

## Once Human 521

### Chapter 521

"What, my dear guest? Are you not convinced? Just like any other being, my children were born innocent . The cruel environment they've been set in is exactly what twisted their minds . Mind you, we're talking logically here... there is no room for emotions or biased perspectives . "

'So? Do you want to defend their actions? Or are you trying to explain to me the process they went through to become like this? I'm not interested . '

Arthur retorted . He felt a chill run down his exposed spine, harmless but dreadful . He could feel Timos' gaze lock onto him, pierce his shrouded mind and peek into hidden thoughts .

"Do not misunderstand . Please . I'm bored so I'm voicing opinions, which are, undoubtedly, facts . "

'Hmpf! Just because you say they are facts doesn't mean they are . The Cthulhu may have evolved, mutated, it makes no difference . I'm judging them based on what I've seen . '

"Honored invitee, you're getting a bit agitated so I'll refrain from saying anything else . Let my words sink in . Plus, you'll be staying here for a bit longer so why don't you look around . Explore . Only then will you make sense of something, perhaps even everything . "

"Hey . " Lucy stopped Arthur, her face showing a look of worry, clearly from his eerie silence and the visibly perturbed train of thought . "Are you okay? Tell me . "

Through his non-existent lips, Arthur spoke with a warm and reassuring tone: "It's nothing . Just pondering about the parasite camp . Back then, I'm sure we eradicated them . "

Vyncent, who was close enough to hear Arthur, said: "Either a few slipped in or they came from another world . I'm more inclined to the second probability, though . "

"They are normal parasites, not as many as the Cthulhu . Now that we got rid of the real danger, getting past them won't be that bothersome . "

Lissandra cut-in, her hands releasing a pulsating white glow which beautifully danced around her, seemingly searching for something .

"At most, there a few dozen of parasites . They are protecting an artifact... the powerful kind . " She continued while mysteriously moving her hand, injecting a speck of light in each of the other three .

Seeing their confused expression albeit their non-resistance to the incoming light, she explained: "It's a trivial thing that be handy in desperate situations . Basically, it grants you a minor immunity to the mental attacks of the specialized parasites . "

Arthur, for one, didn't need it thanks to his special race . Not only is his mental much stronger than the rest, but his Magical and Soul defense are also higher than an Overgod's . Moreover, Curtis is guarding his soul, which is the main target of mental attacks .

Generally, there are three kinds of attacks; physical attacks, mental curses and soul strikes . The last two are closely tied to each other, in fact, mental curses are considered a sub-category of soul strikes . So, as long as one has an impenetrable soul, he or she should not fear meager curses .

Lucy's Physique partially affected her soul, causing it to become filled with Yin power, the main catalyst for mental curses . Besides that, her stats are high enough to negate any mental assault .

Vyncent can fend for himself using his cultivation, however, Lissandra is but a mortal, a frail one . Were it not for her mysterious ability, she would not even be able to walk properly in Riarravar .

"Any idea about the purpose of the tightly-protected artifact?"

Arthur asked the bearded man cautiously walking behind him . In response, Vyncent stopped warily glancing around and turned his pair of eyes to the tall undead in front of him, his expression unreadable .

"A large crystal . It's to be used a fuel for a summoning ritual . "

"Summoning? Summon what? Their God?"

Vyncent shrugged his shoulders, indicating that he also doesn't know, oblivious .

'That can't be right . Timos is here, why would they summon Zaarae? Didn't she lose her powers?'

Arthur returned to being lost in his thoughts, trying to figure out the parasites' plan . The old man with flaming skin refused to speak a word so he was immediately killed .

'If she's coming here then there must be a change of plans... damnit!'

Unlike Timos, who doesn't recognize him, Zaarae is another matter . She hold a personal grudge toward him and would definitely pursue him to the end of the world . She's known to be a ruthless and powerful Empress, a peak fighter even without her racial abilities .

"Worried about Zaarae?" Lucy asked him, her eyes staring at the open scorched field all around them .

"It seems we can't just pass through the parasites . I need to make sure they won't summon her . However, I can't find a good reason they'll summon her here . There's nothing left to obtain . "

"Maybe they knew about your arrival beforehand . "-Lucy

"I don't know . Having her come here will complicate everything . "

Lissandra cut the couple off, her expression that of confusion .

"Wait, who are you talking about? Who's this Zaarae?"

"The Parasite Empress . " Arthur gave an immediate and honest reply . As she heard him, Lissandra and Vyncent kept silent, neither stopping Arthur nor questioning him about knowledge about said Empress .

They already knew he was parasite but way different than the rest, more powerful and mysterious . From the way he just talked, it was clear that he had issues with Zaarae, who should not be brought here .

"What do you want to do?" Lucy asked her husband, waiting for him to speak of a plan before voicing out her thoughts .

"Check the parasite base and destroy the summoning crystal . "

Lucy frowned, thought for a moment before responding: "That's a bit rush, isn't it? We're still not sure if they'll summon her... or if that's even possible . Why don't we investigate first . "

Arthur didn't reply to her, instead, he abruptly halted his steps, looked around and said:

"That's not an option anymore . "

Lucy didn't get enough time to reply as several swift shadows appeared all around them, each focusing on one of the four . Their faces were covered by a black veil and their clothes were inky black . Their speed was out of the ordinary, however, to their misfortune, they couldn't reach their target as their legs got mingled into vines that sprung from the ground .

Two of them rolled on the ground and were bound by thick thorny vines while the other two managed to jump away and safely land a distance away from the instantaneous field of poisonous plants created by Arthur .

"What have we here?"

The undead faced the motionless assailants, his feet slowly marching toward them . They cautiously raised their weapons, a pair of silver daggers, and tried to slowly back away only to meet an invisible way .

"We are still far from your base, why the need to come to us, so quickly and aggressively?"

Arthur's voice became ghastly, his cane monotonously banged on the ground with each step taken . A black fog materialized around him, shrouding his figure and releasing an ominous aura .

Actually, Arthur expected them to commit suicide but the reality was much different and surprising . They raised their hands, threw their daggers and knelt on the ground .

Seeing such suspicious behavior, Arthur felt uneasy . He isn't used to such behavior, especially from parasites, who would rather die than submit .

Lucy joined him as two crystalline lotuses flew from her side to the two kneeling parasites, rotating around them and freezing the ground, slowly creeping into their bodies, starting from their lower limbs .

"We mean you no harm, please stop!" One of them yelled with a feminine voice .

Although the freezing process was momentarily stopped, the two closed lotuses remained near the surrendering parasites .

Arthur stopped a few meters away from the parasites, glanced at the other two, who were caught by his vines and fell unconscious, then coldly said .

"I would like to believe you... were it not for your previously raised arms, hostile actions and covered faces . "

The undead raised his bony hand, malevolent darkness emanating from the spiky tip of his fingers .

Vyncent, staying at the back, hurriedly said: "It's pointless to argue with them, finish them off and let us go . There will be more coming . "

As they heard him, the female parasite who just yelled shook her head and pleaded again:

"No! We came alone! Please believe us . We really meant no harm, we were just testing you . "

With a trembling hand, she pointed at the fallen daggers and explained: "Those daggers are fake... they're made of fragile glass . They can't even hurt a corpse . "

Arthur followed her gaze and stared at the fallen daggers . One of them flew up to him, stopping inches away from his eerie eye . He stretched his hand and felt the dagger, which easily shattered the moment it made contact with a tiny bit of Dark Magic .

Indeed, the parasite was telling the truth, nevertheless, that doesn't make them any less dangerous .

## Chapter 522

Please visit [freewebnovel.com](http://freewebnovel.com)

"So, let me get this right . You wanted to test us so you attacked when we're aware, wielding harmless weapons to prove you held no hostile intention... Do you truly believe we're going to accept such a reason and warmly welcome you?"

Arthur coldly looked at the defenseless parasite, his voice toneless and hand unleashing threads of Dark Magic which danced in the air, slowly closing on the two bound parasites .

"Please! You have to listen to us . "

The female prisoner begged again, sounding quite miserable . She didn't try to free herself or resist the encroaching darkness creeping towards her .

"Nonsense! Finish them off, Arthur . "

Vyncent was totally against letting them live for another second . With hurried steps, he marched in their direction, his swords unsheathed and ready to strike .

