

Once Human 561

Chapter 561

Although it is called a Universe, the Omega Universe is only one world, not a planet, a star, or even a galaxy . The world was called Castra Obis, unimaginably vast and inaccessible by higher being like the Twelve . In the Era of Beginning, some speculated this world wasn't the handiwork of the Twelve but something else . Others explained how Castra Obis came into existence through a series of natural and scientific events . Whatever the truth was, it can be said, for certain, that the Omega Universe was never fully explored due to its absurd size .

Zodiak and Forne, who recently became companions, traveled around 15% of Castra Obis in around sixty years . They've encountered countless people and became much stronger, especially the once-young Forne, who grew up and became a middle-aged man . While Zodiak chose an unorthodox route to strengthen himself, Forne started cultivation right after obtaining Destruction Magic .

In less than a century, he managed to swiftly climb the cultivation ladder, leapfrog dozens of grades and become an Overgod . Despite getting a Celestial Body and even managing to train in one of the King Physiques called the Starlight Physique, which allowed him to control stars, Forne was still incapable of completely overpowering Zodiak due to Dark Magic .

In these sixty years, Zodiak managed to break out of his bubble and became more socially active though his grumpiness never disappeared . Their search for the blue-haired girl bore no fruit, nonetheless, throughout the last several decades, Zodiak discovered much more things about the dreams he had in the past .

Arthur and Lucy, their meeting and their brief struggles . There was an inexplicably urge pushing him to find the little girl, who's supposed to be the couple's daughter . However, there was still something left unexplained which is his knowledge of the girl because, as far as Arthur knew, Lucy was merely pregnant and didn't give birth yet .

What is more confusing is what Claud told him... the blue-haired girl is apparently with Timos, the Black Devil and he definitely saw them somewhere in Castra Obis yet even after sixty years, he found no signs .

Forne never complained and always followed Zodiak, whom he considered as a mentor and a close friend .

"So you're saying that the Nameless Knight will kill you?"

At some point, Zodiak spoke of his death by the hands of Leiu .

"It's a long time from now but, from what I saw, there's little chance to stop him . "

"How can you give up being even trying? Why not try to not go to that place when the time comes? Perhaps the future will change for the better . "

"No, it does not work like that . Some things are set in stone in a way that even Fate cannot interfere . "

"Then why don't you try fighting him? I'm sure that if the two of us fought, we can win . "

Hearing this, Zodiak chuckled and retorted: "I wish it was that easy . "

He witnessed Leiu's strength firsthand, it was borderline impossible to contend against him . Even with thousands of years remaining till his death, he won't be able to reach the desired level of strength to evenly battle The Nameless Knight .

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Even at this point in time, Leiu's title would bring fear to anyone who hears him . In fact, it is said that the strongest power right now does not even dare to provoke the Nameless Knight . The Buria Empire dominated almost all of the Cloud Sea Universe and was extending its reach to the other universes but it suddenly stopped after a confrontation between the emperor and Leiu . This happened seven years ago and ever since then, the Buria Empire laid low and even stopped conquering the rest of Cloud Sea .

Seventy years after the Celestial Tribulation, the two companions were forced to leave Castra Obis due to an ominous thing Forne had sensed . His power allowed him to 'smell' incoming destruction, for example, before something is destroyed, he can, more or less, predict it .

At first, the 'smell' was barely noticeable but after two years, Forne could barely move properly . His face was constantly pale and his body shaking from dawn till dusk . The aura of destruction loomed over all of Castra Obis, sealing its fate and forcing the duo to hastily leave .

Zodiak was reluctant to leave before finding the girl, nonetheless, he had to, reassuring himself that Timos won't let the girl perish in the Omega Universe .

...

Indeed, as predicted by Forne, two months after they left Castra Obis, the whole Omega Universe ceased to exist . Everything and everyone ceased to exist, causing the era known as the Void Era to commence . The destruction of the universe hugely affected its neighbors, the explosion, which was thousands of times stronger than a nova, caused the endlessly stretching Void to devour everything .

Zodiak and Forne were forced into seclusion due to the unfavorable circumstances . Actually, they weren't the only ones who hid as almost every living being chose to a world or a planet and remained there for a long time, waiting for the storm to pass .

The Void made it impossible for anyone to cultivate and anyone born in that era could, at most, reach the Divine Realm . Many Gods, Sovereigns, and God Monarchs perished and the Overgods were severely weakened due to their inability to absorb any Nether Energy .

When the Void Era ended, Zodiak discovered that the destruction of the Castra Obis wasn't the only reason for the absurd amount of Void looming over everything . Moreover, there was a single individual who managed to survive that terrifying nova . He was the named the Joker, a mysterious man with a strength that equaled the Nameless Knight but those were mere speculation as the two never really fought or interfered with each other .

Right after 'that' era, there were several gruesome wars, one was to eliminate the God Race then the remaining races allied to get rid of the Titans . In the end, only the Buria Empire remained standing and, as if it forgot Leiu's warning, continued to conquer everything again . It was at that point in time that Zodiak and Forne showed themselves, though not very willingly .

The Destruction Magic user actually got an invitation from a secret organization with the name of Black Rose, offering him one of the Nine Seats . While Forne went to meet Black Rose regarding the offer, Zodiak was left alone in the Imperial Capital of the Buria Empire .

It was then, when he was seemingly walking down a road bustling with people that he met him for the second time . The mysterious benefactor who passed him Dark Magic, a man wearing a black robe just like the one he made and emitting a dangerous aura containing Dark Magic that was a bit different than his .

One would think that they would go to a secluded area to talk but no, they entered a famous restaurant and sat opposite of each other . Zodiak stared at the man, who took his hood off and gazed back at him, a smile forming on his stoic face .

"Arthur MoonStar . I knew it was you . "

Zodiak spoke with an toneless voice, his gaze containing neither anger not resentment, just curiosity .

"Of course you knew, after all, aren't we the same person?"

"No, we are not . I'm your reincarnation but that doesn't mean we're the same, even though I've regained some of your memories . "

Arthur kept smiling, not disagreeing with any of what Zodiak had said .

"We share the same soul, you have my memories but I don't have yours . So, tell me, does that make me an incomplete version of you?"

After a brief silence, Zodiak replied:

"Who am I doesn't matter now, right? I do not think you've came all the way from the future to talk about this . "

"Indeed . I've come here to reclaim a past favor, which I hope you did not forget . "

"..."

