair that reached her thighs and delicate skin, making her look no different than a Goddess or a fairy . Her soft and melodious voice would anyone, even the craziest people .

'X' spent a couple of seconds staring at her before he coldly snorted and retorted

"What stay? You ugly and stinky whore . "

Though he was captive and should maintain a respectful attitude in the presence of what seemed to be the person who threw him here, X didn't show any politeness, using vulgar words and an aggressive tone .

The woman flinched as she heard his words, keeping her silence for a while before speaking again

"Why so impolite?"

Though his face was still blurry, one could speculate X's current expression, which contained disgust and contempt .

"Stinking whore! You reek of Black Magic! Don't try to that cute act with me . You're all the same . "

This time, the woman was visibly surprised, not expecting him to 'smell' the aura of Black Magic . Though she was repeatedly insulted, the woman wasn't the least bit angry .

"I actually came here to discuss the matter of your release . "

X kept glaring at her but didn't say anything, 'allowing' her to continue .

"You came uninvited and caused a big ruckus, destroying most of this place . The master wasn't pleased which is why she threw in these dungeons . "

"Hmpf!"-X

"She that as long as you complete a small task, she'll release both of you . "

Yamak bared his sharp teeth at the woman and spoke with a deep and threatening voice

"I won't work with you people . "

The white-haired woman let out a sigh and said

"What a shame..."

"Wait . I'll cooperate . "-X

Before she could leave, X said that, clearly wanting to get out of this hell hole . Unfortunately, her next few words made his situation much complicated .

"The master said that she needs both of your help . As long as one of you refuses to cooperate, you'll remain here . "

She turned around and left right after, not leaving a chance for X to talk .

The man wriggled around and tried to shake off the chains but to no avail . In the end, he faced the silver dragon crouching next to him and said

"Hey, don't you want to get out of here?"

"..."

He received no response, so he asked again .

"I've got a plan, you just need to say that you'll cooperate with them . "

"..."

Chapter 512

"Your condition has not stabilized yet, stay still . "

As Lucy tried to get up, a cold voice penetrated her ears, startling her . Once she glanced toward the source of the voice, the silver-haired woman became dumbfounded, her eyes containing disbelief as she stared at the fragile-looking woman sitting next to her . Never did she imagine to run into Lissandra, a former enemy, in this kind of place .

She knew that the fallen God deserted MoonStar city and went to live her life, as a mortal, so what confused her is how a weak woman who can be killed by a wind breeze ended up in Oblivion . Furthermore, she was being taken care of by her, making Lucy a bit uneasy as their relationship couldn't be considered 'harmonious' .

As if she read her thoughts, the woman added:

"Fear not, I bear no grudge against you . What happened in the past shall remain as so, moreover, in a place like this, it's better and practical to ally together to make it out alive and in one piece . "

Though told not to move, Lucy struggled and tried to look for any signs of her husband only to fall back down, groaning from pain . In the last battle, she didn't receive a frontal attack which knocked her out, instead, she fell unconscious due to overworking herself . Continuous nonstop use of Mental Power several exhausted her, and the pain only added more fuel to the fire, worsening her condition and rendering her in this helpless state .

Her right arm didn't even resemble an arm anymore, it was just a gory mangled piece of meat, covered in blood and lacking any kind of energy . The bones were either shattered or broken, the muscles were ripped and the skin was torn, revealing the disgusting sight underneath . The rest of her body was in no better condition, failing even to do the most basic of movements .

Although her energy pool recovered to full, she was unable to use it as the mental backlash resulted from the gruesome fights was still present and heavily affecting her, both mentally and physically .

"Your husband is with Vyncent . We had to separate to confuse our pursuers . "

Lucy struggled to open her mouth and utter a few words but all that got out was a lot of blood, mostly black and sticky blood .

Seeing the poor state of the white specter, Lissandra felt neither joy nor satisfaction... she already forgot about the past and never wanted to discuss it . Her actions were foolish and rash, she shouldn't have been that arrogant . Her short mortal experience changed her thought process, allowing her to see the world in a new light .

While it's true that she resented the couple at first, those hateful feelings she harbored slowly but surely vanished and were replaced by hope and curiosity . She didn't know why but she was inexplicably curious about Astria and its origin .

This small and remote world seemed fine from the outside, however, it had terrifying secrets which would frighten anyone, especially the cave she found underneath the Eastern Continent . The pictures on the wall depicted the future, the book and its connection with Riarravar .

"How do you feel?" The bearded young man gobbled up a dried piece of meat while asking another man sitting opposite of him . The man's hair was grey and had an unsightly scar on his face, his slow movement and trembling body indicated that he wasn't in his best shape .

While controlling his shaking hand, Arthur ate some meat and replied:

"I'll need a few hours to regain enough power to fight . "

He recovered all of his Nether Energy and Mental Power but, for some reason, his current 'body' was rejecting him and not fully obeying him . Strangely, his skin showed signs of cracking, like glass, which alarmed him .

Without the assistance of the ARK or the knowledge of Claud, Arthur wasn't able to guess the reason behind the crumbling of his physical body .

'Must I change hosts?'

He does have other humanoid bodies but he would rather keep using this one until he finds a better alternative . Now that he's a Soul Parasite, he didn't have a real physical body so his current host was temporary and after what suffered in the war, it's to be expected that it's in this condition, however, it still didn't explain the rejection he was experiencing .

In fact, even after being almost killed in one more than occasion, his body should have fully recovered in a few hours, at most .

...

Coincidentally, three hours later, when the trembling ceased and the parasite regained enough strength to defend himself, the two of them received uninvited and unwelcomed guests .

This desolate place was like a graveyard, due to its peculiar nature, not even the Cthulhu dared to come yet there were two silhouettes who appeared a distance away from Vyncent and Arthur .

"You caused a lot of problems then bailed, inferior organism . "

The muscular black-skinned man from before stared at Vyncent with an unfriendly gaze, a dangerous pressure revolving around him . Next to the muscular man stood a silent elder who glanced at Arthur with interest, wondering how another human managed to enter Riarravar .

Surprisingly, neither of the two, who were also parasites, managed to discover Arthur's real identity . Probably due to his special race, something that never existed .

Arthur glanced at the expressionless Vyncent and said:

"What did you do?"

The young man shrugged his shoulders and whispered:

"I did nothing... I was framed . "

"By whom?"

"..." Vyncent glanced at the two parasites and kept his mouth tightly shut, refusing to answer in their presence . Arthur let out a sigh and shifted his attention to the two hostile guests, trying to gauge their strength only to fail . Appraisal showed him absolutely nothing so he tried using his Sense only for it to be negated by a formless thing surrounding the two entities .

"What do you want?" Said Arthur with a chilling voice, his only eye emitting suffocating killing intent . It was only when he heard him speak did the muscular man pay any attention to Arthur, he squinted his eyes and examined the grey-haired man for a few moments before mockingly said:

"You're a broken husk yet you dare to talk in my presence?"

Arthur remained expressionless, his aura rising and his skills ready to be unleashed . Evil Wind, which was sheathed and hanging on his waist, started vibrating, about to attack on its own .

This staring confrontation continued for a few more seconds before the black-skinned man jumped at Vyncent, his big hands transforming into long and sharp claws . Unfortunately, before he reached his target, a dark shadow blocked his way and before he could react, he was sent flying like a kite, a grievous wound appearing on his abdomen .

The man rolled on the ground a few times then hastily got up, holding his bloody abdomen and gritting his teeth, his face incredibly ugly .

"Fucker!"

Sadly, Arthur wasn't going to sit by and watch... his figure appeared next to the black-skinned man, Makaze in hand, he stabbed the target's throat . Just as the dark blade was about to execute the parasite, flames rose from the ground and forced Arthur to retreat a few steps .

When everything cleared, the elder was found standing in front of his comrade, his face still calm, unperturbed by what just happened .

"Stranger, our feud is with the man over there, there is no need to shed unnecessary blood . "

Arthur glared at the old man covered in flames for some time before he sheathed Makaze and nodded his head . He turned around and got out of the parasites' way .