"Up until this point, you haven't given me a convincing reason to stop him . "

Arthur didn't stop the incoming Vyncent, who's eyes were emitting unrestrained killing intent . His hatred for parasites was equal to Cthulhu, if not more . They weren't as numerous as their supposed allies, however, they chased him relentlessly and, more than one time, almost succeeded in killing him .

"You don't understand! We-"

"Yes, I don't understand and I don't need to, actually . You are enemies and I see no outcome where you get out of here alive unless..."

He took one step forward, stopping inches away from her . He crouched down, meeting her eye-level and ripping the excessively long hood hiding her face .

Under this weak disguise was a female, a very young one, in her teens, probably . But, parasites age differently, so, for all he knows, she could be well over a thousand years old .

The parasite, clearly terror-stricken by the scary undead staring at her, its eye seemingly peeping into her thoughts, clutching her soul . After an internal struggle which seemed to last an eternity, she bit her lips and hesitantly said:

"W-we're deserters . "

Maybe it was a hallucination born from her growing fear, the talking female parasite noticed the green flame burning in his socket twitch ever-so-slightly . She glanced at the approaching Vyncent, who was but a few meters away . Having no choice but to spill the entirety of the truth, she continued:

"We, along with a few others, didn't want to follow the orders so we left the base . " She was forced to stop talking as Vyncent's sharp sword was swung down at her sister, about to behead her .

Just as the head was about to be sent flying, the sword froze-mid-air, startling the bearded youngster .

"Arthur, why are you being like this?"

Without even looking at him, Arthur replied: "My job is for us to safely reach the eastern resistance base . Whatever happens in the road is my responsibility so stay out of it . "

"Are you really going along with their nonsense? All because of the previously mentioned crystal?"

"It doesn't concern you, Vyncent . Politely back off . "

Hearing Arthur's chilling voice, the young man snorted but still complied . He withdrew his sword and took a few steps back, nonetheless, his eyes were still glaring daggers at the parasites .

"Our time short so you better be quick about whatever you're going to say . "

Unknowingly, the parasite let out a sigh of relief then scanned the desolate vicinities before speaking:

"You are aware of the crystal so I'll cut through the chase . They want us to summon but the process consumes the crystal and requires a big sacrifice from our part . The majority didn't object but a small portion of us didn't want to be sacrificed for what they call the greater good . "

"Whom do they want to summon? Zaaarae?"

As she heard him mention their Goddess, the parasite became momentarily dazed . She didn't know how an undead knows their Goddess' name but she didn't question and kept her curiosity to herself lest it gets her killed .

"No, it's impossible to summon our Goddess with only one crystal . They want to call for a Calypso Parasite by the name of Emir . He's one of our Goddess most-trusted confidants and due to the nature of this world, he cannot descend on his own . "

"Calypso parasite Emir? Why do you want to summon him?"

"They called it greater good but in reality, they want, no... they need the Strategist's help . As we are considered lower lifeforms, he won't even speak us, much less hear our pleas . He would only consider talking to someone like Emir, a being from his time and worthy of respect . "

Arthur, facing the female parasite, glanced at the other bound and silent parasite . He couldn't believe them... to desert, it just seemed to cliché, a reason many would use to save their necks . However, he can't rule out the possibility of her saying the truth, or, at least, a portion of it .

It has nothing to do with him if this Emir is summoned . All he needs to do is pass through their base and get to the human settlement East of here .

"You've explained the reason for your desertion, however, I still haven't heard the motive behind 'testing' us, as you phrased it . "

The parasite was about to reply only to see Lucy bolt towards a specific direction, leaving a frozen trail behind her . The two lotuses floating above the parasites followed right after the silver-haired woman, their speed no slower than hers .

..

Approximately seven hundred meters away from Arthur and co, Lucy blocked the path of a scholarly man . His skin looked delicate and whiter than hers, his face young and his eyes inky black . He wore a green long robe which his hands and seemed over-sized for him but still added more to his charm .

As he saw a beautiful woman with long silver-hair block his path, the man flashed a soft smile at her, did a strange bow and politely said:

"To whom do I have the pleasure?"

Unfortunately, Lucy didn't respond . She looked at him with a deadpan face, seven lotuses rotating around her body, gradually freezing the corrupt earth under her feet .

The man's abyssal eyes scanned every inch of Lucy then spoke again

"It is rare to see a human from the resistance camp in here . I can't say I'm surprised but I am most definitely intrigued . "

He didn't seem to be worried about the lotuses as he marched in her direction .

"Although I very much want to converse with you . I've got some business to attend to . "

He bowed again and added: "Now then, if you'll excuse me . "

The scholarly man disregarded the freezing weather which started affecting his robe and was about to bypass her only to abruptly halt his steps, his body suddenly growing heavier than usual .

He curiously glanced downward only to see that his feet were frozen by the expanding Yin emanating from Lucy .

"You can't go that way . "

The man gave a pained expression, spreading his hands and retorting

"At least give me a good reason . "

Instead of talking again, Lucy started acting . Four of the lotuses around her bloomed, instantly freezing half of the man's body . The other two spun above him, letting out countless white specks that fell on his shoulders and made him drowsy, barely able to open his eyes .

Without waiting for any kind of retaliation, Lucy stretched both of her hands, concentrated her Mana and after a few seconds, unleashed a grey flame . It was only a tiny spark, the size of a pinky, however, it managed to cause considerable damage to the non-resisting man .

It violently hit his body, scorching his head and chest while turning his lower body into an unbreakable block of ice which became dyed with scarlet blood .

Lucy stared at the unrecognizable body of man, strangely feeling a chill down his spines . After scanning her surroundings, she left the area, leaving behind a snowy field centered by a lifeless corpse .

\*\*\*\*\*

"My dear and humble guest, I'm very interested in what you'll do . "

Arthur, who was pondering about all the details said by the parasite, was interrupted as Timos' voice entered his head, uninvited, of course .

"You've subdued your 'enemies', which are, in fact, the same race as you are . They are bound, defenseless... or as human like to say, trapped weaklings . They provided you with an excuse, a reason, which can be either true or false . And, let me tell you that your judgment is bound to be detrimental, either to yourself or to them . "

He ignored the talking devil and asked the parasite: "Why do you need Timos' help?"

"They want to get into the ancient ruins under the Rift sea East of here . Problem is, they cannot beat the humans without the help of the Cthulhu . "

"I thought you and the Cthulhu are allies . "

"Only superficially . They're savage beings that only obey their God . Moreover, they absolutely refuse to attack the humans there . "

As she said that, Timos joined again, giving a better explanation .

"It's not that they refuse but they are aware of the consequences of eliminating the remaining humans . No matter how ravaged a world is, it would remain as long as there's balance . Ending the tiny bit of life in Riarravar will shake the unsteady balance . Unlike the greedy parasites, my children subconsciously know when to back off . "

Chapter 523

"This world, or any other one, requires an unseen balance . There needs to be as much darkness as there is light . This applies to everything, including living beings . With the extinction of vegetation and the disappearance of stabilizing natural elements, the only holding Riarravar is the remaining humans . You take them out and the game is over, everything will crumble . I won't deny the cruelties my children had

done but they knew when to stop, when to draw a line . Zaarae, on the other hand, does not care about this tiny place . "

'Are you implying that the parasites only want to destroy Riarravar? For no reason?'

"I'm not implying anything, I'm only speaking the truth like I always do . And to answer your question, no . The parasites, or rather, Zaarae, seeks something hidden here but she's unable to come herself... not that I'd welcome her though . "

After a short silence where the two parties kept their inner thoughts to themselves, Timos spoke again: "Enough about this . Tell me, dear guest, what are you going to do with these two parasites? I'm very curious . "

Unfortunately, Arthur gave no response, he focused on the trapped parasite before him, the Dark Magic around him becoming more violent .

"Please don't do this! Please!"

With tears in her face, the woman pleaded, her expression appearing quite genuine . Vyncent kept his silence, not showing any sympathy for the strangers' difficult situation . Lissandra was zoning out, her gaze lingering on the scarlet sky .

As for Lucy, after being absent for two minutes or so, she came back to Arthur's side .

"You've thoroughly explained your situation but I have no reason to let you guys, who are potential threats, live or escape . "

The ominous darkness dancing around the undead started spinning, forming a whirlpool which drifted closer to the two parasites . At first, their energies were absorbed then, when it was about to consume their bodies, the other parasite, the one who hasn't talked ever since being captured, opened her mouth and spoke with a childish clarion voice:

"No! Don't do this! W-we..." She hesitated for a brief moment but when her eyes landed on the approaching whirlpool and felt the chills down her spines, she was forced to continue: "We can help you! I, I know a safe way . "

Sadly, the primordial darkness creeping out on her didn't stop, making her think that she spoke too late .