Zodiak gave no answer, he only watched this nonchalant man, who was exactly like the Arthur in his dream . Various thoughts went through his mind, he wondered about Arthur's intentions... whether they're harmful to him or not .

"You're not in the memories of the past or future Arthur, which means you reincarnated again, right?"

Arthur chuckled and truthfully answered: "Of course I did . You died, or rather, you will die, and our soul will go through another reincarnation . The final one, hopefully . "

"So I did die by the Nameless Knight's hands?"

"Seems like it . "

Time crept by and the two maintained an awkward silence before Zodiak broke it by saying:

"What do you want from me?"

In response, Arthur took out a very detailed picture of a black two-handed sword and showed it to Zodiac .

"I want you to go and retrieve this . "

Chapter 562

"Bloc A! REPORT!"

On the peak of the mountain below the Celestial Tribulation, one of the highest-leveled players was panicking as he watched a disaster befall on the spaceship floating a distance away .

It all began when a deafening gunshot was heard several miles away from the mountain . To begin with, it was suspicious that part of the tribulation headed there but, before it could reach wherever it was going, there occurred a catastrophic explosion .

Whoever did this was a woman, she was holding onto a large silver rifle and the moment she fired, she turned around and swiftly left . Some level 10,000 players tried chasing her away but went back empty-handed, claiming that her speed was simply out of this world . The problem wasn't the woman, however, but was actually the spaceship, which was hit by the single bullet .

The spaceship was monstrously huge yet a third of it instantly vaporized, triggering all the alarms and destabilizing the whole ship, making it slowly fall to the side .

Due to its massive size, no one of the present people could stop its descent so they could only move away from the mountain . The powerhouses standing on the peak refused to leave and activated their powers to defend from the impact .

As one would expect, when the spaceship crashed into the mountain, it violently shook as if a volcano was about to erupt . 'Twas at this moment that the thunder started roaring and raging, raining down on the peak, showcasing literally heaven's wrath . Everyone present looked at the mountain's peak, where 8 blinding stars rose from under the earth and started rotating monotonously .

"It's the creation of a Celestial Body!"

Nobody knew who but a random person excitedly shouted those words, making the spectators even more eager to see the cause of this tribulation . If it's a treasure then everyone will fight for it and if it's a person then they'll either try to rope him or kill him . Whoever incurs the anger of the Heavens is bound to be someone with limitless potential, a person capable of reaching the epitome of strength .

"It's a 8-star God Monarch . "

An old monk who hails from the Thousand Buddha sect looked at the flashing stars and commented, fascination could be seen within his old yet lively eyes . A small distance away from the monk, there sat two figures, one was a young man with an innocent but determined face while the other was a middle-aged man with long black hair .

The older one is a supreme existence in the Cloud Sea Universe, one of the four living Sword Gods and a respected individual . As for the youngster with him, it was actually Syth, the only son of the deceased Human Emperor of Astria .

"If you continue training at the same pace, you'll be able to build 8 stars too . Watch carefully . "

The man instructed his one and only disciple, who enthusiastically nodded his head, not knowing that the origin of those blinding stars is actually his first mentor .

The Sword God was about to talk again only to see a hand dig through the unstable earth and appear on the surface . He was not the only one to notice this peculiarity . At this time, everyone ascertained that it's not a treasure but a living being who managed to invoke the tribulation .

As instructed by Arthur, Zodiak traveled to the past Riarravar and, after being locked for some time due to the mechanism of the luminous city underground, he successfully obtained Anduril and swiftly left the world . However, this feat was done a long time after his meeting with his benefactor .

In fact, his brief journey in the Imperial Capital can be said to be more intriguing and action-packed . It all started when Forne joined Black Rose as the Purple Seat of Malice, and as he was a good friend of Zodiak, it didn't take long for the latter to become one of the Nine seats too . To be precise, he dueled the Red Seat and emerged victorious, claiming the position as his own .

At that time, Zodiak immersed himself in research, trying to fully comprehend Dark Magic . He put the matter of the blue-haired girl to the side because he had no leads .

Surprisingly, Emperor G'am Tir, ruler of the Buria Empire, was actually the Black Seat of Death at that time . Along with the Yellow Seat of Patience and Zodiak, after a one year long bitter research and countless failed experiments, managed to create an artifact, or, to be more accurate, an orb . It was made from the souls and remains of dead God and Titan Races .

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Zodiak wanted to use it to stop Leiu, however, G'am grew greedy and wanted to use it to conquer more land . This quickly led to a conflict between the two, which was sorted out in a gruesome battle . The fight lasted a whole week and, in the end, the Black Seat was defeated but spared by Zodiak on the condition that he declares himself as dead and secludes himself .

Zodiak also his place as the Black Seat and properly managed Black Rose until one day, he vanished right after handing his position to Forne, who was left confused .

As for the Orb of the Fallen Overgods, it was supposedly kept by the Yellow Seat until, someday, it simply vanished, presumably stolen .

When he died, Arthur knew he'll reincarnate but didn't know what 'reincarnation' really met . He thought it'll be just like the first time but he couldn't be more wrong . After what seemed to be an eternal slumber, he opened his eyes but couldn't focus on what's around him as his mind was flooded with new things... memories .

No, they weren't memories of Zodiak's but of himself, his young self, before he entered the orphanage . Though he couldn't remember what he experienced prior to the orphanage, he never questioned anything so when he finally found out the truth, he was really flabbergasted .

It all started when he was baby, the second he appeared in this world, there wasn't the warm embrace of a mother nor the happy cries of a father . He laying alone on a bed, his eyes incapable of opening and his surroundings empty .

He adapted to the environment and, for the first two months, couldn't feel hunger, strangely . There was a voice talking him, it was soothing and melodious though it was hard to guess whether it's a man or a woman . When he opened his eyes, the first thing he saw was a medium-sized room with just enough furniture but an absurd amount of books scattered everywhere .

"Read and learn . "

The voice talked to him while presenting a book, which opened by itself . While flipping the pages, it taught him again, again, and again . For days, weeks, months, Arthur didn't keep count as his hunger for more knowledge eclipsed everything .

He learned of energies, cultivation, the system, the elements and forbidden techniques . When he was one-week-old, he successfully managed to control Nether Energy and absorb it . After two weeks, he stabilized his minuscule Dantian and strengthened his Meridians . When two months had passed, he already reached the Spirit Realm but due to the small place he was living, he couldn't try out any skills or spells, and it's not like the disembodied voice allowed him to wreak havoc in this humble abode .