The old man kept his gaze on Arthur, only retracting it when the former was a distance away . The injured man was seething with anger, his focus shifting entirely to Arthur . Were it not for the old man who held his shoulder and whispered something in his ear, he would have already attacked the far away Arthur .

As for Vyncent, he stood rooted to the ground, sword in hand and ready to retaliate were anything to happen .

The old man raised his hand and was about to attack the bearded young man only for a fountain of blood to appear next to him, splattering him with the disgusting and nauseating liquid .

He saw a man wrapped in black flames, his hand holding the head of the black-skinned man, as for the rest of the victim's body? It exploded .

Arthur used Shadow Magic to create a clone and dived underground, attacking when the old man no longer paid him any attention . Though this strange parasite was truly strong, he still couldn't compare to Arthur's arsenal of skills .

He only needed a tiny bit of Godly Thunder to make the black-skinned man explode into a pool of blood .

As he saw his companion die like that, the old man's face turned extremely ugly . He swiftly retreated away from Arthur and retrieved a dagger covered in flames, his aura exponentially increasing .

Just as he was about to attack Arthur, the old man's body froze in the ground as the Gravity had a drastic and unexpected change . His body became inexplicably heavy and his movements very slow, nevertheless, the old man muttered a few inaudible words, causing his body to turn illusory, becoming unaffected by the Gravity .

Even the black chains which sprung from the ground did nothing at all, they merely passed through his body . Seeing this, Arthur was reminded of Angelina's Physique, which rendered her immune to Physical attacks for a period of time .

Chapter 513

"Can you move?"

Lissandra helped Lucy and worriedly asked her . The fallen God wasn't like Vyncent, she was still a mortal with some special powers acquired here, however, these powers are meant for combat so their situation was quite tricky .

Lucy was breathing heavily as sweat soaked her bloodied clothes . Her face was paler than usual and her movements were a bit stiff, nevertheless, she mustered all her strength and nodded her head to ease Lissandra's worries .

"Where are we going?" Asked the white specter while hiding her trembling hands behind her back .

"Anywhere but here . "

Lissandra left the cramped place to survey the place while Lucy leaned against a wall, trying to regulate her breathing and activate her Physique . Unfortunately, her energy just wouldn't circulate as if there was something blocking it . Furthermore, the feeling of hunger and thirst worsened with every passing second, sucking every last bit of strength she desperately tried to muster .

Less than a minute later, Lissandra entered the cave to signal Lucy only to find the latter in a semi-conscious state, barely able to stand up . Just as she was about to talk, Lucy fell on the ground, unable to hold on any longer . Thankfully, she was caught by Lissandra, who held her in her arms and checked her pulse only to find it inexplicably and dangerously slow, almost non-existent, even .

As she examined the unconscious Lucy, Lissandra let out a sigh and shook her head, unable to come up with a solution . After pondering for a few minutes, she put Lucy on her back and used a thin rope to bind their bodies to ensure that she doesn't fall .

Lissandra took a few deep breaths, straightened her bent back then left the cave only to be assaulted by a gust of suffocating heat which made her sweat and pant heavily . The fragile woman persisted and continued to slowly march, a pulsating white light emanating from her hands, enveloping her and Lucy and erasing their presence .

"You've called for me?"

The white-haired woman was a bit surprised, she didn't expect 'X' to be able to convince Yamak in just two days . She frowned and glanced at the silent dragon, which was motionlessly crouching next to its inmate, unperturbed by her appearance .

"F*ck! Can't you at least take a bath? You smell worse than horseshit . "

The man comically held his blurry nose and waved his hand in annoyance . He signaled for her to stand a bit farther as the unpleasant smell was something he couldn't tolerate .

"Enough . " She said with a triggered tone, unwilling to bear through his pointless nonsense anymore .

"Have you resolved your issues?"

'X' wriggled his body in discomfort and only replied when he found a more comfortable position .

"Mhm yes yes, we agree to help your master in whatever he or she needs . Let us out . "

The veiled woman sized him up then added:

"Very well . I'll guide to master . "

She retrieved a snow-white ribbon and swung at it at the cell . The ribbon went through the cage and easily cut the binding chains, turning them into beautiful white roses .

'X' swiftly got up, patted the dust off his dirty black tuxedo then massaged his wrists and ankles . He was nonchalantly humming, happy that he was finally released and doesn't have to remain here any longer .

Yamak let out a groan and lifted his head, his piercing pupils focusing on the white-haired woman, who wasn't afraid of the two of them even though they were unbound .

"Let me make this clear, you cannot talk to my master with that nasty attitude of yours . "

'X' waved his hand dismissively and retorted

"Ok ok as long as you don't stand next to me, I'll refrain from 'nasty' comments . "

She let out a snort, turned around and left, expecting the two to follow . 'X' threw an unreadable glance at Yamak then left cell . As for the dragon, due to the narrow place, it cast a spell on itself, making it size much smaller, the size of a lion pup, actually .

A small silver dragon floated behind 'X', appearing more like an obedient pet than a dangerous beast that could obliterate cities with one breath .

"LET ME OUT!"

A tall silver-haired woman angrily shrieked, her hair disheveled and her robe tainted by the mud inside this gloomy and uncomfortable place . After the war ended, she tended to her daughter, who's still unconscious but the 'peaceful' days were interrupted by her teacher, who barged in and threw her here .

She was a distinguished individual in the Divine Planet and many feared her yet she was treated like a criminal and imprisoned here against her will .

It has been a week already yet the Joker never showed up, leaving her here, unable to do nothing but call for him .

Though she was an Exalted God, this place restricted all her powers and made her high cultivation irrelevant . Katrina was about to shout again only for a dark silhouette to enter the prison, startling her .

As the figure made its way toward her, her expression drastically changed . She didn't dare shout out loud and maintained a calm countenance while wondering why such an individual appeared here .

"I can understand why you find this place so distasteful and unpleasant, however, it is one of a few places which can bind you . "

His cold and emotionless face echoed in this empty place, ringing inside her ears . He stood inches away from the prison bars, his penetrating gaze focusing on her, making the Matriarch unconsciously take a step back .

After a short silence, the pale-faced youth said:

"If it were up to me, you'd already be dead . "

Upon hearing this, Katrina frowned but didn't utter a word, obediently choosing to listen to what he has to say .

"Let me make this perfectly clear O'venerable Matriarch, the woman you claim is your daughter, Lucy MoonStar, has nothing to do with you or your clan . She doesn't want to associate with you, doesn't want to meet you, doesn't want your motherly love, she only wants to be left alone and live happily with her own family . "

His eyes narrowed as he took one more step, his face almost touching the cold bars . A dangerous and soul-shaking darkness emanated from him, creeping closer to the stiff Katrina .

"I think my words were crystal clear, right?"

After a few moments, Katrina reluctantly nodded her head .

Leiu kept staring at her, his eyes almost tearing hole through her frozen body .

"If you understand then listen carefully, from this point in time until the day you die, you will not meet her . If by some sort of ungodly coincidence, you two meet, you'll turn around and leave . You won't say a word, you won't seek her or anyone close to her intentionally . "

Katrina mustered some courage and was about to object only to hear him say "Do not speak . " These three words held unobstructed authority which weighed down her, rendering her unable to utter anything .

"I do not want to hear your voice, much less your reasons or excuses . I said my part and, you, Katrina, will listen to my words and obey . You've lost your chance for reconciliation so don't you push yourself off the cliff and lose your life too . "

He turned around, the darkness leaking out of him retracting almost immediately . Before his figure vanished, he added:

"Farewell... and let this be our final meeting . "

Only when he left did she regain control over her body . She fell on the ground, kneeling, panting and holding her chest . Though, supposedly, her teacher, The Joker, is just as strong as The Nameless Knight, the feeling she got from the latter was completely different . She felt overwhelming dread, to the point of being paralyzed in his presence, it was definitely an unfamiliar feeling for someone of her status, someone who's used to being feared .

Chapter 514

"You didn't have to be so aggressive . "

The Joker leaned against the wall and glanced at the passing youth, who paid him no attention as he made his way upwards, toward his mysterious manor .