Just when they thought it was their end, the black whirlpool turned transparent and was sucked by the undead's hand .

"I am listening . " Arthur's bone-freezing voice rang inside their ears, making them shudder . It took them a few moments to process what happened and realize that they're still alive . The older female parasite kept her silence and stealthily let out a sigh of relief . As for the other one, she had her cloak removed too, showing a young immature face, two emerald eyes and long brown hair .

As she was uncomfortable being coldly stared at by the creepy undead, the young parasite looked around, foolishly trying to evade his piercing eye .

Subconsciously, she knew that it was futile to try and look away, so foolishly and childishly . However, she cannot be blamed as she's simply too young and isn't experienced in dealing with overbearing



people . Arthur's dark magic was enough to freak out any mortal, and a newly born parasite isn't that different . Furthermore, his current appearance was that of a tall undead whose eye was a ghastly green flame .

"If you won't speak then you're just delaying the inevitable . " Once she heard that, the girl bit her lips and after a long internal struggle, responded:

"I can guide you to the Eastern resistance camp..." She paused for a moment before continuing: "B-but I want you to take us with you . "

"And why would I take you? The resistance camp only welcomes humans . "

Only after he said that did he realize that he's not one to talk, especially with his current frightening appearance . The girl looked at him with a strange expression, clearly having the same thoughts as him, still, she didn't voice them out .

"Never mind that . Where is the safe path you mentioned?" He asked her and waited for an answer, which never came . She remained tight-lipped, fully aware that if she told him the path's location, he would dispose of her as her presence would be needless .

"Are you sure you don't want to tell me?"

Even if she doesn't talk, Arthur has many ways to extract the information, either by torture or forbidden spells .

"Stop pressuring her . She, no, we won't talk unless you guarantee our safety . We share a common destination, and a temporary cooperation could prove time-saving . "

The older parasite seemed to have become a tad braver, raising her head and staring directly at Arthur . Now that she saw his previous action, she concluded that they 'needed' a safe path to the East .

"What makes you think I won't kill you both and just go raze that base of yours to the ground . "

In response to his taunt, the woman chuckled and retorted: "If you wanted to do that, you wouldn't have wasted time speaking with us . "

Arthur backed away from the two parasites, turned to Lucy and pondered for an inordinate amount of time . Using a basic Telepathy skill, easily interruptible by an expert, Lucy conversed with him:

"I don't think they're lying but there's still a risk . "

"Indeed . However, I can't see any reason for them to try and trick us like this . "

Lucy glanced at the innocent-looking girl and the older female parasite before adding: "This could also be what they want us to think . Sending their experts would defeat the purpose of their plan... assuming this is really a ruse . "

The two discussed their next steps and finally reached a common conclusion . Arthur wasn't that happy as he let out a snort and stretched his hand toward the unconscious parasites, retracting the thorny vines harming their bodies and binding them .

Lucy walked up to the two female parasites and coldly said: "You'll guide us to that safe path . As your entree to the resistance, you'll handle it yourselves . "

They nodded their heads, slightly excited . After being released from Arthur's grasp, they walked up to their comrades and checked up on them .

Fortunately, apart from a few cuts caused by the thorns, the two parasites were healthy . To gain a bit more trust from Arthur and his companions, they also removed the hoods of the unconscious parasites, choosing to reveal their appearances to their 'escorts' .

The remaining unveiled parasites were actually middle-aged . One was a woman and the other a man a two long dark horns protruding out of his forehead .

...

"Why the frustration? The hate? Does being racially different irritates you that much? Why must everyone fear what they can't fathom?"

Timos, being as talkative and intrusive as ever, talked to Vyncent, who was in a bad mood after the parasites joined them .

'No . I'm being rational here, clearly more than Arthur . '

Surprisingly, he talked to Timos, which is, in fact, a very rare occasion .

"Rational? I don't rationality is succumbing to one's emotions . "

'Four enemies appeared out of nowhere, attacked us and spat a bunch of lies to lure out into a trap . I don't know why he let them live and actually believed what they said . '

"But, my humble guest, what you see and hear isn't necessarily the truth . And, in my opinion, what he did is 'right' . All life is precious and, if you can, you should always spare thy enemies . "

Please visit [freewebnovel.com](http://freewebnovel.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

"It's through here . " The young parasite, marching at the front, pointed at an average hole randomly situated in the ground, amidst a field filled with rubbles and broken buildings . This hole was ordinary in every sense of the world, plus, there are dozens if not hundreds of such holes .

Arthur suspicious looked at the girl then examined the hole, sensing nothing wrong . He stretched his sense underground but alas, he discovered naught .

As she was being gazed by Arthur and his three companions, the girl, flustered, reassured them: "I-it's really through here . I coincidentally stumbled upon it when I was p-playing . "

"And? Did you go all the way? Are you sure it leads to the Eastern camp?" Arthur's domineering voice made the young parasite restless .

"It should be about right . One thing is for sure, it won't lead us back to our camp . "

The horned male parasite spoke, his countenance calm as he wasn't affected by Arthur like the others . He may be weak but he lived long enough and saw all kinds of things so even though Arthur is overbearing, it's still tolerable .

"If you say so... but don't forget about what I planted inside of you . "

Instead of the loud detonators which can attract a lot of unwanted attention, Arthur put a lethal poison in their bodies . It merges with their blood and can be activated with his Sixth Sense . Such poison is useless against God Monarchs and higher but it can be fatal to Divine Beings and hindering to Gods .

Chapter 524

"No! Why'd you let him go!"

The pink-haired Lolitta loudly whined, displeased about the Joker's actions . She tried to punch him but he held her face with his large hand, stopping her from coming closer . This left her swinging her small fists around, trying to hit him .

The tall man wearing a strange costume frowned and berated:

"Why are you blaming when you couldn't even handle him by yourself! Jeez, it hasn't been long since I've given you my card yet you already got yourself in serious trouble!"

The girl's face became flushed, and, after a while, she managed to free her covered face, her small chest going up and down from hyperventilating .

"Hmpf! I was about to kick that pervert's ass!! I didn't need your help!"

Google search [freewebnovel.com](http://freewebnovel.com)

With one hand on her hip, she harrumphed while comically glaring at the Joker, who wasn't paying her much attention . He played with his cards while saying:

"I was summoned, either by you or automatically . My card was set to activate when your life was truly in danger hence my presence here . "

"No! You're wrong! I didn't ask for your help!"

"Are you deaf or what? My appearance here doesn't require your call for help . Now be silent for a moment . "

"Who're you to order me out?"

She jumped at him again, this time using her power to immobilize him . Unfortunately, the Joker's hand blurred and hit the back of her neck, immediately causing her to fall unconscious . After taking care of her, he clicked his tongue and gazed at the vanishing black fog a distance away .

Only when the fog was fully gone did the Joker leave the area . Lolitta causes too much trouble and leaving her unmonitored may complicate things . It's troublesome enough now that death knows of her existence . If he were to snitch to the System, it'll endanger this place .

\*\*\*\*\*

Right after the young female parasite entered the hole, Arthur followed, his sense locked onto her . The interior of the hole was just as shabby as the exterior . The temperature was a bit higher and there was a serious lack of illumination, making it difficult for Lissandra and Vyncent to see anything .

As for the parasite leading them, her eyes turned bright and her pupils became thinner and vertical, like a cat's . She adapted to this darkness and took steady and silent steps .

Behind the hole was a cramped path, devoid of anything . It definitely wasn't something natural, something that was born due to the changes happened in Riarravar .

Their formation was a straight line with the girl at the front, Arthur right behind, Lissandra squished between him and Lucy . Vyncent was at the far back, cautiously watching the three parasites marching before him .

After walking for three minutes or so, the path became narrow, unable to fit Arthur's undead host or even the horned parasite . Nevertheless, such a problem was easily fixed by Arthur's quad-spirit, who reformed the path ahead, making it much more spacious and luminous .

"This was built by humans?"

Arthur asked the startled girl, who slightly fastened her steps and gave a perfunctory reply .

"Maybe . "

"What about the metal doors up ahead . "

Once she heard those words, the girl became surprised, her lips quivering "H-how did you know?"