Five long years' worth of memories entered Arthur's head and caused him to remain dazed for a couple of minutes .

"Didn't I say that, when the time comes, you'll be the first one to know?"

It spoke to him, the voice now originating from the top of the tree . Arthur, half smiling, lifted his head and looked at this entity which can be considered as his parent .

"Bilgart, is that you?"

In response, the speaker chuckled and replied: "It seems you have finally regained your childhood memories . Congratulations . "

The current Arthur wasn't a child anymore, he had the appearance of a middle-aged man and all his powers are accessible, including Dark Magic . However, there was an additional thing inside his body, it brought him serenity and filled him with confidence .

"What the System called Lost Magic wasn't obtained from Dark Magic but from your childhood . It's the power of creation, the same one all the Twelve had . "

Arthur quietly listened while raising his left hand, from which an invisible aura emanated, shaking the space and cracking the ground underneath his feat .

"As for that, it is purely condensed Nether Energy, the strongest form, I daresay . I believe it'll be useful . Now then, I'm sure that some of the questions you're eager to ask are slowly being answered your memories but I don't mind doing it too . Go ahead . "

Just like his young self, Arthur removed his boots and sat near the calm and beautiful pond, put his feet in the cold but refreshing water before asking:

"So I'm about to enter the second cycle of my life?"

"Yes . "

"Will things be different?"

"That is up to you . "

"How about Zodiak... did he die?"

"Your soul returned to 'you' which can only mean..."

It didn't need to continue for Arthur to understand the meaning behind his words . After letting out a sigh, Arthur asked again:

"Did you orchestrate everything?"

"Orchestrate? What a funny word . I'm only a watcher, whatever happened, happens, or will happen, is not up to me . It never has, my dear child . "

"Then what about me? Did you create me?"

"I did . "

"Why?"

"Hm? Would you rather not being born at all? Don't you want to live with your wife and children? It is a weird question to ask a parent, don't you think?"

"Parents give birth but in my case, you created me . "

Arthur spoke with a sad tone though his face remained stiff, not showcasing his true emotions .

"I don't think there's any difference between the two . The first two humans were created, so were the first demons and dwarves, etc . Just like any living being, you're able to love, hate, and grief . "

"Then am I considered a human?"

"I intended for you to be a human . So, yes, you are human . "

Then, Arthur maintained a long silence, his mind drifting away . Only after an inordinate amount of time did he speak again:

"I still don't understand... what is the purpose of my existence?"

"Purpose? There is no need for a purpose . I did not create you to do something specific but to only enjoy life as it is . Love and be loved, my child . "

Chapter 563

Like a shooting star, Angelina rushed past the hundreds of raging Shadow Beasts, her destination only a hundred meters away . Her silver spear was sweeping the air, leaving a beautiful but deadly arc in its way . Any monster that got close to her was flung away, however, due to their sheer number, she couldn't fend herself from all directions .

Her Physique was activated, rendering her immune to physical attack, nevertheless, the Shadow Beasts were still able to slow her down by pulling her shadow, somehow restricting her movements . The beast-like monsters weren't the problem, what was troublesome was a tall shadowy silhouette that bombarded her with attacks while also controlling the lower and weaker species .

"Almost..."

She jumped in the air, trying to dodge dozens of leaping beasts only for the gravity to multiply, forcing her body to quickly descend right into the enemies' bosom . While falling to the ground, she clenched her spear and used her ultimate skill while activating her race's unique ability . An Illusory white tail and long ears appeared, her pupils now snow-white and white flames burning under her feet, Angelina let out an ear-piercing screech and stabbed her spear .

Both the weapon and its user was enveloped by a suffocating aura which took the form of a two-headed dragon, one head was the whole spear while the other was Angelina herself . Like a falling meteor, she crashed into the mass of beasts, causing a loud explosion and pushing all the enemies away . The White Specter crashed into the ground then hastily got up and dashed toward the majestic black temple a short distance away .

She left behind a large crater with a minuscule yet bottomless hole at its center . As for the Shadow beasts, they tried to attack again but by the time they realized what happened, the woman was already at the entrance of the temple, which was a forbidden zone none of them could trespass into .

"It's different *cough*"

Angelina coughed some blood while inspecting the vicinities . Unlike the other temples, this one was, at least, five times larger and looked inexplicably clean and less eerie . Both the floor, roof, and walls were made from a black, crystalline marble, adding more beauty to this archaic place .

Before going deeper, the woman rested for half an hour to heal her wounds and recuperate some Nether Energy . Though, her specter transformation was active and her long tail was dancing in the air as if it was some sort of a radar .

Once she was ready, Angelina cautiously entered the temple, her spear ready to attack anything that moves . Her quiet breathing abruptly halted when a voice rang inside her ears, startling the woman and causing her body to twitch and retreat a few steps .

"I don't think it's respectful to brazenly enter a tomb with a weapon in hand . "

"Who are you?"

She tried to locate the source of the voice but apart from the usual statues, there was nothing else . Fortunately, whoever or whatever was speaking to her wasn't adamant about remaining hidden .

To Angelina's surprise, the small statue at the center twitched before it started moving or, to be more precise, the wings flapped three times before the tiny head turned around, facing the flabbergasted woman .

Words got stuck in her throat as she tried to process what just happened . When she heard the disembodied voice, she expected the presence of something but never did she expect that it was actually the statue .

The entity flapped its wings again then flew in the air, heading not for Angelina but a throne that she just had noticed . It was three to four times to size of a normal throne and, sitting on it, was the strongest being that had ever existed, Moriah, the Shadow Emperor .

He had a humanoid body but didn't look particularly human, with a dark blue skin, an absurdly long black hair that reached all the way to the ground, and ears that somewhat resembled an elf's . The entity that just talked to Angelina headed toward the throne and comfortably landed at the top of the throne, right above the lifeless body of Moriah .

"Come here, Angelina Album Larva . "

Though it beckoned for her, she only moved after dozens of seconds, her steps clearly showing her reluctance . Though she felt no danger from the entity, it doesn't mean she wasn't afraid .

The woman stopped a few meters away from the throne, her head lifted and gazing at the creature looking back at her . The reason she was first confused when she saw the statues was because the central one, which belonged to the Watched, Bilgart, didn't look as threatening as the rest .

In fact, the statue was that of a crow, a very normal crow except for its color, half black and half white . Even right now, it was still vertically split in two colors, from the top of its head all the way to its tiny feet . The eyes were also pure white or jet black but, apart from that, the crow didn't have anything special, in terms of appearance, that is .