Hearing no response, the Magician grew impatient and annoyed, he followed Leiu and continued:

"Listen... she may have been wrong but you can't blame someone for following their beliefs . "

He held the knight's shoulder, trying to stop him only for his hand to be shoved away by the latter, who abruptly turned around and gazed deep into his brother's eyes .

"Wolfram, try repeating that to Arthur while looking straight into his eyes . "

Feeling a bit ashamed, the tall man dropped his head, not daring to lift it or meet the chilling glare of the youth .

"There's no more room for reconciliation . She may be your student but HE IS your brother, I don't think I have to tell you whom to support? Or is it that you feel pity?"

Though there was no response from the Joker, Leiu continued talking:

"Tell me, who was the one who came to rescue thousands of times? Is it her? No . It's not, and it'll never be . Six times did he lose his life to get you out of that cursed coffin and yet you're showing hesitation? Really? Perhaps you also need some time off in that prison to think things over..."

Slightly irritated, the Joker pushed his brother and angrily said:

"You don't know how I feel so why are you judging me?"

"I'm not judging you, only warning you . I trust you more than anyone in this world, after all, you and Arthur are the only things I have left, so don't you betray my trust . "

Amazed, 'X' started whistling as he saw the grandiose place he was currently in . The archaic and priceless materials used to decorate the floor and tall walls, the neatly ordered dark gold pillars and the incomprehensible runes engraved on them, it was a rare sight even for an old being such as him .

Along with the silver dragon, he followed the veiled woman who kept her distance from them, mainly because of 'X's nagging . The woman reeked of Black Magic, something he abhorred as it's against his ideals and pollutes the world, slowly corrupting it .

Twenty minutes later, the three arrived at a spacious hall which lacked any form of illumination and had a dense amount of Black Energy, making X puke on the spot, dirtying the unhallowed ground .

Suspended at the center of this gloomy hall was a large figure, a female, to be exact . She was three to four times bigger than an average human, her skin that of a corpse's, her hair, as black as ink, reached the ground down below .

Yamak didn't know her, however, 'X' was the total opposite . His hidden pupils constricted as he stood there, paralyzed, either from shock or fear . His nonchalant attitude vanished and his movement became stiff, though only temporarily .

After ten seconds, he took a deep breath, resisting the urge to vomit again, and saluted the silent motionless woman . The female's closed eyes slowly opened, focusing on the new guests, her pupils like a bottomless abyss, sucking everything it lands on .

"Two lifeforms well-versed in Space Magic... good . "

Her ghastly voice made both Yamak and 'X' shiver as a formless pressure forced them to kneel before her . They didn't resist and complied by lowering their heads, not daring to meet her dangerous gaze .

"Master, they both agreed to assist you . "

The white-haired woman knelt before the suspended figure, also lowering her head and speak with the utmost respect . Her previous arrogance was nowhere to be seen, she also paid no more attention to the dragon or 'X' .

"Very well, you're excused . "

The woman swiftly left right after, leaving her master alone with the two 'guests' .

"You do know that barging into someone else's home and causing a ruckus is impolite and unfitting for accomplished people such as yourselves, right?"

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Her domineering voice echoed in the spacious hall, making the dragon and his companion twitch .

"It was but an unfortunate coincidence, O'lady of Darkness . "

Hearing him call her by her old title, she furrowed her brows and focused her gaze on 'X', who was soaking with cold sweat . He inwardly cursed Yamak, who brought him to this ungodly place . His previously concocted plan wouldn't work on someone like her .

"It's rare to see a lifeform of this modern age who knows about me, should I be flattered?"

"My lady, your fame spre-"

She cut him off by saying "Oh spare me your pointless flattery . "

Although she very much wanted to move, she was able to do nothing but move her lips . Her chest was pierced by an invisible weapon, rendering her in this miserable state .

Albeit being bound, she was still able to demonstrate monstrous power as long as it's within her realm . She was the one who captured the two of them and threw them in the dungeon .

Nonetheless, their unexpected appearance is a good thing for her as their assistance will quicken her plans and soon set her free .

"Let us not waste time speaking nonsense . What I require you to do is pretty simple, so simple, in fact, that any child could do . "

Though she made it look easy, 'X' was pretty sure that it'll be an impossible task .

After pausing for a split second, she resumed:

"I want you to gather the Nine Cursed sword and the Nine Divine Sword . "

"..."-X

'X' knelt there, dumbstruck and unable to process what he just heard . No matter how powerful he is, accomplishing such a thing is nothing short of impossible .

One has to know that the locations of the swords are unknown, except for a few . Even if he finds them, their owners are bound to be terrifying individuals, like Losha, for example .

'X' wasn't crazy to the point of trying to get Losha's Divine swords, he would be killed in a few seconds, after all, there are just some people he can't offend .

The woman grew impatient as she heard no satisfactory answer:

"What? Can't you even accomplish such an easy task? Or would you rather rot in my dungeons?"

"No no no, my lady, I already started devising a plan and forgot to give you my answer, please forgive me . "

Right after he said that, 'X' felt an excruciating pain coming from his brain . Yamak was also in a similar situation, the two of them laid on the ground, their bodies convulsing and bleeding like crazy .

Two black lights were emitting from the woman's eyes, directly penetrating her two guests . After one full minute, the agony vanished, relieving the two of them, who remained on the ground, feeling inexplicable numbness in their head .

"I've marked you both, now make haste . "

The dragon stubbornly tried to raise its head and glare at her only to be dragged outside by 'X' .

The man didn't waste time and quickly teleported himself and Yamak to another Realm .

"Sh*t! Why is my luck so freaking sh*tty!"

"You don't have to be so dramatic . "

"Do you even know who she is? F*CK!"-X

"..."

The silver dragon at X with a dumb look, unable to reply . The man angrily stomped the ground and retrieved his cane, drawing weird symbols on the ground .

"She's bloody Xyktia! Now let me, AS USUAL, try to think of a plan!"

After a short silence, Yamak asked: "What about the swords?"

"What swords? If you want to get them then do it yourself, I don't want to die yet!"

"You'll die either way . "

"There's a difference between a quick and slow death . "

With great difficulty, Lissandra dragged Lucy and slowly walked between the clustered Cthulhu, which didn't notice her presence . After a long while, she reached a desolate area so she decided to take a small rest to recuperate .

She glanced at Lucy but the latter was still in a comatose state, unlikely to wake up anytime soon . Her body needs to be healed and her consciousness needs to be nourished, her best option is to reunite with Vyncent and Arthur .

'Perhaps he knows how to wake her up...'

The frail woman emptied what was left of the small bottle of water then scanned her surroundings . After making sure everything was clear, she was about to lift Lucy's body only to hear an ear-splitting and wild roar coming from not far away .

This loud cry definitely belonged to a beast, furthermore, it seemed to be making its way towards her .

Lissandra hastily fixed Lucy on her back and prepared to run only for a dog-like beast to jump at her . The monster's body was covered in flames and its mouth was fully open, ready to rip her body into pieces .

She clumsily jumped to the side, falling on the ground along with the unconscious Lucy . Lissandra raised her hands and emitted a blinding radiance, which stopped the charging beast, slowing its movements and buying her enough time to flee .

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Lissandra dragged Lucy's body and tried her best to get as far away from the flaming beast as possible . Unfortunately, the spell she cast won't last forever and she was too weak to run, especially with someone on her back . Her abilities weren't combat-oriented and although the monster wasn't particularly strong, it was still able to easily kill her .

The unbearably hot weather and the exhaustion made her movements sluggish as she dragged the unconscious Lucy and scanned the area, trying to find a safe location to hide in for some time .

Sadly, the dog-like beast regained its ability to move thirty seconds later, it growled angrily and rushed at the two women, its mouth wide-open, spitting several large size fireballs .

The frail woman weakly raised her weapons and conjured a shield of light which blocked the fireballs but shattered in the process . She attempted to conjure another only to miserably fail as her body fell on the ground, unable to support her any longer .

With desperate and hollow eyes, Lissandra stared at the incoming beast, which pounced at her . It completely disregarded the unconscious Lucy and mainly focused on her . Her pursuers weren't aware of Lucy's presence, furthermore, they only sought Lissandra, or more precisely, what's inside her .