"Doesn't matter . Where do they lead to?"

"I don't know . I've never tried entering them . "

Two hundred meters away from Arthur, there was tiny metal doors on the walls and ground . Only children could fit through these doors which were made from a yellow, almost golden material which remained unscathed by the decay and passing of time .

His sense wasn't able to peer through the doors' inside . In fact, the moment his sense reached the metal doors, it couldn't scan anything anymore as if it was being blocked . It was like some sort of deadzone, negating everything .

This made him grew more cautious as he walked closer to young parasite . Thin invisible threads stealthily wrapped around her neck and limbs, any sudden movements from her would cause her head to fall, Arthur just needs to exert a bit of force and pull the threads .

Sometime later, they reached the metal doors and momentarily inspected them before continuing . With the exception of the horned parasite, no one said anything .

"It is said that an ancient civilization lived underground and used a very advanced technology . Their current whereabouts are unknown and even their appearance is open for speculation . "

"And how do you this?"

Facing Arthur's question, the parasite lightly coughed and explained: "I'm not versed in combat but I studied a lot of history . "

Hearing this, Arthur let out a chuckle, which sounded more like a devil's laugh, and said:

"As for as I know, history is closely tied with geography . How come you're not aware of this path?"

The parasite glanced at the silent girl then replied: "It is prohibited to leave the camp without permission . If you're caught then you'll be severely punished if not killed . "

This led to Arthur also looking at the girl who dropped her head, perhaps from embarrassment or guilt . She discovered this path by herself so that means she sneaked out of her camp, unnoticed .

"Anyway, it is said this civilization didn't believe in any God and sought proper using unconventional means . They abruptly vanished from Riarravar a millennium before the red moon, leaving their eternal legacy behind . "

"Legacy?"

"Ancient artifacts, advanced cities, and several undecipherable prophecies . "

"If they're indecipherable, how come they're called prophecies?"

"It's what our God called them . They may be incomprehensible to mortals but they're merely stupid writing to Gods, or at least that's what the Black Devil said . "

Before Arthur could talk, Timos' voice resounded in his hand, as thunderous as ever .

"I never called them stupid writings . They're unnecessarily lengthy and filled with inconvenient riddles . A self-created language with the purpose of sounding mysterious and superior to the common one used by all . Well... if they wanted to achieve greatness then they certainly did . "

Hearing the overly-enthusiastic Timos, Arthur snickered: "You're much talkative than before... do they bother you that much?"

"Bother me? No . Irk me? Yes . They denied my existence, saying that I'm something born out of a combination of will and energies . They forsake the ability to wield magic for knowledge and science, disbelieving in any kind of God and mocking those of us who dared to face them . "

Facebook

Twitter

Tumblr

Pinterest

Chapter 525

The rest of the trip, albeit gloomy and awkward, proceeded smoothly . They marched for half an hour before they arrived at the other side of the unusual mountain erected in the middle of the wasteland . From the girl's words, the human camp shouldn't be too far from here, however, entering it wouldn't be

as easy as imagined . There is a relatively big bridge which was heavily fortified and always guarded by strong experts .

Vyncent, who wasn't in his best mood ever since the parasites joined, became a bit excited when they got closer to the resistance camp .

"How many survivors are there?"

Arthur first asked Vyncent, who shook his head in response, so he directed his question to the young parasite . This innocent looking girl was more knowledgeable than she looked . Not only did she know how the camp looked, but she was also aware of the defenses put around the entrance .

"You're coming too?" The young parasite curiously asked Arthur, who looked like a Lich . The humans were antagonistic against all the different looking races so they'll surely attack Arthur on sight . She was wondering why he's so brazenly going heading to the camp, appearing quite relaxed .

"What? You can come but I don't?"

As she heard his cold voice, she quickly shook her head and tightened her lips, choosing silence over the satisfaction of her curiosity . In fact, it wasn't only the girl who was intrigued, the other parasites wanted to know how exactly Arthur will enter the resistance looking like that .

Their unasked questions were silently answered by Arthur, who halted his steps and was abruptly shrouded by darkness . When the Dark Magic dispersed, what replaced the undead was a body that looked very similar to Arthur's previous body . He created it using the Dark Cloud and it can't technically be called a host but it worked, nonetheless .

Gawking, the parasites stared at the dark-haired man standing before them, a hideous scar on his left eye while the right one was blood red, like a vampire .

"As per our agreement, you'll manage yourselves once we arrive . "

Unfortunately, they couldn't hear his voice for they were too shocked . They genuinely thought he was an undead yet he altered his appearance so quickly and they couldn't feel the previous creepy aura of the previous host . It was truly magical . Parasites have high sensitivity so they can recognize their skin almost immediately but it wasn't the case with Arthur, who was a superior, unique variation .

"Yes, you don't have to worry about us . " The slightly older female parasite assured Arthur . The horned parasite, with one hand on his chin, examined Arthur from head to toe before mumbling

"Interesting... not a shapeshifter but maybe a Ratiga?"

He didn't mean as a question and was only talking to himself . He was the only one not afraid of Arthur, showing nonchalantness in his action and words . He was just too engrossed in his own world, pondering about anything unknown .

...

Beyond the mountain, the suffocating weather started cooling down and there appeared signs of snow, surprisingly . The ground was no longer scorched, it became snowy and frozen . The temperature had a

drastic change as it plummeted to a dangerous degree, causing Lissandra and the parasites to literally shiver .

In the end, they clustered around Lucy, whose body was emitting a warm heat that melted the snow under her feet .

"It shouldn't be long before we arrive, Arthur . "

Vyncent suddenly stopped Arthur, his face showing some hesitation . The bearded youngster didn't whether to speak his thoughts or not . In the end, he convinced himself and resolutely spoke:

"Look... I think it'll be better for me to speak and allow us entry . "

His face still expressionless, Arthur retorted: "And why is that?"

"Well... you could be a bit overbearing and I don't think they'll accept a behavior other than respectful . "

Actually, Vyncent hit the nail on the head . While it's true Arthur can be respectful, he finds no meaning in being so to random strangers .

"My dear guest, what he said is very, very reasonable . Maybe unwillingly, but you come out as a cold and aggressive person... must be related to your past, which I guess is grim . After all, not everyone can become a Soul Parasite! It's even the first time for me to see such a race and it fascinates me . "

Arthur gave no response, he stared at Vyncent for two seconds before continuing his march . The young man sighed but didn't insist, inwardly hoping Arthur would let him lead, just this once .

If they end up provoking the humans, it will be irreparable for this is the only safe place in Riarravar .

Approximatively an hour later, the group arrived at what seemed to be their destination . There was a massive frozen bridge that connected this area to a floating piece of land . Built on that floating land was an equally large fortress that rose to the heavens . There were huge chains coming from the fortress and wrapping around the bridge .

"This is definitely not what I pictured . " Vyncent comment while taking a breath of the chilly air .

No wonder the parasites weren't able to defeat the remaining humans . If the bridge is destroyed, there is no way for them to attack the humans . Furthermore, such an enormous fortress is difficult if not impossible to destroy . Even if the Cthulhu decided to eradicate the resistance, it'll cost them dearly .

"The Frozen Keep is what they call it . A fortress built with anti-magic black steel, its walls are thicker than you could imagine . It is truly an unequaled masterpiece, or so I think . I would need at least four of my arms to take it down and, believe me, that's saying something . "

Timos spoke to Arthur, sharing his opinion about the fortress before him .

As he stared at this perfectly Frozen Keep, Arthur felt inexplicable easy .

'I don't like it . ' Such was his thoughts, contrary to everyone around him, who were amazed and stupefied . The closer he was to it, the more uncomfortable he became . It felt like a prison of some sort .

\*\*\*\*\*

His surroundings filled with nothing but absolute darkness, something he's very accustomed to . His eyes glowed with a golden radiance, scanning every inch of the small cave he found himself in . His breathing rapid and his bony and thin fingers holding papers that melted with the surroundings .

With heavy steps, he marched deeper into a path at the end of the cave . The only sound was the monotonous banging of his cane each time he took a step . At some time, the cane hit a metal object, causing the old man to halt and curiously look around .

"Ras'va Tik"

He muttered incomprehensible words, causing two small white flames to appear above him, illuminating this narrow corridor . Sadly, the white flames lasted for a few seconds before they dispersed, to the old man's surprise .