"You came here seeking answers, right?"

Angelina nodded her head but didn't speak .

"But, do you know what this place is?"

She pondered for a few brief seconds before replying:

"The tomb of the Shadow Emperor?"

"Yes, it is his tomb but before that, it was an ordinary planet . Its name was Serenity, a special place for you and your husband Claud Venice . "

"Husband?"

"Is it that difficult to believe? I suppose not because, by coming here, you've unknowingly accepted what you've dreamed of . Deep inside, you knew they weren't mere dreams, after all, no mind can create memories so vivid... so heart-wrenching . "

"So... what now?"

Arthur stared at the crow standing on the thin branch of the only tree in the courtyard, his gaze locked onto the mysterious white and black pupils of this entity known as the Watcher .

"Now you move on . This is only a spiritual boundary, its only purpose was to explain a few things to you . The real second cycle will start when you open your

Just as Bilgart finished speaking, Arthur started feeling sleep, his eyes slowly closed and his muscles relaxed . The urge to sleep overpowered his desire to remain awake, so, again, he entered another slumber .

"Hey, old man! Are you sure you got the invitation? Show us!"

A bunch of arrogant youths who were loitering around Losha and pestering the old man wearing a grey robe . They were the only two in the vicinities until a while ago, where these second-generation kids showed up and immediately started causing trouble .

Losha, the reincarnator, was sure that they either bought the invitation or illegally acquired because they were not strong enough to qualify for the Red Tower and get a red envelope from the Joker . As they obviously had nothing to do, they started mocking the cross-legged elder and circling around him .

Their intentions were clear yet neither Losha nor the old man reacted in any way . Things escalated pretty as words turned into violence like pulling his long robe and lightly kicking him while laughing outloud .

Having had enough, Losha furiously got up and walked up to them . However, before she could harshly reprimand them in the form of a beating, they swiftly fled . At first, they only glanced at her but when they had a clear look at her face, they recognized her and chose to back away .

"Hey, are you alright?"

Though she found him a bit creepy, Losha still decided to talk to him . Seeing that he didn't react to their 'bullying', she thought that he simply didn't want to offend them as maybe they come from powerful families, which is most likely the case .

The old man stood up and removed his head then softly smiled at the blacksmith, who found his face a bit familiar .

"Thank you for your help miss Losha . "

He stretched his hand, planning to properly greet her . Losha looked at this shockingly thin hand and bony fingers and reciprocated as she found it disrespectful not to shake his hand after he had thanked her .

"You know me?"

She stared at his face, which was riddled with wrinkles and unusually pale like that of a corpse . In fact, she sensed no power coming from him, on the outside, he seemed very weak as if a simple breeze could take his life, though Losha knew better than this and decided not to judge him based on his appearance .

"I'm a big fan of your past achievements . "

He let out a chuckle after saying that, creeping her out even more . Losha decided not to fret much about it and was about to retreat after shaking his hand only for him to add:

"Ah, please forgive my manners, I haven't introduced myself . "

While slightly bowing his bald head, he said:

"The name is Zodiak, very nice to meet you, miss . "

For a moment, Losha was shocked as parts of her memories become clearer, giving her more clarity and causing her body to momentarily shiver .

"Zodiak?"

"I guess you do remember me, old friend . "

Though he said that, Losha remained oblivious, still trying to piece together her fragmented memories of her past life .

"It is better not to dwell too much on the matters of the past . We didn't part ways on friendly terms, however, I do wish you do not get consumed by your greed once more, G'am Tir . "

Right after saying that, he sat cross-legged and closed his eyes, no longer paying any attention to the dumbstruck woman before him .

Death and his recent disciple, Anastassia, stood before the dying Zodiak .

"I'm surprised he still can hold on . "

The robbed old man gazed at Zodiak, who was all bloodied and trying to use what little remained of his Dark Magic to get rid of the malevolent Darkness unleashed by Anduril, Leiu's sword .

"You will separate the soul from the body then I'll give you the Scythe to harvest it . "

Death explained the process to Anastassia . The woman, after slight hesitation, crouched next to Zodiak, who's almost dead, and stretched her hand, about to pull out his soul .

Unfortunately, the moment she got close enough, a hand grabbed her throat, suffocating her . Before she could do anything, her body was assaulted by a monstrous amount of Dark Magic which sealed all of her movements .

The old man, Death, tried to stop Zodiak's sudden attack but he was a second too late . Both the assailant and the now-hostage Anastassia appeared a distance away .

"What do you think you're doing, Zodiak!"

Very angry, Death glared at Zodiak, who's barely able to breathe while gripping Anastassia's neck, and shouted .

In response, Zodiak coughed a bit of blood before saying:

"You attempt anything, she dies . "

He tightened his grip, causing Anastassia's face to turn red, there even a black fog coming from her nose and ears . By now, Death knew that she had been corrupted and not even he, is able to extract all the Dark Magic .

"What do you want? I can neither save you nor heal that wound!"

"I knew you to do what you're good at, harvesting souls . "

Zodiak pointed at his chest then continued:

"After Arthur reincarnated into me, our soul became larger and stronger . I want you to split it in two!"

"Are you crazy?!"

The old man frowned, revealing a twisted expression, clearly finding whatever Zodiak said absurd .

"I can't do that!"

"You can and you will . "

Zodiak threatened the old man by using the now unconscious Anastassia, who couldn't handle the pain . Her life was now entirely in the Mythical's hands and the only one who can save her is Death .

"It's not like your souls merged, it's the same one . It's not possible to separate it in two . "

"Is that so?"

The hand gripping the woman's throat tightened even more, shredding the skin and damaging her larynx . Seeing this, Death panicked and hurriedly said:

"Stop, I will do it!"

He gritted his teeth, retrieved a large scythe and marched toward Zodiak .

"Try anything else and I'll make sure she joins me!"

While still holding Anastassia and breathing really heavily, Zodiak made it so his chest is exposed to the incoming Death .

Actually, what Zodiak wanted wasn't an impossible thing, however, it goes against the natural laws of Death so by doing that, Death will be condemning himself . The only thing that can get rid of Death are the very same laws that made him .

The large and sharp scythe was swung at Zodiak, going through his chest and striking his consciousness . It has to be said that Death was very accurate as he pulled half of the soul, bringing with it Arthur's memories .

This caused Zodiak to fall and clutch his chest, unable to bear through the agonizing pain . As for the old man, he caught the falling Anastassia and made sure her hand was holding the Scythe, which the only thing that symbolizes true Death .