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That power of light is something she stole from the parasites' base when it was raided by the Cthulhu . She and Vyncent stealthily sneaked in and acquired a few good things, mainly this mysterious power and an old key .

Just when the claws of the vicious beast were about to stab the helpless Lissandra, the monster strangely burst into flames . Shocked and confused, the woman looked around only to see nothingness, she was alone in this unfamiliar and eerie place . The howls of the flaming beast and the heat from its flames completely vanished .

She stared at dispersing flames, which lingered in the air for some time before they were pushed away by the passing hot breeze .

With a back soaking with cold sweat, she slowly stood up, looked around multiple times then headed toward Lucy, about to pick her up and leave this place with haste .

When Lissandra was about to pick up the unconscious woman, a tall figure flashed from behind her and appeared next to Lucy . Additionally, another silhouette sprung from the ground, appearing right next to the startled Lissandra .

Only when she saw their appearances did the woman's expression ease up . She let out a long sigh and fell on the ground, her legs finally giving in to the fatigue .

"Fortunately, we arrived on time . "

Vyncent crouched next to Lissandra and inspected her body using her sense, finding no signs of any fatal wounds, however, she was very exhausted and needed a lot of rest . In her current condition, it'll be hard for her to use her abilities .

As for Lucy, she was being taken care of by Arthur, who pressed his left hand on her mangled arm, using his Life Energy to restore her crippled limb . Though the process was slow, to say the least, results started showing up after half an hour . The muscles were healed and the skin was growing back, the bones were straightened and strengthened and Mana started flowing through her right arm .

After dealing with her cripple arm, Arthur used his Metal Magic to conjure a sharp and thin needle which was coated with a dense amount of Death Energy . He was following the Quad-Spirit's advice and clearing the impurities in her body which will greatly facilitate her recovery .

With precise and fast movements, he stabbed several parts of her abdomen and chest, injecting Death and Life energy in those holes . At the same time, his other hand was releasing a gentle and soothing light which healed minor injuries all over her body .

"64 holes, 32 for Death and 32 for Life . " Said the old ancient earth spirit, which now fused with the rest of the spirits . Through Arthur's eye, he attentively looked at his master's action, advising him and explaining the operation .

"She has a Yin Physique but the Golden Crow flames provide enough Yang to reach the required balanced . You only need to use Death Energy to separate them once, then Life Energy to merge them . In the past, they perfectly merged but whatever that man did, it caused all her Meridians to become corrupt and half-destroyed, I've never seen anything like this . "

Arthur was wholly focused on Lucy, more than half of his energy was poured into Lucy's body, first controlling the unstable Death Energy to forcefully separate the chilling Yin concentrated in her body and pushing away the golden energy mainly situated in her abdomen .

The process was difficult and the slightest mistake could potentially cripple her cultivation . Fortunately, her constitution was nothing to scoff at so Arthur was able to successfully complete the first task .

Sadly, the second one was much more difficult, mainly due to Arthur's physical body, which failed to properly circulate the energy from his Dantian to his Meridians . In fact, when he returned to his senses and checked his body, he was startled to see his lower body full of cracks, literally on the verge of breaking .

As he tried moving his legs, they crumbled and he was ejected from his previous body . Arthur was more preoccupied with Lucy than acquiring a host so he possessed her, making the completion of the second task easier as he could see everything clearly .

Approximatively six hours later, Arthur finished the second task, not only cleansing Lucy's body of all the impurities but also strengthening it and healing it . As per his calculations, Lucy would wake in a few hours, at most .

Having finished this straining operation, Arthur exited Lucy's body and retrieved a skeletal body from his Zodiac's storage . This corpse resembled Lichs and belonged to an old Necromancer .

Arthur wore Zodiak's black robe and held an ominous staff then banged it on the ground, causing more than fifty skeletal dogs and birds to appear . This shocked Vyncent, who was about to question Arthur only to see this .

After ordering the new summons to scout the area, Arthur turned to face Vyncent and Lissandra then raised his hand, releasing a blinding light which enveloped the weakly frail woman . This nourishing light got rid of the bruises in her limbs and gave her the necessary energy to move properly again, basically, it rejuvenated her .

Though Life energy isn't able to satiate thirst and hunger, it still able to slightly alleviate them .

"We'll rest until Lucy . You should eat in the meantime . "

The bearded youngster nodded his head and used the ring Arthur handed to him to retrieve some fruits and lots of roasted meat . The mere sight of such 'delicacies' made the dazed Lissandra salivate . Like a ghost, she snatched the meat out of Vyncent's hand and started gobbling it like a hungry wolf .

Arthur raised a Dark Barrier around the four of them, then swiftly created a concealing formation which made them undetectable . He used Lost Magic to create a few seats and a comfortable bed for Lucy then joined Vyncent and Lissandra .

"I believe we need to talk . "

Unlike in the past, Arthur's tone lacked any hostility or coldness when talking to either Lissandra or Vyncent . They saved him and he was grateful, it was as simple as that . Whatever happened in the past shall remain so .

Currently, their situation demanded that they joined hands, furthermore, Vyncent and Lissandra are more knowledgeable than him about Riarravar . It's true that he lived here a long time with his brothers but, after being invaded by the alien forces, the terrain of Riarravar would continuously and randomly shift so reaching their destination would prove harder than just blindly heading East .

"Yes *munch* we do . "

While fully enjoying a large piece of meat, Vyncent nodded his head, his mouth dirtied by the food . Were it not for the shiny armor he was wearing, he would have looked like a miserable homeless . His beard was thick and long, his eyes lacking any light, as if they lost their innocence, and his golden hair reaching his shoulders .

"I would also like to talk with you . "

A domineering voice rang inside Arthur's ears, causing him to abruptly stand up, startling the eating Vyncent .

"What's wrong? Did you detect nearby enemies?"

The young man became alert as he comically stood up and glanced around, still munching the food and tightly grasping the hot piece of meat .

Seeing that Vyncent didn't hear the voice, Arthur grew confused and uneasy . Due to the nature of this world, his Sixth Sense could only stretch for 400m, however, even without it, he could guess the identity of the person behind that voice .

In one of the empty eye-sockets of the host he was possessing, there appeared a green and eerie flickering flame . It creepily danced around in that big eye-sockets, seemingly searching for something .

"What do you want? I already refused to play your game . "

"Are you sure? Once you reach your desired destination, my offer will no longer be available . "

"I am sure . "

Arthur could hear a sigh followed by an unnoticeable tremor which affected the whole world .

"Well, you still have time so do think over, thoroughly, if you please . After all, in this boorish place, there's nothing better than a small game... a game, if won, will grant you a lifetime of benefits and rewards . Trust me, you won't regret playing . "

Arthur snickered and retorted: "What if I lose the game?"

The creature chuckled and replied: "I can guarantee that none of your humble companions will be affected . Plus, you'll also retain your life . "

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After having said his part, Timos no longer spoke, leaving a spooked Arthur alone . The parasite spent some time to collect his thoughts then sat back on the chair, waving his hand to Vyncent, signaling him that everything is alright .

The bearded young man finished his last piece of meat, licked his fingers then drank a bit of water . When he was fully satiated, he took a deep breath and shifted his attention to the eerie silent moving skeleton that was gazing at him, attentively and unobstructively .

When he was certain that he got Vyncent's full attention, Arthur said:

"How long have you been here?"

The blond man shrugged his shoulders and gave a vague answer: "Months? Years? Time flows differently in this world and I, for one, haven't been keeping count . Got other things in my mind, things more important than counting how much time I spent in this hell . "

"Then how did you end up here?"

Vyncent lifted his head and watched the sky, bloody red, illuminated by an ominous moon, so very close to the world... seemingly about to crash into it .

"An unfortunate accident . Honestly, if I can go back in time, I would still follow this path . It's either this or dying by the King's assassins . "

His face lacked its craftiness and previous brightness, under the bloody light coming from above, his expression was dim and his face devoid of any innocence . This world hardened his heart and changed his mentality, for the better or worse, nobody knows .

Arthur glanced at Lissandra, who was still eating, only to hear an answer to his thoughts almost immediately .