He retrieved a small torch from his long black robe then lit it and warily waved it around . He crouched next to one of the metal doors and attempted to open it but they didn't open it, probably because he was physically weak .

"Cunning bastards, you actually hid it here . "

He clicked his tongue, massaged his temples while pondering about a solution . After what seemed to be an eternity, he put the torch on the ground and knelt on the ground, his two hands unleashing two whirlpools that landed on the metal door, slowly corrupting it .

Unfortunately, the Dark Magic was also negated, the whirlpools only managed to corrupt a third of the door before their resistance kicked in . However, his unsuccessful try alerted whatever place he was in . Spinning yellow lights appeared at the top of the narrow place he was in . This was followed by a series of strange sounds and dense steam leaking from the metal doors .

Before he could react, the metal doors abruptly opened and several silhouettes sprung from within . They were humanoid and made from a green stone-like material which caused the old man to shake .

The puppet-like figures jumped at the old man, who already prepared a few dark talismans . He swiftly backed away and threw his talismans, slowing down the assailants . His cane emitted a violent light which, at the last second, formed a transparent shield in front of him, blocking the closest puppet .

Nevertheless, the old man was sent flying a few meters, his body rolled on the ground and before he could get up, the green figures jumped at him . Their unbreakable legs and hands hit his body, breaking his bones and cracking his skull .

What they didn't realize was that their target was only a decoy . The real one slipped through their ranks and passed through the metal doors .

Chapter 526

Zodiak stood at the edge of an artificial cliff, his mouth wide-open and his eye full of disbelief . The sight before him jolted him, making stand there, in a daze .



Unfortunately, he hadn't the time to enjoy the marvelous city as numerous flying bee-like objects were shooting lasers at him .

Due to his invasion, the whole city came back to life . Everywhere he looked, he saw something strange, purely mechanical and utterly void of any kind of energy . The city was running by itself, however, not magically . Even though his powers are all-rounded, they became very weak in this mysterious place, rendering him in a helpless situation .

All he could was bait the protectors and run around for a few hours until his resources were finally depleted . He was cornered, captured but not killed . The old man, bound by green handcuffs which negated his Dark Magic, was thrown into an advanced prison .

Through a small hole in his cell, he was given food and water and the prison wasn't that bad, to be honest .

In total, the old man passed 728 days inside that prison, planning and preparing his escape . He needed to not only escape but also acquire what he came for . It wasn't something for him but he had to finish this job, no matter what .

After a bitter prison break and a violent battle with the endless protectors, Zodiak miraculously obtained the treasure . He barged into the second level of the fortified treasure vault and got his hands on a thick jet black longsword . The strongest weapon ever crafted, also known as Anduril . In addition to Anduril, there were other powerful artifacts but he was only able to steal one before hastily leaving . He was curious about the third and fourth levels of the vault but it was practically impossible to get in without permission .

So, heavily injured, the old man escaped a place he called the city of light . He didn't remain a second longer in Riarravar, choosing to end this hellish journey as soon as possible . And, as per the agreement he previously made, this story was to not be recorded in his journal .

Although very few people knew, many years later, Zodiak the Mythical, who reached a self-created Realm, was killed by the Nameless Knight . Apart from the Whisperer King, no one witnessed their fight or knew the reason behind it . It was from that point onwards that everyone started fearing Leiu . As for the Whisperer King, he was spared on the condition that he utters not a single word about what he heard or saw .

\*\*\*\*\*

X, who was free after a relatively long imprisonment, just appeared in the Zutis Galaxy, his territory, only to be welcomed by an unwelcomed and unexpected guest .

"Come on, you don't have to react so intensely . "

The Joker hugged his arms and mockingly said, his lips arched upwards . He had an expression of interest as he gazed at the blurry figure of X .

Although the guest already stated that he didn't come to cause trouble, X still felt uneasy . He straightened his back and supported himself with his cane .

"Why are you here?"

He wasn't courteous or polite, after all, he wasn't weak and chose not to believe in the absurd rumors about the Joker's powers . Sadly, the rumors were actually an understatement as he's as strong as his brother, the Nameless Knight .

"I heard you're the best Time-controller around . I've come seeking your help... I'll pay, of course . "

The Joker knew the connection between Arthur and X but still chose to ask for the latter's help . No matter, he needs to prevent what's about to happen even if he needs to resort to a sly fox like the man currently facing him .

"I decline . "

As he heard the instantaneous reply, the Magician burst out in laughter, totally ignoring X, who was slowly retreating .

"Sorry but the negotiation is only about the price . " Then, before X could react, the Joker picked him but the back of his neck and vanished .

The teleportation lasted for a split second before they found themselves in a small room filled with monitors and cables... and an over-abundance of the color pink, whether it's in the walls or the scattered objects .

Through the blurry face, X gazed around for a few moments before saying

"Isn't this an office?"

He seemed to have gotten used to being thrown in random places and didn't even bother fleeing from the Joker, who fell on one of the round and soft couches .

"Blurry stranger, you smell nice!"

A short and young girl with pink hair walked next to X and sniffed him while speaking . Strangely, she didn't react so fiercely to the appearance of X, who inspected her, his head tilting to the side .

"An AI, no, a human?" He mumbled to himself, his unseen eyes focusing on Lolitta .

"An AI and a human? Now that's a shocker . "

"Yes yes, it is but I didn't bring you here to guess who's this and that . Brat, get on with it . "

He glared at the Lolitta, who pouted but didn't protest . She rummaged through a bunch of boxes before retrieving a dark capsule .

"I need your help to open a traversable path . "

Without waiting for X to reply, Lolitta put the capsule in a round slot behind her then started quickly tapping on a pink keyboard . The several big monitors started showing lots of stuff, including images of people, locations and weapons .

"T-this is Arthur's data?"

"Yes, it's that stinky parasite's!"

X remained silent for a few moments before talking again: "You want me to open a path to his location? It depends where he is . "

"Riarravar . " The Joker said, his eyes lazily opening and closing .

Irritated, X banged his cane on the metal ground, his head slightly moving, shifting from move monitor to the other .

"Don't worry, I mean him no harm now that he doesn't have the orb, however, that blade of his is another thing . " He reassured the Joker, who hasn't said a word about his feud with Arthur, then he continued:

"I'm afraid a path to Riarravar is difficult if not impossible . Timos is still trapped there and I can't afford to mess with a being like him, it's simply too risky for me . "

"I will deal with Timos . "-The Joker

As if he heard a joke, X snickered and retorted: "Deal with him? He's always ten steps ahead . Furthermore, I'm opening a path to his domain, it's like I'm asking to be killed!"

"I said I will deal with him . He's not as strong as he's portrayed . "

\*\*\*\*\*

'What's happening to me? Why am I dreaming about him?'

Angelina held her chest and sat up, her body soaking with sweat . It must have been the tenth time she dreamed about a man similar in appearance to Arthur but the total opposite in terms of behavior . She lived with him for a while, their house was small but peaceful and warm . They even had a kid, a boy whose name she can't remember . Whenever she woke up, it made her heart race and her face flush, the feelings were genuine but they weren't directed toward Arthur .

One day, having enough of what she called ridiculous dreams, she picked her spear and left the Ancestral land of the White Specter Clan . Her mother was still missing so the elders are managing the clan and, thankfully, there were no more attacks from the undead .

She wanted all of this to end so she followed listened to her heart and followed her soul, which was unknowingly guiding her, pulling her to a special place . Very soon, she left the Cloud Sea Universe and arrived at the border between two universes, an unstable space which is full of peril and has an abundance of powerful and deadly Spatial Beasts .

unbeknownst to anyone, Angelina was heading toward a hidden place, a place that holds many secrets known to none . Inside her consciousness, a rotating cube was pulsating with a silver light, it was the source of everything and the beginning of the strange events revolving around her .

Chapter 527: 527

As the group got closer to the enormous bridge, several figures came running at them, they were surprisingly fast and wore strange unfamiliar armors . In a way, their attires were a bit similar to the Earth's past samurais . Very quickly, they surrounded the group of eight, their katanas raised and ready to strike .

The only reason they didn't attack was because Arthur and the rest looked like humans and their ruler, the shogun, instructed them to not act rashly when met with humans . While it's true that parasites can look like humans, most of them usually have some deformities such as horns, tails, or elongated claws .

Apart from the male parasite, who wore a hood to cover his horns, the rest's appearances were clear and it was impossible to mistake them for a Cthulhu .