His figure slowly started vanishing he completely disappeared, leaving only an unconscious Anastassia and a struggling Zodiak .

A long while later, the woman woke up, feeling confused about the condition of her body . She felt refreshed and no longer sensed her Dantian or anything else, it's as if she was no longer a human . She surveyed the surroundings and happened to see the lifeless body of Zodiak laying a distance away .

In her hand, there was a Scythe, though contrary to the one from earlier, this one was jet black and emitting thick amount of Death Energy .

When he opened his eyes again, Arthur saw a two-story building that was not only dirty but riddled with holes . The walls were creaking and the door could not be closed due to its poor, shattered state . There was a heavy downpour which made him all wet and limiting his view of the vicinities, nevertheless, he recognized this place with only one glance, it was the orphanage he grew up in .

"Bilgart, I see... I finally get what you meant . "

He looked at his tiny hands, those of a very young boy, then walked toward the entrance .

"Lucy... if this is what it takes to meet you again then I'll gladly choose the same path . "*"

"Dear contestants, the Red Tower will open its doors in three days, please ready yourselves . "

A robotic voice of a female came out of the red envelope handed by the Joker . The thousand people in possession of the envelope clearly heard the voice and started heading toward the tower .

Most of them had already reached the destination and were patiently waiting . As the Red Tower was absolutely ginormous, its surroundings were equally large so the several hundred people were quite a distance away from each other, unwilling to fight and merely meditated in silence .

There was some friction between rivals and enemies but they didn't fight to death and decided to contest inside this marvelous artifact before them .

Around three hours ago, Lucy arrived near the tower and joined with Forne, Artid, and one more person belonging to the Nine Seats . It was the Grey Seat of Decay, a woman by the name of Celes .

"You've come, which means you agree to our plan . "

Forne spoke to the silence Lucy, whose face was changed thanks to the special mask .

"Hmpf!"

She snorted but didn't object, which made Forne grumble, disliking her attitude but choosing not to comment . A couple of minutes later, other people joined their small camp .

One was a person Lucy was very familiar with, a man wearing a black suit and holding a small cane, his face blurry, hidden by magic . There was also the middle-aged man residing in Underworld, he brought with him the Void Behemoth, which took a much smaller form as to not attract attention .

Three of the Nine Seats of Black Rose, Lucy, 'X', G'am Tir, and the Void Behemoth... these seven decided to form an alliance in order to take down one entity .

"Remember, our goal is to reach the top floor safely . Our target is the Nameless Knight . " Forne solemnly said while looking at everyone present .

"Didn't you say he's not our target?"-Lucy

"Well, technically, he's not . The real danger is what's inside him... a pest that only emerges rarely . Its name is Sol'khin . "

VOLUME 11 : The Red Tower

Hey, Crow here . I want to say that I wasn't going to write this volume(10) but decided to do so because it helps explain many things in the story . In the beginning, Arthur found Zodiak's body but I don't want to just call him 'lucky' for finding a cave that has the body of a mythical being . I wanted to explain how the body arrived there, who is the owner and what's his relation with Arthur .

Before you ask, I'll say that the next volume will have Arthur and it'll not be a flashback of some sort . I don't want to lengthen the story more than needed, whatever I have in mind will be written and all that I deem unnecessary will not be mentioned . I'm not saying the story is almost finished, neither is it still at the beginning phase .

What I want is a satisfying end that, when read, will explain anything mysterious in the story . Of course, something will remain hidden and will only be revealed in Leiu or the Joker's story .

Now, Let me explain a few things so that some of you will not remain confused . In this volume, there was a scene when Arthur was shopping and found a figurine that resembled the crocodile Zodiak encountered when he was young . This scene happened right after the end of Volume 10, when the second cycle began and Arthur is reliving his life on Earth while choosing the same path, purposely getting close to Claudia in order to get kidnapped, etc . . .

From the looks of it, albeit having the soul separated in two, he still regained some of Zodiak's memories .

The scene where Zodiak and Aneirin witnessed Leiu kill Death (in Serenity/past), the boy who escaped at the end was the same old man who took Anastassia as his disciple, grooming her to be the next Death .

If you have any more questions, please ask in the comment and I'll try to answer .

Thanks for reading so far! I appreciate it .

Chapter 564

"Boss, what's wrong? It's the first time you're treating me to such an expensive meal!"

Cynthia, Arthur's secretary curiously inquired as her boss surprisingly brought her to one of the luxurious restaurants and told her to eat as much as she wants .

"Can't I pamper my subordinate? Hahaha"

He laughed while looking at her comical expression, which clearly showed that she didn't believe a word of what he said . Ever since she took this job, he'd make her work day and night so, such a rare occasion,

which was definitely out of the norm, kind of frightened her . In fact, she even thought she's going to get fired due to her clumsy actions .

"B-boss, I kno-"

Before she could finish, Arthur cut her off by saying:

"It isn't what you think so enjoy the dishes . "

Cynthia sighed and did as told, though her mind was busy thinking about something else . Anyway, it didn't take long for her to fill her stomach and savor the delicious desserts .

When she was about to go wash her hands, Arthur grabbed her hand, his face looking a bit more serious . He pulled her back in the seat and pushed a relatively large envelope towards her .

"I don't need you or want you to question any of what I'll say . Take this and leave the country tonight, I've already booked a flight to Switzerland for you . You always wanted to live there, right?"

Dumbstruck, Cynthia looked at the envelope then at Arthur, not knowing how to react or what to say .

"I've arranged everything for you there so you can live comfortably . This gentleman here will drive you to the airport . "

He looked at a middle-aged man who walked up to the table and bowed to him before facing Cynthia .

"See you . "

Without even waiting for her reply, Arthur stood up and left the restaurant . As for his secretary, despite her unwillingness, she was still taken to the airport and flew to Switzerland the very same night .

Actually, that very same day, Arthur was kidnapped in front of his home . A group of muscular mercenaries bound him and threw him into a large white van .

Of course, Arthur neither fought back nor said anything as he expected all of this to happen . Like the past, he was brought back to that room and tortured while Claudia enjoyed the sight . Using his still vivid memories of the first cycle, Arthur acted the very same and questioned his wife's actions, eagerly waiting for the fateful day to arrive .

Months passed and Arthur's body slowly broke down until 'X' finally appeared and offered Arthur a second chance, which he obviously took . However, when he reincarnated, he wasn't brought back to Astria but to another place .