"I accidentally found her when I was scouting an enemy base . She told me she came from a world called Astria, there was a portal that connected the two worlds . "

Lissandra, albeit busy filling her belly, still heard their conversation . She cleared her stuffed throat and explained:

"Under the Eastern Continent, there was a cave from which the Cthulhu arrived . Deep inside, there's an orange portal that brought me here . "

With one hand under his skeletal chin, Arthur pondered for a few moments before asking again:

"This cave? Where is it exactly?"

The woman expected such a question so she honestly answered: "Apparently, there are many entrances . The one I used is located far North, somewhere around ancient elven ruins . "

She paused for a second, trying to remember the cave, then resumed: "Apart from a few simple traps, there was nothing special about the cave . However..."

As she stopped once again, the green flame inside Arthur's eye-socket started restlessly flickering, giving Lissandra the creeps . She knew it wasn't on purpose but, as a mortal, emotions such as fear, anger and such, are a common occurrence . Cultivators can, more or less, control their emotions, however, mortals heavily relied on emotions, which define their existence .

After struggling for a bit, Lissandra managed to spit the words which got stuck in her throat .

"However, at the end of the cave, I stumbled upon shocking things . Wall paintings . To be precise . You'd have to pay them some attention to know their meaning... they relay the past and present events... as well as future ones . "

"Future events? Could you elaborate?"

"Yes, sure . " She nodded her head and stated: "There weren't many paintings but each one of them was too accurate . I cannot recreate them but I can speak of what I saw; An army of undead, millions of them, as well as the four Divine Beasts, all marching toward the same direction . The World Tree attacked and scorched by alien forces, mainly angels . A man in black using a scroll on top of a valley . "

"Anything else?"

"Yes but uh... it was a long time ago for me and I can't properly remember them . "

Arthur waved his hand reassuringly and added: "It's fine if you can't remember, I'll personally investigate the cave once we're back . "

"What makes you think we'll come back? I've been here for a long time, more than you can imagine . As I said previously, time flows differently from the outside . It may have been a few days since I vanished from the Cloud Sea Universe while several years passed here . "

Arthur glanced at the unconscious Lucy then confidently said: "We'll be able to leave, trust me . "

Unconvinced, Vyncent retorted: "Don't get me wrong, it's not that I don't trust you, but... I want to bet on your abilities and not on your confidence . If there's one thing I learned here then it's that having hope is akin to signing your death certificate . Through the hard and rough way, I've learned not to make a move only when your survival is certain . People who 'hope' not to be captured or to escape this hell are but delusional idiots . "

The man unsheathed the sword he got from Arthur, gently caressed it while coldly looking at the parasite .

"Lissandra and I saved you both not out of pity or our past 'relationship' . No . We did it because we believed in your strength, in what you could do for us, how you can facilitate our hazardous adventure, if I may call it so . Arthur, I've seen what you're capable of and I know a fair bit about your powers, however stranger they may be . I chose to bet on them because we desperately need them, especially in such an unfavorable and unfamiliar world . "

Arthur wasn't the least bit angry over Vyncent's words, he knew the man's reasoning and he had no right to blame him .

"Your actions are justified . I, too, if I were in your position, wouldn't have saved a soul if they can't prove to be useful in the future . "

"Yes, we risked it big by saving you two . Lissandra had to store her power for one whole year to teleport such a big distance, and twice, at that . "

"I know, and I'm grateful for what you did . I thank you for my and Lucy's behalf . You can consider those rings as partial compensation . "

Still looking at Arthur with an expressionless face, Vyncent sheathed the sword then said

"Since you said so then, these rings, I will keep . However, please do not misunderstand me, I did not ask for your gratefulness but your help . With you here, even if we can't leave this world, we can at least reach the remaining base East of here . "

The bearded young man stood up, fixed the sheath on his waist then glanced at Arthur, saying his last bit . "One last things, Arthur... I'm no position to lecture you but don't get too attached . In here, anything can happen so you should always prepare for the worst, always . "

His figure melted in the ground, leaving a silent Arthur and a nonchalant Lissandra, who savored the food as if it was her last meal .

...

"Your desire to leave my 'turf' is stronger than ever . What happened, dear guest, someone bothered you?"

Timos deep voice reverberated inside Vyncent's ears . He was scanning the area when he suddenly heard this voice, invading his mind, reading his thoughts .

"Bugger off . "

"Come now . " The entity sounded a little hurt as it continued; "You don't have to be so aggressive . I'm trying to be helpful here . Don't you want to leave? Start a new life? Not everything is lost, you know . "

Vyncent ignored the voice, pretending as if it didn't exist . However, the one speaking knew better than to stop, it could see the man's turbulent emotions, his hidden desires, and masked expression .

"Do you have some bad blood with the new guests?" Timos remained silence for a few moments, seemingly trying to see through Vyncent . "Hmm, it doesn't seem to be the case, then . . what's pushing you so hard? You used to be docile, unperturbed by mortal emotions . You do know that one simple 'outburst', as you people like to call it, would lead to your miserable and very unwanted to death . "

The man kept his eyes focused, inspecting the terrain, his body merging with the earth, catching the tiny vibrating all around him .

Seeing that he got no reactions from his first guess, Timos let out a sigh and added:

"Treat wisely, my dear guest . 'Tis a treacherous path and an unfair life but waste not the potential given to you . Do not let yourself be controlled by your emotions . Think, think, and think before you act . You've entertained me so I want to see the day you leave this forsaken place . "

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Her eyes fluttered then slowly opened, she remained in a dazed state for a few seconds as she was trying to remember what happened before she fell unconscious . Her memories were disorderly and the pain assaulting her head was slowly disappearing . Strangely, she felt refreshed, her body as light as a feather and her supposedly crippled arm in a perfect, working state .

Her right eye pulsed with blue light as it focused on the red and ominous sky, contemplating something, unaware of the unwavering gaze directed at her . Half a minute later, she sat up only to see a tall skeletal body sitting next to her, its only eye confirmed the person's identity .

The woman flashed a mesmerizing smile at the undead, stretched her hand and grasped his, unaffected by the coldness coming from the old bones .

Lucy tried to stand up only for Arthur to stop her while saying:

"Rest for a few minutes . Let the Mana circulate inside your body . "

"En . "

She obediently nodded her head while staring at him . Seeing her fiery gaze, Arthur chuckled and jokingly said:

"Not so pleasant to the eye anymore, huh?"

Her soft smile widened as she pushed back her long silver hair which fell on her eyes then retorted .

"No . " She tightly clenched his skeletal hand while continuing: "To me, no matter what body you're using, you'll always be the same . My Arthur . "

"Hahahaha, that's good to hear because I'll need to use this body... at least until I find a better alternative . "

This host, albeit ugly and inefficient in many ways, is one of the best available host options for him . It greatly boosts his Necromancy and Dark Magic and isn't affected by hunger, thirst, or the brutal weather .

Without going too much into the unnecessary details, Arthur recounted his last trip Riarravar and all that happened after . He spoke of the Twelve, his relationship with Wolfram and Leiu, and about Anatassia's disappearance .

"Weird, she's not the kind of person to disappear so abruptly and without prior notice . "

Lucy had a very close relationship with Anastassia . Sonia's big sister, the master of the Ma Clan was never a rush person, though she can be emotional at times, she always makes the wisest decisions . So, her sudden disappearance was a strange occurrence .

"What are Jakob's thoughts?"

Expecting such a question, Arthur let out a sigh and said: "He seemed to have given up . He's meticulously handling the sect and taking care of his son . He seemed to have changed, drastically . "

"Of course he has, he lost his wife and can't abandon his son and roam the world, hoping to find her . "

"That is why I promised him that I'll find her . "-Arthur

"I'm afraid it won't be easy . We have to leave this place first . "

The half white specter stood up, scanned her surroundings then raised her hand, emitting chilling white energy which spread toward all directions, decreasing the unbearable heat and cooling the weather, making it much more manageable .

Lissandra and Vyncent, who just came back, took a deep breath and enjoyed the refreshing coldness brought by the beautiful falling snowflakes .

As she was too engrossed in this snow-like 'world', Lissandra failed to notice the graceful figure marching toward her . Only when Lucy stopped before the frail woman did the latter snap out of her daze and unconsciously take a step back .