"Who are you?"

A broad man took two steps forward and asked Vyncent, who stood at the front of the group .

"Greetings, we're humans, just like you . We came here to seek shelter . "

His voice was toneless, containing neither arrogance nor politeness . He scanned the people surrounding him, his eyes momentarily resting on a slender figure at the back, silently watching them . He only felt threatened by that person, who most likely was a female .

After a short bout of silence that flowed between the two of them, the man slightly lowered his katana and said:

"It is too early to say you're humans . We have a device that can test how much truth your words contained . "

Just as he finished saying that, he retrieved a circular object from under his thick armor . He pressed a few times on some specific locations, causing the object to emit a small white light which soon projected itself above it in the form of a single word .

'Human' .

This simple looking device could determine the race of its holder . It isn't flawless, however, most of the time it the results are genuine . Once he finished preparing the device, he handed it to the nearest person, Vyncent .

The bearded young man was about to take the device only for the opposite man to retract his hand for a moment while warning him:

"Any sudden movement and you're all dead . "

In response, he just nodded his head and took the device . The process took around ten seconds before the word 'Human' appeared in front of Vyncent, showcasing his true Race .

The next on the line was Lissandra, who successfully passed the test too . The broad man along with his companions became a bit relaxed when they saw the good results . Their weapons were no longer raised but they were still behaving with cautiousness .

Arthur didn't know how exactly they did it but the parasites were able to trick the humans, somehow using the device to their advantage . In fact, as per the patrols' request, the horned parasite removed his hood, showing his facial features, which totally lacked any kind of oddity, including the previous horns .

No one but Arthur knew that Lucy was a half-demon and half-white specter so they assumed that she'll easily pass the test . To their surprise, the words 'Half-Specter/Demon' actually showed above the device, causing everything to become a bit chaotic .

The broad man raised his katana and was about to point it Lucy only for the weapon to disintegrate into nothingness . With the exception of Lucy, the only man who hasn't used the device yet walked forward, shielding the woman and saying .

"As far as I know, your enemies are the parasites and the Cthulhu . "

The man paid Arthur no attention as he treated back and signaled for his companions to ready themselves .

"Demon or Cthulhu, what difference does it make?"

Everyone raised their weapons and took a battling stance, patiently waiting for their leader's order .

"You see now, my dear invitee . Humans are just as foolish as any other race, blinded by their stupid and hypocritical beliefs . If I were to choose, I would definitely side with the demons, Xyktia's children . They are extraordinary magic users and a truly noble race who doesn't rely on something as idiotic as religion to survive . They respect their Goddess but do not blindly worship her . "

Arthur paid no heed to the talking Timos, instead, his scarlet eyes shifted from the broad man to the slender figure standing at the back . Unlike Vyncent's hunch, Arthur was able to feel that woman's powers, which were carefully hidden but not impossible to detect .

"We came in peace and only want to cooperate . No need for pointless fighting . "

His words were directed to the female, who maintained her silence . As for the broad man, he refused to listen to reason as several thoughts rampaged inside of his mind . He started suspecting the others who came with Arthur, however, Vyncent couldn't let that happen so he hurriedly explained:

"We traveled together but we were unaware of her race . Plus, they helped us kill a few parasites along the way . "

He stole a glance at Arthur before focusing on the humans' leader . Even though he heard Vyncent's words, the man remained skeptical and didn't want to risk it .

"As you said, we don't need to fight so why don't you go away . "

"That is not a possible . Why don't you call someone with authority, I'm sure I can be of great assistance . "

"I'm sorry but we don't welcome you in our ranks . " Just as Arthur said his bit, a clarion voice resounded in the area . The woman standing at the back lifted her head and uttered those words .

"On what basis?" Arthur retorted, his single eye staring back at the woman, who, unlike the others, didn't wear a thick armor but simple yellow cotton clothes that barely protected her from the coldness .

"Those are not my words but the shogun's . " She didn't seem to mind Arthur's cold stare as she shrugged her shoulders .

"And where is this shogun? Too busy to say those words with his own mouth?" Arthur mockingly said, his head turning toward the sky-piercing fortress .

"We're done here . Welcome the new humans and explain to them our situation . " She said her last piece before turning around and leaving, no longer bothering with Arthur, who didn't bicker with her or try a more aggressive approach .

"I can say, with certainty, that this is the best result for you two . It is not a place that suits you both, your abilities will be heavily restricted and you'll be treated with contempt . Despite its beauty, it is a rotten place full of arrogant people . "-Timos

As Lissandra and co were guided to the Frozen Keep, Vyncent turned one last time, exchanging gazes with Arthur .

'I'm sorry, Arthur, but just like you, I'll do anything to survive and sticking with you and roaming this treacherous place isn't exactly safe . '

Due to the people around, he kept this thought to himself, nevertheless, Arthur was able to understand everything through the young man's eyes . It's not like he blamed him, after all, their deal was for Vyncent to guide them here, that's it .

The young female parasite also turned several times, looking at Lucy and Arthur, hesitating . Were it not for the other older female parasite, who dragged her, she would have spoken for the couple .

"You could be considered homeless now so why don't we play a game? I'm sure it'll relieve your stress and freshen both of you up . "

Timos' voice echoed inside their heads, causing Lucy to frown and Arthur to click his tongue .

Seeing their not-so-friendly reactions, Timos corrected himself

"Oh don't misunderstand! This isn't the game I was talking about when you two entered my humble abode . This one is different, harmless and without any consequences . This, I promise . If you win, I can give you a hint that will help you leave Riarravar . "

"And what if we lose?" Lucy asked, her tone showcasing her irritation . She wasn't angry at Timos but at the humans, whose behavior is absurd .

"You win, you get a hint . You lose, nothing happens . "

"And you expect us to believe you?"

After a short silence, Timos said: "Then I'll make you believe me . North-West of here, there's an intact ravine that can benefit you . I'm sure it'll make you change your opinion of me . "

The couple gave no response to the bored entity . They telepathically conversed and after an inordinate amount of time, they started heading North-West . After all, it's not like they got anywhere to be .

Chapter 528

"My dear guest, I can see what motivates you but I want to know what kind of end do you seek . "

Arthur inwardly snorted and snapped at the talkative Timos .

'Can't you stop talking for a moment?'

"I'm genuinely curious . A person of your strength can achieve many things so it shouldn't have been hard to hide your race and live 'happily ever after' . As boring as it seems to me, that kind of ending is wildly fantasied about, strongly desired by most, if not all, mortals . I mean, look at me, I'm eternally living a peaceful life without worries but it bores me to death! Where's the 'happiness' they talked about?"

"You wouldn't understand . It requires emotions, something you obviously do not have . "

"It's here that you're wrong, invitee . I chose not to have them for they are a hindrance, something that clouds judgment and makes anyone do foolish, perhaps even suicidal things . "

"Then how can you expect 'happiness' when you refuse to feel?" Arthur snickered at Timos, who was actively talking to him almost every day .

"Happiness can come in many forms . I mean, should I consider myself currently happy now that I'm less bored? Or is it relief that I can finally talk to someone? The whole existence of emotions is illogical and contradicting to everything . The greed that causes wars, the grief that causes revenge, the anger that causes chaos... wouldn't it better not to feel anything? Wouldn't it facilitate everything? You sacrifice emotions and you earn something greater . "

"If you discard your emotions then you're no longer a human . "

"Ha! I spit on this humanity you talk about . You're no longer humans? What? Aren't you the one being illogical here? It's not only the humans who have emotions . Every other race can feel something, including the worms under your feet and the cows, chicken, and pigs they slaughter to feast on . It's never been something exclusive for humans . "

"Does this topic interest you that much?" Arthur rolled his eyes and dropped his head, gazing at his hand, which he was slowly clenching . Strangely, there was an almost unnoticeable numbness which stole his sense of touch .

"Oh but it does! Very much, actually . However, I can see that you're replying half-heartedly so I will end it with a question, as usual . My dear guest, what would you do when the emotions you hold so dearly suddenly vanish? Will you be an empty, emotionless shell? Or will you still convince yourself that you're still like most 'humans', able to feel anger and joy . "

"I'm not obliged to answer . "

"Of course you're not . And, in fact, you've given me a clear and satisfying answer without even realizing it . "

After that, fortunately, Timos ceased talking, leaving Arthur be for quite a while . The couple didn't engage in any obscenity along the way due to the suffocating weather and the peeping being who was following after their steps and talking from time to time .