With the mountain in a demolished, unstable state and the tribulation pouring down on the peak, the spectators grew curious about this 8-star God Monarch who's currently rebuilding his body into a Celestial one . At first, a hand sprung from the earth then it was followed by a second hand, they were stained from the dirt but apart from that, they resembled a human's .

Like an awoken zombie, a man appeared from the earth, he had short hair that was jet black with a bit of white strands . Before his face become clear, he vanished from everyone's sight .

"I told you that I will come back, right?"

Arthur appeared before the elder monk from last time, the one who banished him to Riarravar . Due to his sudden attack, the monk wasn't able to escape . Arthur's hand stabbed the monk's abdomen and literally pulled his organs then Dark Magic followed, engulfing the whole lower part of the old man .

The monk tried to speak but only blood came out of his mouth, his cultivation was being lost and he couldn't even take out his artifact to defend or flee . While holding the top of the dying monk's head, Arthur glanced at the flabbergasted spectators, a soft smile plastered on his now clean face . A strange black spatial tunnel opened next to him and, from within, a small jet black ring and a robe attached themselves to Arthur .

"I didn't think I would have a lot of fans . "

Arthur chuckled and raised his hand, releasing an absurd amount of Godly Thunder which clashed with the incoming tribulation . The white and red thunder struck each other, cracking the space and destroying the surroundings .

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Not all of the people present recognized him, however, those who did, became shocked and frightened . One of them was the black-haired Marshall who appeared at the end of the war between the white specters and the undead, his countenance changed as he glared at Arthur, not bothering to hide his hostility .

The target of his fiery gaze remained nonchalant as he looked at the raging thunder up above and mumbled:

"It'll be better to get rid of this before the fun begins . "

He retrieved the sword given to him by Timos, held it with both of his hand and flew into the sky, directly at the tribulation . What happened after left everyone gob-smacked, like a wheel, Arthur spun in the air and slashed with his sword, releasing a devastating invisible blow which cut down everything in its path . The hundreds of thunderbolts and the clustered dark clouds were split in two and vanished within ten seconds, leaving nothing but the rumbling sounds of the disappearing thunder .

Just like that, a Celestial Tribulation which can evaporate an Overgod was taken care of . This only deepened the dread of the spectators, especially those who are not strong enough to content against this unfamiliar man .

The players that came from System braced themselves and took out a lot of expensive items, planning to defend themselves if Arthur decided to attack them next .

The Marshall changed into a fighting stance as he knew he would be next . Very few people remained calm, one of them was the Sword God, Syth's teacher . At first, he was surprised but didn't feel that much threatened by Arthur, however, when his disciple told him something, he retreated to a safe corner and merely watched the events unfold .

After he got rid of the tribulation, the eight stars rotating around Arthur started forming his Celestial Body . The process took less than a minute, moreover, not even one person dared to disturb Arthur, who was becoming an Overgod before their eyes .

His eyes shone with a blue luster while his body emitted an outrageous amount of Dark Magic which shrouded the sky and corrupted half of the demolished mountain, which could barely hold on . Any more damage and it'll crumble, no one would have ever thought that an ancient monument would be destroyed to such a sorry state .

"Time to collect some debt, Marshall . "

Arthur spoke with a mocking tone as he sheathed his sword and faced the enemy . Unfortunately, the Marshall wasn't alone as two other silhouette jumped next to him . The two were unfamiliar to Arthur but thanks to Appraisal, he was able to see their status, including the realms . Both were peak Overgods, supreme existences in this Universe but the parasite didn't feel worried .

He could hear the calling of the red envelope given by the Joker, which meant that the Red Tower will open soon . He didn't know where Lucy was but it was safe to assume that she'll be waiting for him there .

The first to initiate an attack was the Marshall, who charged at Arthur, his sword releasing tiny silver threads made of sharp Sword Essence . In retaliation, Arthur punched the air in front of him, cracking it and breaking all the threads, then he teleported next to the man and violently kicked his legs before using his new power which allowed him to release a purer form of Nether Energy which can damage enemies .

The Marshall was hit by the kick but managed to somersault in time to dodge the second attack .

The two others, both old men, each rushed from one direction, one wielding a long halberd and the other a long lance . When they got too close to Arthur, their movement became incredibly slow, allowing Arthur to easily position himself and counter-attack .

Within a split second, the two were flung away, one enveloped by green lightning and the other waving his weapon around, trying to get rid of the Dark Magic . Sadly, Arthur wasn't done as he teleported again, appearing behind the old man wielding a lance and opened his mouth, spitting some sort of acid .

The deadly acid splattered all over the old man, melting his clothes and skin, causing him to wail loudly, unable to handle the pain . Even before such a gory sight, Arthur didn't bat an eye as he punched the old man, planning to finish him only for the Marshall to dive from the air, his sword releasing a loud cry then unleashing a white blast .

Arthur changed his target from the old man to the Marshall, his fist clashing with the sword . The result was an annoying ringing sound caused by the cracked sword of the Marshall, who gasped and swiftly retreated .

Sadly, his body plummeted below, and before his body could crash in the ground, the earth moved on its own, changing into sharp and long black spikes . He trying rotating his body mid-air to avoid them but the ever-increasing gravity rendered him unable to move freely .

A distance away, the lance wielding Overgod was overwhelmed by a large flame tornado and a lightning dragon, both bombarding relentlessly . He was able to protect himself but he could not join the other two and attack Arthur .

...

"He's multitasking . Never saw anyone actually do it . "

One of the players chatted with his friends while watching Arthur's fight . Another player, a woman with a long green hair and a light silver armor, nodded her head and added:

"He can use lots of elements too . I see lightning, fire, earth, Space, darkness, Life, death . "

"Isn't he that parasite who got banished? How'd he come back?"

Hearing this question, the woman shrugged her shoulders, uninterested . She took out a red envelope and said:

"We've got no business here, let's head to the Red Tower . "

Some of the players under her didn't object and obediently followed her .

...

The old man who got hit by the acid perished less than a minute later, as for the lance wielding Overgod, he was targeted next by Arthur .

The parasite, while receiving the Marshall's sword slashes, was able to hit the far-away old man . Small and colorful tornados appeared above his hands, they spun with great speed and, when thrown, became extremely large and devastating .

Around six tornados headed toward the old man, each containing an attribute with the most terrifying one being the Death Tornado . It withered everything in its way and kind of weakened the other tornados, nonetheless, they ended up reaching the target and trapping him .