Lucy's gaze contained no hostility, just the usual coldness, which seemed to have slightly melted as she looked at the woman before her . While stretching her hand, she said:

"The past is the past . You saved my life so I will restrain from expressing my thanks with words and, instead, protect you until we leave this world . "

Though a bit hesitant at first, Lissandra still shook Lucy's hands . The two women shook hands for a good ten seconds before they separated, their gazes also shifting to something else .

"With the two of you conscious and healthy, I reckon our trip to the East will be much easier . "

Vyncent nodded back to Lucy, who glanced at him, and uttered those words .

"The terrain is constantly changing, how are we to head East?"-Arthur

Arthur knew that Riaravar's terrain was continuously and randomly changing . One second they're heading East, the other they're going the opposite way, there's no way of telling they're on the right track .

The System's map was non-functioning ever since he entered Oblivion, making any kind of navigation almost impossible, especially with this environment, which looked the same everywhere you go .

"I can lead the way but we have to go in a straight line . "

"Which means we'll encounter enemy camps and armies . "-Lucy

"Exactly . " Vyncent nodded his head and retrieved an old yellow-ish paper from his pocket . He straightened it then put it on the chair while explaining: "Ever since I arrived here, I've tried reaching the East resistance camp but due to the shifting mountains and treacherous roads, all my attempts were unsuccessful . Nevertheless, I noticed that the enemy camps were always the same, which means that I've been running in a circle . There are a few Cthulhu patrols roaming the land but they're of no threat to us . What worries me are this and this . "

He pointed at two black circle surrounding a large area of the map .

"The nearest one is a large Cthulhu camp, the same one Lissandra appeared in . A big army is stationed there with dozens of generals and a commander, which is the real problem . The small fries are manageable but the commander uses a special bow and fires arrows from miles away . Believe me, Arthur, one arrow from that monstrosity can even injure someone like you, heavily, too . "

Arthur remembered a giant that wielded a terrifying Arrow the last time he was here . Though the giant was dangerous, it isn't really a threat to the current him, who can pulverize everything with one 'simple' Rizaki . As for Makaze, he decided to not use it here . Ever since it reached his side, the dark blade has been behaving strangely, very strangely, in fact . It would constantly vibrate and sometimes became uncontrollable . It wasn't due to devouring the orb but because of this world, it was doing something to it . For that reason, Arthur stored it in Zodiak's storage, only to be used in extreme emergency situations .

"What about the second obstacle?"-Arthur

Lissandra snorted and Vyncent clicked his tongue, visibly angry .

"Parasites . " He replied, frowning and gritting his teeth . "A troublesome bunch . Very resilient and way smarter than the barbaric Cthulhu . They're more coordinated and we have no concrete or detailed information about their base, much less they . "

"Alright... so we have to get past these two and we'll arrive East?"

Vyncent shook his head and corrected him: "No, that's not a certainty . What I can tell you, however, is that the two enemy bases will chase us down like dogs and we won't be able to get past them, stealthily, I mean . "

Curious about what she had previously seen, Lucy asked: "What about that massive monster?"

Lissandra knew who Lucy was talking about . She looked at the shadowed sky and answered

"Timos won't interfere . The Cthulhu may be his creation but he's not interested in them . "

The woman stopped, then, as if she remembered something, added: "If he telepathically talks to you, ignore him . "

. .

Half an hour later, after everyone readied themselves, they finally departed . To make sure Lissandra is absolutely safe, Arthur conjured a Dark Barrier around her and hid three Death Knights in her shadow . Furthermore, he built a simple, offensive formation that can deal with the weaklings .

The formation uses thirty-six swords which follow his will . The swords do not have any attributes and are fed with Sword Essence, it is an efficient killing formation, something used back in the old days, when the Buria Empire was still prosperous .

"What is this place?"

As he heard her expected question, the old man chuckled and said

"See for yourself . "

They elevated in the air, having a much clearer view of the land before their eyes . There was a vast, lush forest, clean rivers and snowy mountains .

Anastassia, confused, kept scanning the area but this peaceful place was unfamiliar . Her spiritual body followed the calm old man, who took her to various places of this world .

Just when they were about to head West, a small, pinkish figure blocked their path . With an angry expression, one hand on her hip and the other pointing at them, she loudly yelled .

"What are you doing here? Scram! It's not a place for stinky people!"

The Lolitta coldly snorted and waved her hand, signaling for them to immediately leave this place . Her face telling them that she didn't even want to hear an explanation . It's either she truly didn't stomach them or wanted to vent some accumulated anger at the first people she ran into .

Seeing this she-devil rage at him and his disciple, Death frowned and inspected her . Unfortunately, he found nothing suspicious, she was an office AI hired by the System to manage this world . However, her strange and eccentric attitude was definitely abnormal .

"Little day, we're just sightseeing, we won't bother anyone . " He kindly smiled and mouthed his sentence quite well to not incense the Lolitta .

"What sightseeing! This isn't a park! You better leave before I make yo-"

She halted mid-sentence, her gaze focusing on Anastassia .

"Wait . " With a hand on her chin, she stared at the black-haired woman from head to toe before adding: "I know you! You're one of the parasite's friends!"

Just as she said that, the old man's eye narrowed . His countenance became much more serious as a cold gleam flashed across his eyes . He lifted his hand, which magically reached the Lolitta and grabbed her by the throat .

With a chilling voice and a piercing glare, he said

"Who are you?"

He knew all of Arthur's entourage yet this girl, who's also an AI, seemed to be awfully familiar with Arthur, to the point of recognizing Anastassia .

As she was suffocating under his deathly grip, the little girl's face reddened . She helplessly moved her hand and legs, trying to free herself .

After a lot of effort and a bitter struggle, she managed to squeeze out a few words

"P-perverted freak! I'll s-show you!"

A simple red card fell from under her dress, falling a few meters before it froze mid-air then started emitting a red light .

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Before the old man could react, a monstrous force hit him from above, sending him flying like a kite while at the same time releasing his grip, finally setting the little girl free, unwillingly, of course .

"Jeeeeeez! Never thought I'll be called so soon . "

The Joker stared at the haggard old man, who swiftly got up and glared at him .

"Don't try to frighten me with your old eyes!"

The Joker's hand flashed and grabbed the startled Anastassia . He held her from the back of her neck while mockingly saying

"What? You hold one of my people yet I can't do the same?"

He paused, glanced at the distressed and angry Lolitta then said

"Now, you're going to be a good old man and sincerely, I repeat, SINCERELY, apologize to her . Hmmm, and give her a gift too, she's still young so a present would certainly please her . "

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"You'll stay behind and wait for my signs . "

Lucy wanted to object but a gentle, harmless force pushed a few steps back . She didn't even have time to open her mouth before Arthur vanished, leaving an inky black fog in his stead .

Sure, her help would facilitate many things, however, she has to remain here and guard Lissandra . As for Vyncent, he's more than capable of defending himself, especially after getting a gear upgrade from the parasite .

The trio hid in a secluded area, bereft of anything, living or dead . They were a fair distance away from the Cthulhu base, which could be seen from their location .

Unlike his companions, Arthur recognized this place, this broken city, once prosperous and bustling with people of all races . He fought Claudia here and the aftermath razed the whole place to the ground, leaving a few, very lucky survivors .

The casualties that day surpassed anyone's imaginations, innocents were slaughtered due to the conflict of otherworldly beings . It wasn't Arthur wasn't the one who caused the catastrophic explosion, his arrival and invasion of the castle did push the parasites into doing such a terrible thing . However, he didn't blame himself for he knew that one city massacred is still better than letting all of Riarravar fall into the parasites' hands .

Unfortunately, they changed the fate of one place but couldn't alter the ending . Their contribution, if it may be called so, was unnecessary, untimely, and consequential .

Currently, the barbaric monsters built shabby looking huts and tents, regarding this area as their 'home', a safe place where they can do whatever they wish .

As expected, even though there were fewer and fewer humans remaining in this world, that didn't stop the Cthulhu from capturing a few and torturing them in inhumane ways .