As they took Timos' advice, the couple headed North-West but were met with no favorable results even after half a day . The Black Devil didn't specify the distance needed to reach the ravine so the two of them continued traveling nonstop .

Their Stamina was infinite so they didn't feel physical tiredness and the savage aura lingering everywhere wasn't potent enough to affect their mentality . The sight remained unchanged, a wasteland covered in inextinguishable fire, decayed ruins, and scorched, corrupted earth .

Surprisingly, they didn't meet any Cthulhu, much less parasites, which made their trip smoother and less time-wasting .

..

A full day after their departure, Arthur and Lucy took the first step into an unscathed and unknown region . It was like stepping from one world to the other as there was a clear line separating the hellish area from a tropical and calm forest .

The couple heard the noise of cicadas and rustling of nearby enemies . Even more astonishing was the scarlet sky which drastically changed, becoming clear and blue, like Astria .

"What do you think? Isn't it a good place to rest and relax . There are many things to gain here . "

Actually, what the couple did was circling around Timos' body and end up here . The forest was lush, serene and seemed like a totally different world .

"Most of Riarravar was built by the GameMaster and 'God', however, it doesn't mean that the rest of the twelve didn't contribute . This forest, in particular, was the handiwork of Ventus and I . 'Tis a land of opportunities and only a handful of people were invited here, including you . "

Before Arthur could spend some time contemplating the beautiful sight, the Strategist spoke again:

"I'm sure you do not believe me but it remains a fact that I created this land which I call The Free Space . I did fail in creating a functioning Race, however, just like anyone else, I'm capable of learning . "

The forest was humming with life, totally opposite to the rest of Riarravar . The bright canopy, the birds that sing sweetly, or the unseen sun lighting up the dirt path ahead of the couple . It was decorated with outgrown roots, wildflowers and fallen leaves that crunch beneath their feet . The smell of blood was replaced by the fragrance of the minty grass and the damp earth . Each breath is like water, cleansing and fresh .

"Now, go forth . Explore . "

Arthur and Lucy didn't wait for him to say that before they began wandering around, enjoying this new environment . They didn't have to be so tense or on guard around the clock, it was apparent that this place is void of dangerous beasts .

They did stumble upon deers, boards and such but they only stared at them from afar, neither interfering with their lives or killing them . They had plenty of food in their storages and uncorrupted place shouldn't be poisoned by their arrival .



As the Black Devil said, they were invited here to rest and, if they're lucky, chance upon unique opportunities .

\*\*\*\*\*

"I found something! I found something!"

The Water Empress lifted her head and gazed at her lively short subordinate who was jumping around while holding a dusty old book . They found a bunch of ancient diaries, mostly belonging to the Bard Aneirin, and they're currently reading the comprehensible ones and deciphering the gibberish .

"What did you find?"

The empress kept a deadpan face while speaking, having heard the girl repeat the same thing for a while now .

"It's about the Star Empress!! Apparently, she's friends with The Black Devil!"

A frown appeared on the flawless face of the tall woman . She stood up and read the book presented by her subordinate . She flipped through a few pages before mumbling:

"It couldn't be Timos, right?"

The short girl retorted: "No! It's definitely him . Who else but him is called the Black Devil?"

"Anyway, whether she's really friends with him or not doesn't help our case . "

Chapter 529

"As a token of my boundless sincerity, I'll guide you to a place which can heal your injured eye . "

Timos' voice echoed in Arthur's head which was followed by a noticeable pulsating light coming from a specific direction . The marked place wasn't that far away and inside this forest, it was like a walk in the park for the couple .

After around twenty minutes, they arrived near a calm lake . It lay without a ripple in the silver-blue water as time itself had been frozen . There was also the refreshing fragrance of jasmine, adding more beauty to this heavenly place . Without a doubt, this was no natural lake as the mere look of it made the two couple shiver from the energy lingering in the air . It was unfamiliar but serene and non-oppressive . Their bodies weren't able to naturally absorb it and could only bask in its aura .

"Before you lays a lake of diluted Primordial Energy . It's the only one in all existence and no being, including myself, can absorb it all . Now, I'll give you just one piece of advice; Take what you need and leave what you can . "

Arthur looked at the crystalline surface and stood there, momentarily dazed . The deep voice of the Black Devil snapped out of his daze and made him suspiciously glance around, fearing that this may be a trap .

"What? Still not believing me? I literally presented you with the greatest gift and was generous enough to give you some liquefied Primordial Energy . "

"Your notorious reputation precedes you, how do you expect us to trust you?" Arthur clearly stated .

Next to him, Lucy leaned closer to the lake then added: "You're known as the Strategist . It won't be surprising to see you tricking us at the very end, if not now . "

Once they voiced some of their thoughts, the two heard a low emotionless chuckle .

"I don't need you to trust me . Just believe that I mean you no harm . In fact, do I really need to resort to pathetic tricks to eliminate you two? Don't forget you're in my domain and inside a place I personally built . "

"Then why the sudden generosity? Nothing is ever free . "

"Yes, you are totally right . To achieve balance, there must be a 'give' and a 'take' . I only want you to thoroughly think about my offer and if you're up to it, play a game with me . That is my 'take' . "

"What if we refuse?"

"You're free to refuse or accept anytime . I don't expect an immediate answer . "

The two parties stopped talking after that . Arthur and Lucy inspected the lake and circled around it a few times before sitting down . Due to the nature of Riarravar, the System was malfunctioning so the use of Appraisal was impossible . However, even without Appraisal, it was easy to confirm Timos' words as Arthur's wound started itching .

After an inordinate amount of time, Arthur carefully pulled a drop of water from the translucent lake . The process turned out to be extremely difficult as the drop was inexplicably heavy as it took him several attempts to pull it toward him .

Once it was close enough, it flew into his chest and pushed him a few meters . His body shook violently for a few moments before it calmed down when he sat cross-legged and started 'digesting' it . At first, this simple-looking drop caused huge tremors across his body before it calmed down and was slowly absorbed by his Meridians and his revolving Dantian .

As time passed, the hideous scar on his face vanished and his eye was being treated by the Primordial Energy . When half a day passed and night befell on the Free Space, Arthur's left eye opened at last . It emitted a sky-blue light that fell on the breath-taking lake .

Arthur let out a breath containing a lot of steam then stood up and stretched his limbs . Although he couldn't see his stats or his Realm, he was sure that he broke through . He circulated his Nether Energy then raised his hand, conjuring four golden stars above him . This clearly meant that he's a 4-star God Monarch .

Lucy, who was meditating next to him, also successfully pulled a drop of water and was currently using it to heal the internal damage left by her silver revolver . Having absolutely nothing to do, the man sat next to his wife and enjoyed the view .

A sea of shimmering stars, diamond strews across a raven gown boundless and beautiful . His thoughts wandered as he gazed at the starry night sky, his mind reminiscing about the past, about all that happened, good and bad . It happened so fast that he couldn't keep up . Enemies were getting much stronger and he's jumping from one mess to another .

The whereabouts of his daughter are unknown, the fate of Astria is shrouded and he's stuck with Lucy in Riarravar . Sometimes, he regrets meeting her and dragging her into this chaotic world, full of dangers .

Maybe if he hasn't met her on that fateful day, everything would've been different, much different indeed .

"Congratulations on your fast recovery, dear guest . "

Absent-minded, Arthur didn't reply so Timos continued speaking:

"Why are you so obsessed with me? Surely there are many others who are willing to play your game . "

"That is where you're wrong . Only you can play the game . "

"Care to explain?"

"I'll only explain if you agree . "

Arthur spent a few moments to ponder then said: "I agree to play the second game . The one you claimed hasn't got any consequences if you lose . "

This time, Timos took some time to reply . His voice seemingly much softer for some reason

"Actually, it's not a game but a small request of time . I just need one of your belongings and in return, I'll handsomely compensate you . It's a trading game . "

Arthur didn't immediately object, he looked at the serene lake while responding:

"One of my things? Which one . "

"The Dark Blade . "

Once he heard that, Arthur voiced his instantaneous rejection to which Timos explained:

"Wait till I finish first, please . Personally, I do not need the blade and I have no use it for it . I merely want to return it to its home, where it belongs .

You see, that blade isn't really a weapon but a person, a living being, like you and me . Ventus Malum is his name, he's the father of all swords and the one in the blade you call Evil Wind . "

"..." Arthur kept his silence as he listened to the narrating Black Devil .