Unfortunately, the old man didn't die that easily, he suddenly emitted a blinding red light and swept his lance, breaking all the tornados before leaping at Arthur . The old man's speed became absurd as he appeared next to Arthur and stabbed him, the spear going through Arthur's chest .

Glad that he finally defeated the target, the old man looked at Arthur only to find the latter smiling, unperturbed by the lance going through his chest .

"Got you . "

The moment Arthur said that, the ground under the old man turned jet black and started to suck him in like some sort of a black hole . In fact, this was an ability Leiu often used and Arthur managed to successfully imitate it using Dark Magic .

The old man struggled and tried jumping away but to no avail, the more he moved, the faster the suction became . A couple of seconds passed and all that remained was an emptiness in his location, even his desperate cries could no longer be heard .

The Marshall, angry, became much more serious as his blade turned invisible and his aura multiplied . Like a ghost, he zigzagged around the spikes blocking his way before stabbing Arthur with the unseen blade .

Sadly, his weapon hit only air as Arthur vanished yet again and when he reappeared, he was possessing the body of the old man who was killed by the acid . Arthur took a throwing stance and, after applying all of his strength into the arm holding the lance, he shot it at the incoming Marshall .

It whistled in the air and shattered the space around it as it directly clashed with the enemy, breaking into pieces but still managing to fling the Marshall away . Furthermore, the tip of the lance had a fire Rinotsu hidden in it, which engulfed the whole target .

Being an Exalted God, the Marshall wasn't heavily injured by either the Rinotsu or the lance, nonetheless, he did suffer minor wounds and still had to get rid of the Hell flames burning his clothes and disturbing his flow of energy .

Chapter 565

"What do you *cough* want?"

The black-haired Marshall coughed blood as he faced Arthur, who was possessing the body of the dead Overgod .

"Revenge, sweet revenge . "

The old man flashed an ugly smile at the distressed Marshall, whose sword skills were countered by Arthur . He stealthily retrieved a Dimensional Stone, planning to leave this area before he get fatally injured by the rampaging Dark Magic .

Using the overgod's body, Arthur dashed at the middle-aged man and attacked with his palm, emitting a blinding golden light followed by a large illusory palm that twice his size . The Marshall swung his invisible sword, unleashing a silver beam which clashed with Arthur's palm attack .

The beam emerged victorious and headed toward Arthur, striking his body and causing a lot of blood to gush out, nevertheless, the parasite continued his charge, uncaring about the damage dealt with his body . He neither felt pain nor threatened because, as a Soul Parasite, Physical attacks can't kill him . Moreover, his stats were now outrageous to the point that even an Exalted God's attacks do very little damage .

With the acquisition of the Celestial Body, a higher cultivation and his incredibly physical body, a fresh Exalted God like this gloomy Marshall can't really defeat him .

Although his charge was slowed, Arthur still managed to reach his target and raise both of his hands, releasing a formless energy that shattered the space and locked the enemy in place . This was followed by a sprayed deadly acid, three exploding detonators and a large black whirlpool which hit the man's face, completely disfiguring him and consuming all the sword essence he planned to use to resist .

In the end, the Marshall was sent flying two hundred meters away and before he could stabilize his body, Arthur was already upon him, shackling him with the use of tiny black threads that wrapped around his limbs .

Arthur also activated his eye ability, slowing time around him and the enemy, rendering him unable to crush the dimensional stone and getaway .

Very calmly, he snatched the stone from the Marshall's hand, pocketed it then mockingly said:

"This trick has been used so many times... did you really think I would let anyone else escape?"

Then he put his hand over the Marshall's head and used Dark Magic, corrupting the man and causing him to die a very painful and miserable death .

Once he was done with the enemy, Arthur looked around before focusing his gaze on a solitary man wearing an armor that had the Cloud Sea emblem . He was a God Monarch who accompanied the Marshall, his strength was weak and after witnessing what happened to his superior, he didn't dare act arrogantly or even try to run away .

"This is only the beginning . Tell your sect, empire, or whatever, that I'll come back . "

Arthur then looked at the crowd of experts, all looking at him, and spoke with a more domineering tone:

"The Thousand Buddha Sect, the Heavenly Snake Clan, and the Cloud Sea Sect, I'll uproot every single of them . Please help me relay this message to them . "

He did a slight bow before adding: "Now then, I'm off . "

He was enveloped in a green lightning then flew away, leaving a black fog in his path . All the onlookers remained surprised for some time before they came back to their senses when the sky-piercing mountain started heavily shaking then crumbling into literal dust .

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"We received an urgent message from the scout . The target will pass through here in an hour . "

A man covered in a thick silver armor talked to his superior, an old woman wearing a normal white robe .

In response, the old woman nodded her head, turned to face an army of a hundred experienced Holy Knights, and spoke with a loud and crisp voice, contrary to what one might expect from a sack of old bones like her:

"Prepare the shield and solidify the formation!"

The knights shouted in union, all energetic and ready to battle the incoming enemy . It was actually a Dark Magic user and a parasite, an existence that is absolutely evil, or so it was deemed by the Holy Dominion .

The news about Arthur traveled far and wide in just two days and, of course, the Holy Dominion learned of his reappearance . They mobilized an army of experts to capture him, or kill him if the first option was possible .

It wasn't that hard to guess his destination, which was the Red Tower, so the Holy Dominion blocked the one and only route . They won't be relying on ambush but on a frontal clash with the use of a strong army .

The old woman was a High Cardinal and someone who had fought Zodiak in the past so she's quite knowledgeable about Dark Magic . Unfortunately, when the time came and the parasite showed, it didn't go as they had expected .

They raised a humongous magical white shield which blocked both the ground and the air, allowing no soul to pass through . The hundred Holy Knights raised their shield and unsheathed their blades, ready to initiate the attack . Sadly, Arthur didn't care about them, he was like a meteor, destroying everything in his way .

The hundred Holy Knights were instantly pushed away before they could do anything . As for the white shield, it actually halted Arthur's flight, locking him into place for a couple of seconds .

Just as the old woman, the High Cardinal, was about to cast a spell, two wings appeared on Arthur's back, increasing his aura even further .

With the use of the wings conjured by [Angel of Death], Arthur was able to crack the shield and open a hole big enough for him to fit through . Without looking back, he continued straight ahead, his body becoming a thin lightning bolt which traversed the space at an unreasonable speed .