An eerie black fog traveled through the air, unnoticed by any of the resting monsters . The evil race was busying himself with food, torture, or other miscellaneous things, disgusting to even describe .

The parasite passed through them and paused for a few seconds when he got too close to one of the giants .

...

"I don't think it was a good idea to let him go alone . Their commander is dangerous ."

Vyncent glanced at the Cthulhu base, his brows furrowed and his foot repeatedly tapping on the ground, clearly tense .

"It should be soon . "-Lucy

Lucy raised her head and gazed at the red sky, her eye, strangely started emitting a blue light which startled Lissandra and the bearded youngster .

The light coming out of her eye enveloped the trip and turned everything around them grey as if time and space were stopped . From this point onwards, anything outside of the blue sphere's range of interference won't affect anything inside, no matter what it is .

Lissandra followed the woman's eyes and was shocked to see the sky turned disturbingly black, blocking the moon and dispersing all the clouds . This sudden change was followed by a passing breeze, ghostly and soul-shaking . As they were inside the blue sphere, they weren't affected, however, they were able

to see the nothingness caused by the darkness . Hear the deep and threatening growls coming from the Cthulhu base .

The darkness lasted for a few seconds before it was absorbed by a minuscule thing right at the center of the enemy base . It was a speck of strange black light, devouring every inky blackness around it .

The Cthulhu also sensed the change in weather and environment but, sadly, before they could react, the earth started to violently shake and the sky cracked .

All sound was cut off and the world was stripped of any source of light, enveloping it in total gloom . It was an explosion using compressed Dark Magic and as per the parasite's expectation, it was able to demolish everything in its way . Turning all the monsters into absolute emptiness, even the half-dead humans were killed, leaving literally nothing behind .

The base was built on a large crater, however, even this crater disappeared, leaving behind it a dangerous black fog, negating all light . Nothing was able to get past the black fog, not even the suffocating heat that dominated the whole world .

...

Inside this black fog, there was a tall, blurry silhouette, its body even bigger than the giants . Its eyes releasing a golden glow piercing the fog and attempting to locate the source of everything . It took the commander but a few breaths to find a lonely figure floating above the fog, its flickering green eye dancing in the empty socket .

Without hesitation, the commander retrieved a silvery bow from its back and pulled the metal strings . It raised its weapon, aimed at the parasite and pulled the string, releasing an arrow of light that dispersed all the fog in its way and whistled as it made its way toward its target .

Before it could hit the floating skeleton, the arrow bumped into a transparent barrier, stopping it for three seconds . Arthur raised his staff and pointed it at the arrow, resulting in countless bony spikes to surround the arrow and hit it .

Though it had monstrous force behind it, the arrow crumbled before all the spikes, dispersing into countless specks of light . Arthur banged his staff three times, sending ghostly silhouette at the commander, who fired three more arrows, each one stronger than the last .

The screeching ghost-like creatures passed through the arrows and emitted deafening and wild sound waves that pushed back the Cthulhu, then, they entered his body, causing it to shake for a few moments before a cluster of blood was spat by the surprisingly handsome commander .

As the fog cleared up, the appearance of the infamous commander could be seen . He had long silver hair, brown skin, and golden pupils, totally unfit to be called a Cthulhu or a barbaric, brainless monster .

"What are you?"

With a piercing glare, the commander readied his bow again and asked, using the common language used by the humans . Alas, he didn't get an answer from Arthur, who sent dozens of bone spikes at him while filling the sky with fiery vermilion flames .

The Cthulhu bent his back, pointed his weapon upwards and shot three arrows at once . They twirled around each other and clashed with the falling sea of fire, breaking it and splitting the sky . It wasn't the end of the arrows as they fell back down, ready to disintegrate the undead .

As for the bone spikes, the commander, while making use of flawless footwork, agilely most of them while deflecting the rest .

"You have no idea who you're messing with . This isn't a world for your kind . "

The commander roared and shot more arrows at Arthur . The parasite vanished, teleporting of few times and easily dodging the arrows .

"'Tis not a world for your crude race too . "-Arthur

"So you can talk, vermin!"

The battle grew fiercer as Arthur unleashed a torrent of spells, mostly Dark Magic . As for the commander, he kept bombarding the parasite with his arrows . The Cthulhu was incredibly fast and wasn't the least bit injured even after being hit by two detonators, six bone spikes, and thirteen lengthy Dark Spears . His skin was tougher than metal and his movements were unfit for a creature of his size .

Chapter 519

"Now you understand how your victims feel when you invade their home and mercilessly slaughter every last one of them . "

Arthur spoke to the commander, who somersaulted, and, mid-air, fired arrows at the unmoving parasite . Unfortunately for the Cthulhu, not one of its arrows managed to get past Arthur's defenses . They either struck his Dark Barrier or were deflected by half-transparent grey tornadoes, also known as death storms .

"You come, uninvited, wreak havoc like an abomination and explain your actions through such lies!"

The enormous monster snickered at Arthur, showing a row of straight white teeth . His lips curved upwards as he lowered his bow and continued:

"Before you come lecturing me or my kin about our actions, take a thorough look at the history, the true history, not the fabricated one . "

Arthur listened to the rambling commander, his eye fixated on the enemy and his staff raised but no attacks were unleashed . Deep inside, he knew that this strange being, leading the bunch of barbaric and mindless aliens, was most likely spouting nonsense, however, there was something about his tone . He didn't seem to be acting or trying to buy time, his words genuine, containing anger and frustration as if he was the one being blamed .

Unfortunately, even if there was a sliver of truth in his words, that doesn't change anything . They still massacred a whole world, eradicated all races but themselves and top it all, took joy in the weaklings' suffering, using them as 'decoration' to liven their mood .

"I don't need to look at history to understand . I saw enough to know that you and your race are evil, filth that does not belong here . "

The commander snorted, glanced at the scorched and bloodied remains of the 'lucky' Cthulhu which weren't engulfed by the Dark Rizaki, and retorted:

"Just because we're different, mentally and physically, doesn't mean we're evil . We have different perspectives, we do not view the world like humans, elves, or dwarves . We were created this way, it's not our fault that we seek violence instead of peace . Furthermore, even without our interference, this world was bound to break, either by our hands or the humans . A greedy race, pretending to be peaceful but is actually the most dangerous of them all . "

His golden pupils glared at Arthur, his gaze unwavering and he clenched his teeth .

"Tell me, undead, how are we different to the humans, who, at the very beginning, massacred almost the entirety of the elven race, fearing their magic . It was only after a bitter war that took half of the population that the two races settled, finally choosing to 'cooperate' . Although I say cooperate, it was hardly any different from a cold war that lasted until our arrival . Humans sought domination... power, they wanted to enslave anyone and anything that didn't look like them . "

After a few seconds of silence crept by, Arthur said: "Yes, they fought, over and over, however, there were still boundaries . I won't defend the humans but they sure as hell didn't want to destroy this world . It's their business if they wanted to dominate it but they didn't resort to cruel means like you did . "

As if he heard a joke, the commander let out a sarcastic laugh and countered: "Cruel means? Then what do you call the White Plague? An artificial disease that killed thousands of humans and elves alike, causing them to suffer for days . The weapons they created and used against anyone who opposed them . Actually, did you know that we learned about torture from humans? We merely imitated them . We weren't born outright defected . "

"Anyway, it's not like bickering like this will change anything . Raise your bow . "

Arthur pointed his staff at the commander and fired several, successive blasts conjured from death energy . They were formless and swift as they instantaneously hit the Cthulhu, causing him to take a few steps back .

He tried to retaliate by shooting an arrow, however, his hands were frozen by invisible, soft yet unbreakable threads . He only needed to let go of the metallic string but such a simple action wasn't possible .

His whole body fell into a net of threads . When he took a few steps back due to Arthur's previous attack, he fell right into the parasite's trap .

While the commander was explaining himself, Arthur used his threads to form an invisible war, like a spider's web . Even with his over-sized body and monstrous strength, the Cthulhu was rendered immobile and defenseless .

Having caught the enemy, Arthur floated closer to the commander, his flaming green eye dancing in an unsettling manner .