"Ventus is one the Twelve and someone I consider as a friend, a kin of mine . Unlike the rest, we two were close enough hence the existence of the Free Space . Basically, I was the mind and he was the body . Sadly, the fool fell in love with a mortal, and a human, at that . Countless times did I try to stop him but he was blinded and wouldn't listen to reason, unfortunately . I will skip the tragedy and say that it ended badly, even after he crafted Eighteen swords for her sake . Nine to protect her . Nine to attack . Together, they were the epitome of power, something truly unstoppable which is why many of the Twelve wanted to get them, especially when their stupid war started . After exacting his revenge on Xyktia, who killed the love of his life and turned her into an undead, he brought her remains and eternally imprisoned himself in a dark, cold place . With enough time to feel absolute loneliness and despair, he became a blade and before it was completed, it was stolen by a greedy bunch .

I recounted the story so you can understand my reasoning . That blade in your possession is powerful and irreplaceable but it's not meant for you, at least not now . It needs to return home and reach completion and, only then, on its initiative, will it head toward the person it deems as a true partner . "

Arthur sighed and said back: "Do you think recounting a story is enough for me to give up my weapon? The blade and I are bound by an oath . "

"The oath, I can see . It's relatively new and unknowingly takes a toll on you both, limiting the power you can unleash while wielding it . I can break it and free both of you but only if you agree to release the Dark Blade from your possession . " Timos paused for a brief second before resuming:

"Though I don't know what this 'love' exactly is . I've seen many examples and I can ascertain that you, like anyone else, want to spend the rest of your life with the woman next to you . I'm willing to bet that even in death, you'd want to be by her side . Forever . "

"Dear guest, I know you don't care about strangers but this matter concerns you . Didn't you notice that your partner is acting awfully mysterious ever since entering this world? It's because its home is close and it started a bit of peace after an eternity of torment . Like I said, if you're truly meant for each other, this will not be the end, I promise you that . "

## Chapter 530

"Again, I'll have to refuse this trade . Your reason is convincing but it's not enough for me to temporarily separate from Makaze . "

Arthur remained firm, unwilling to hand over Makaze over such a brief story . Sure, Timos may be telling the truth but the Dark Blade greatly contributes to Arthur's prowess and his strongest skill [Thousand Waves] requires an unbreakable blade . Furthermore, Evil Wind may be the only one of its kind which can process Dark Magic and manipulate it, making it a perfect match for Arthur .

"You refuse without even seeing what I have to offer . I'm someone who believes in equivalence so If you were to return the Dark Blade, I can assure you that you won't be losing . In fact, I'm prepared to give you more and even teach you a few things that may come handy in the future . "

Seeing that Arthur showed no signs of changing his mind, Timos added:

"Alright, we'll do it like this . I'll lend you a few things and you try them out . By then, if you're still unsatisfied, I'll stop talking . What do you say?"

Only silence came out of Arthur's lips . He stood there, his arm crossed and his eyes lingering on the night sky . Timos took the parasite's silence as acceptance so he immediately made his move, controlling the peaceful forest .

Within a few seconds, thin vines sprung from the ground, wrapped around a shabby wooden box .

Please visit [freewebnovel.com](http://freewebnovel.com)

"The first thing I'll lend you comes in two pieces . The first one is the object before your eyes . A wooden box unlike any other, unique and priceless . This thing, albeit shabby, can be broken by no one, including The Twelve . Once you put your blood on it, it belongs to you and you'll be the only one who can open it

at will . Mind you, it can store anything, even stars, worlds, planets . Actually, the ring on your finger was made from the same wood . "

Arthur glanced at the jet black ring that once belonged to Zodiak . It didn't feel or look like the normal wooden box but it's certainly different than the normal storage rings . Inside this ring, there are countless things and to inspect them one by one would take an eternity . That would leave anyone wondering how Zodiak managed to acquire so many things .

"Before she learned how to properly harness her power, Dimitra mistakenly used a huge portion of her power to create a medium-sized piece of wood . Seeing no purpose in keeping all to herself, she traded some with me and kept the rest to herself . Obviously, I gave her something of equal value, my blood essence with which she helped Tiarius create Riarravar . Very few people knew but that wooden chunk she accidentally created took a great toll on her, making her weak . "

"You're speaking of a big deal as if it's nothing . Are you sure you want to speak of such ancient secrets?"

Arthur snorted, not knowing whether to believe Timos or judge all his words as nonsense, deceitful lies .

"Secrets? Hahaha . A secret stops being so the second a third person knows about it . Furthermore, what I spoke about are past events, the history that is no longer important . "

The Black Devil waited for a few moments, watching Arthur stare at the box and trying to probe it using his sense .

"Just like the Dark Blade, this is a piece of Dimitra so there's nothing capable of affecting it . Moriah helped me change its form and turn it into a storage . Now, let's look at the thing inside, an unparalleled masterpiece that transcends anything . "

Arthur knew that Timos was over-glorifying whatever was inside to appeal to him, nevertheless, he maintained his silence and waited for the box to open .

The parasite looked at the opening wooden box with half-interested expression . He walked closer and leaned his face, wanting to peek inside but such action was needless as the object was reflected into his eyes almost immediately .

To be honest, one would expect a heaven-defying item with an exceptional appearance, however, what Arthur saw was the definition of mediocrity .

A fairly short, wide, slightly curved blade made of a silvery material is held by a grip wrapped in gilded, navy blue skin . It lacked any kind of decoration, its appearance very basic . Ordinary .

"It doesn't have a name, an origin, or characteristics . No one ever used it, besides me, and, in my case, I only wielded once before storing it in this box . It was given to me by a certain entity that I will refrain from mentioning for the sake of safety . "

"How come you were so open about the box yet strangely secretive concerning this sword?"

Expecting such a question, Timos gave an immediate response . "Because it's rather unnecessary to talk about its origins . If you agree to trade then, when the Dark Blade returns to you and I come to retrieve this sword back, I'll tell you a bit about where it came from . And, no, it wasn't crafted by any of the

Twelve and the materials it was made from are unknown even to Quhea . Now, before you try it out let me warn you... this is a blade that does not rely on attributes or uses energy . It cuts and kills, nothing else . It can pierce anything you can imagine but its fuels on the user, meaning you, so you need to be careful when using it because each swing costs dearly . In the past, when I used it, I didn't know its true power so I ended up weakening myself for ten millenniums and the attack I unleashed demolished my whole domain along with Moriah's, going as far as severing his arm . I, the weakest of the twelve, managed to hurt the strong existence ever with just one swing . No one would have believed me so I kept quiet about the matter and blamed Xyktia, who, at the time, was experimenting with Black Magic . "

"And why exactly are you giving such a powerful sword to me?"

"As I said previously, it's part of the trade . It will go back to the box the moment the Dark Blade reaches completion and seeks you . Moreover, I'm lending it to you because I know, in the time you'll be using it, you won't be able to cause what I consider 'real trouble' . At most, you'll cut a few heads and wreak some worlds, it isn't a big deal . "

"I'm aware of the trade but you could have offered me a different sword . "

"You make it sound easy to produce powerful swords such as the Dark Blade . Apart from this oddity, there's only Anduril and the combined effort of the eighteen Divine and Cursed swords that are worthy . "

Arthur pondered for some time before stretching his hand toward the silver sword . He was about to lift it only for his hand to momentarily freeze . He was experiencing a feeling that had long since vanished, the helplessness one goes through when they can't lift a heavy object . He was only incapable of lifting it for the first three seconds because he exerted little force but when he mustered all of his strength, he was still able to properly hold it but his muscles were twitching and his veins popping .

"I'm surprised you were able to lift it on your first try . Good job . It requires a titan's strength to be able to swing it around . Oh don't try swinging it here, I don't want my forest to disappear . "

Arthur was a bit eager to test it out so when he heard Timos' words, he couldn't help but inwardly snort . He raised it in the air but after a few seconds, he started feeling tiredness albeit his infinite Stamina .

"Don't show such a surprised expression, I already told you that it's something out of this world . The limitless Stamina you're so proud of is useless against it . "

"Does that mean I can only use basic sword attacks without resorting to skills?"

"No, skills can be used but the cost is probably more than you could handle with this fake body of yours . I reckon that a serious swing will suck the life out of your arm and it'll need some time to recover . "