"If all of your race was half as intelligent as you are, maybe it wouldn't have come to this . Maybe, just maybe, you could have reached a compromise . "

Though he was captured and surely about to be killed, the being remained unfazed, even when he was facing death . His gripping golden eyes remained locked on the robbed-undead making its way toward him .

"You don't understand . We were blamed since our creation... and not only us, our magnanimous God wasn't spared too . Those naysayers, foolish and restless, wanted to find a target to incriminate, and we were just unlucky to be created at such a time, the perfect time for them . "

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"As I told you before, I shall repeat it again . Your words won't change a thing, they never will... it's over now . "

The commander flashed a hideous smile at Arthur, his body wriggling and his tied hand balling into clenched fists .

"No, it's not over . It will only be so when the humans are gone . Undead, with time, you will come to understand how dangerous and corrupted humans are, how one second they wave their innocence flag and the other, they stab you in the back, ruthlessly and mercilessly . Beware . "

The commander didn't wait for Arthur's final attack and, instead, freed one of his hands and stabbed an arrow into his heart, killing himself .

Arthur looked at the lifeless body of the commander laying on the ground and let out a soft sigh, waving his hand, storing the Cthulhu's body then sending a blinding light high-up in the sky . This radiance was the signal meant for the three hiding in the back .

A few seconds later, Lucy, accompanied by Lissandra and Vyncent, appeared next to Arthur . The silver-haired woman's gaze was on Arthur, who was lost in his thoughts .

"To be honest, I didn't expect it to end so quickly and... easily . "

Vyncent let out a surprised whistle as he saw the scattered bodies of the dead Cthulhu, most of them scorched or missing a head or a limb .

"Let us go, I do not like the smell of this place . "

Arthur landed on the ground and started walking North-East, seemingly still absent-minded . Sadly, his pondering was cut short as a disembodied voice rang inside of his head .

"My dear guest, do you feel happy now that you got rid of one obstacle? Relieved after massacring thousands of my children?"

As he heard this familiar voice, Arthur knew that it was Timos, the massive being that could be seen from all corners of this world .

'They simply got what they deserved . '

"Yes yes, don't misunderstand me, I do not blame you or resent you . It was a necessary action to get to your destination and I fully support your direct and swift means . It's just that... I'm curious about your thoughts, your 'feelings' . Unlike your humble and dear comrades, I cannot see through you . You're like

an impasse, blocking me and everyone, and, this picked my interest . A hot and interesting topic which can distract me for a while, decrease some of my unrestrained boredom . "

'I'm not obliged to talk to you, much less reply . '

"Of course not! What you do is entirely up to you . I'll talk and you, unwilling to converse, will quietly listen to me . You're free to deny my words if you ever want to, too . "

Chapter 520

"My dear guest, right and wrong are made-up things, they do not separate us and our enemies . It's our different standpoints, our perspectives isolate us from each other . Both sides blame each other . There is no good or bad, just two different views that happen to contradict . If that is true then it explains why, in wars, for example, both sides do not feel guilty when they battle each other to the death, unaware that they are pointlessly spilling blood . And, obviously, with the occurrence of wars, countless innocents and powerless peasant die, for no reason, just because they were at the right time and place . Then, why, you would say, that weaklings are always the first to die, to be tortured, or to be used or taken advantage of? Is it because they relinquished the right to acquire power? Nay, perhaps they did not have the 'privilege' for such right, undoubtedly meant for Kings, most nobles would say . Mayhap, as the elves preached, one must respect nature and yearn for peace to be able to live a good, fulfilling life, regardless of their power, physical or verbal .

Do we blame the ones doing the killing? The ones ordering the killing? Or both?"

Arthur slowly marched along with the other silent three, each minding their business . Vyncent was scanning the area, searching for any signs of enemies . Lissandra closed her eyes and would take deep breaths every now and then, the reason behind her strange actions remains unknown .

As for Lucy, she gazing at Timos' silhouette, which hung a looming shadow over the whole area . His thick and outrageously tall tentacles randomly danced in the air, the smallest of them was the size of a normal village .

The land around Timos was ravaged, turned into rubble and countless craters . No living beings dared to go near him, no, nothing and no one is able to get close, whether they wanted it or not .

His aura, though restrained, was stronger the closer you get to him . Furthermore, if one of the tentacle were to accidentally hit you, it will only leave a mist of blood in its path .

The one that tried to snatch the Angel of Death could barely called a tentacle, it was a small part of Timos, like a single hair of someone's head, insignificant and totally harmless .

As he listened to Timos, Arthur let out an inaudible grunt but chose not to comment, deeming it as useless to argue .

"As I said before, you do not need to talk . Listening is enough for me, after all, the basis of every conversation is hearing what the other party has to say . I consider interrupting others as rude... only people who can't defend themselves or don't have convincing arguments tend to cut-in, only wanting to be heard yet refusing to listen . Idiocy, but I digress .

My precious invitee, I don't blame you for the death of my children, however, I do not condone your means . Believe it or not, this 'base' you considered as an impasse, something that blocks your path, didn't need to be so mercilessly destroyed, causing more harm to this broken world . Everything can be solved using words, even with non-sentient beings . You can't communicate so you use violence? That's absurd and unsophisticated . True, you don't feel guilty but that doesn't change the fact that you did something unnecessary . "

'Don't lump me with those freaks who kill anyone and everything . I've made the best choice in my current situation, the choice which requires less time and energy . Their deaths were not necessary but obligatory . Even if they weren't in my way, they would have been killed for what they did to humans . '

Arthur heard a low chuckle, which sounded like the growl of a beast .

"Oh... so you want to be some kind of vigilante? Vanquishing the 'evil' and stopping the reign of terror . Roaming the land and getting rid of all the filth in the world . If it's like that then what's your reason? Protect humanity? Self-satisfaction? Atoning for past sins? It's always something within those lines . "

'...'

Arthur didn't reply, or, more accurately, couldn't . Partially, Timos' words were true, he could have spared most of the Cthulhu but he didn't . Why? Because he felt angry at them, for what they did to the humans, elves, and all other races who fell into their hands . For him, the Cthulhu were an evil race, end of the line . From his perspective, there was no need for any explanation, not for Timos or anyone else . Though, it's not like anyone would demand such a thing for they don't care, they don't give a damn about the Cthulhu, or anyone else . People only care about themselves, their benefits .

It wouldn't be surprising to see humans allying with Cthulhu as long as they receive good rewards . Some have morals, firmly believing in justice but they're few and far between, and, in some cases, fanatics who do twisted things to achieve what they assume is 'true justice' .

"I don't like what you did but I cannot judge it as a 'wrong' or 'evil' thing . It's something done out of necessity, to survive . Now, let me speak about something else that bugs me a bit . "

After a short silence, Timos continued

"Your petulant individualism . Do you think it'll achieve anything? Even beings such as myself never dared to always act alone, much less you, my dear guest . Relying solely on yourself, thinking that your impudence and overbearingness is enough to push away those around you . I can see who you hold dear and who you do not care about, it's pretty easy to notice through your actions . Over time, those feelings you so dearly cling onto will slowly yet surely disappear . Not on their own, of course . It'll be you who will crash everything, that is, if you continue to conduct yourself so... so incomprehensibly . "

'Now that you've said your piece, can you shut up?'

Annoyed by the endlessly talking Timos, Arthur snapped at him . He didn't to be educated by a monster who pretends to be intelligent using his pitiful eloquence .

"I will, if you answer one question of mine . "

'...'

Timos regarded Arthur's silence as acceptance so, without beating around the bush, asked:

"What is better? To be born good or to overcome your evil nature through great effort?"

Arthur didn't give an immediate reply . He spent an inordinate amount of time thinking before saying:

"There's no such thing as to be born good . The experiences you live through determine whether you're good or evil . Your actions prove your nature . "

"Then, how do you explain the existence of my children? You said that none can be born good then it's right to assume that, also, none can be born evil . Why is it that my children were called evil, defective, abominations . "

"Because they are . Their actions proved what they are . "

"Their actions, yes . Them? Not so much . There's no denying they've become 'evil' but they weren't outright evil . There must have been a process that led them to be like this . This process, either natural or caused by someone's machination, is, from my perspective, the true evil . The mastermind . "