Even if they wanted to chase, the Holy Knights were didn't have the needed speed to catch up . Even the highest grade Spirit Boat isn't able pale in comparison to Arthur's speed .

[Angel of Death] and [Transmutation] boosted his already sky-high Agility, which is, currently, slightly above 50 billion points . So, like that, the Holy Dominion suffered a loss by having their shield cracked and several of their knights injured, though, thankfully, none died .

"To all contestants, the Red Tower competition will begin in 50 minutes 57 seconds, please remain close so you can be teleported inside once the countdown ends . "

Arthur could hear the robotic voice speak every ten minutes, warning the contestants to remain near the tower .

Actually, the Red Tower was situated in the System Universe, more precisely, in a solitary planet in the Andromeda Galaxy . Apart from the Red Tower, there was nothing in this place, no forests, mountains, or living beings .

Out of the thousand who received the invitation, 988 arrived and are ready to begin . Some people decided to ally with each other but they remained oblivious to how the tower works . They didn't know if they'll be pitted against each other or will have to cooperate to climb to higher floors .

Arthur activated [Eternium], further accelerating his flight as he went through a self-created Spatial Tunnel leading directly to SPX-48, the name of the planet where the Red Tower was .

"To all contestants, the Red Tower competition will begin in 9 minutes 50 seconds, please remain close so you can be teleported inside once the countdown ends . "

At this point in time, Arthur finally reached the end of the tunnel and appeared on the outer region of the planet, a yellow fog blocking his way . He possessed a bird covered in purple spikes then started spinning in the air, pushing away the fog and entering the planet's hemisphere . He could already see the unshakable glowing tower, which had cards symbols engraved on its four sides .

The bird was like a beam of light as descended from up above and madly flew at the Red Tower . When there was only one minute remaining, Arthur was able to reach the needed distance to be able to teleport inside so he landed on the ground and scanned his surroundings, sensing no soul nearby .

"Please ready yourself, the competition will begin in 10 seconds . "

"9"

"8"

"7"

"6"

"5"

"4"

"3"

"2"

"1"

"Lo, seekers in days unborn, god-bladed bearers . Know this, this tower challenges the sky . Ware the watcher, the peak awaits, soul-hungry, unsated!"

Chapter 566: 566

Ever since his reincarnation, the soul bound with Lucy vanished without any explanation, which made it harder for Arthur to locate his wife . Nevertheless, they'll surely find each other inside the Red Tower so he didn't worry that much . There were only a thousand participants so it shouldn't be that hard to locate her . The only problem was the floors, which were worlds of their own, unimaginably vast and inhabited by strong monsters and, supposedly, humans and other peaceful races .

Currently, at the top of the tower, the Joker helped Saly sit on an overly large chair before glancing at the quiet Leiu and saying:

"Who do you think will reach the top floor?"

It wasn't the youth who replied but the energetic Saly: "My parents, of course!"

"Don't be so sure . The tower was built by the two of us but we cannot control it so we cannot do anything if danger befalls on them . "

Even after hearing that, the little girl remained cheerful while looking at the numerous screens displaying all the participants .

"Hm? Why can't I see mother?"

In response to this, the Joker and Leiu also looked at the monitors but found no signs of a silver-haired woman .

"Maybe she's didn't come or... in disguise . "-Joker

Although Lucy couldn't be located, the two brothers weren't worried and were, in fact, more interested in Arthur, who was standing all alone .

"I reckon that 10% will reach the top floor . "-Leiu

"Welcome to the first floor, contestants . "

The robotic voice spoke directly inside the 989 people's head the moment they appeared inside the Red Tower .

"To proceed to the second floor, please eliminate the Earth Cyclops, Fire Python, and Wind Drake . "

The people who were grouped up before the competition got teleported into the same place, as for the loners, they appeared in a random place of the first floor .

Arthur was in a normal desert, where the temperature is higher than average and the sun was shining brightly . He didn't know how the tower functions and how could they possibly put a real sun inside, nonetheless, he didn't spend much time pondering over useless stuff .

The task seemed simple and as it's the first floor, it shouldn't be that hard . The moment the clearing goal was said, everyone started moving, some wanted to get rid of potential enemies as soon as the competition begins and others immediately started searching for the three targets .

"Master, Earth Cyclops are actually mutated versions of normal cyclops . They absorbed too much Earth Energy and adapted to their environment, they should not be too difficult to kill . "

Arthur listened to his Quad-Spirit, which gave him a brief explanation about the Earth Cyclops and its unique abilities . He was in a desert, which is, most likely, where the first target is . Moreover, he isn't the only one here and there'll be more people grouping up to clear the floor . However, he isn't either going to disguise himself nor group up, he'll try to finish things quickly and, hopefully, meet with Lucy soon .

Three minutes after appearing in the desert, Arthur chose a random direction, possessed the body of a cheetah and started madly running .

As luck would have it, a group of second-generation, silver-spooned, young masters was also in the area . They were the same ones who mocked Zodiac before the competition starts and were shooed away by Losha .

There were three of them, one was an Overgod but his foundation was very unstable, indicating that he reached this stage only thanks to expensive elixirs . The other two were God-Monarch and, overall, they

weren't really a threat to Arthur's, who just passed by them, unwilling to waste time on pointless talks or fights .

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"Wait! What's that?"

A young man with long red hair pointed at the speeding cheetah, both excited and curious . He retrieved a staff and cast a spell in the form of long invisible wind blades, which were supposed to hit Arthur but missed the mark as their speed was a joke .

"I want it! Help me catch it . "

The three tried to chase after Arthur, who was the cheetah, only for the ground under them to start moving . A wave of sand rose from the ground and literally engulfed the three, burying them under it for a couple of seconds .

By the time they got out, the cheetah could no longer be seen . The trio's troubles have not ended, however, as large snakes sprung from the ground and ganged up on them, leaving them with no choice but to fight .

A few kilometers away from the battle, Arthur stood atop of a sandy hill, confused about something .

'I definitely sensed traces of Dark Magic inside the three of them, but it's definitely not mine...'

"Master, maybe someone found Zodiac's hidden powers . "

'No, it's different from the artificial one acquired by his followers . '

...

A woman with flashy pink hair stood near the edge of a canyon, gazing at large beast flying in the air, surrounded by violent cyclones, protecting it from all sides . This was a drake, a lesser version of a dragon but can still be considered a strong opponent . Lucy neither used Lonely Moon, Yin Power, or the Golden Crow flames, she opted for an easier solution which will not reveal her identity .

She jumped off the cliff, heading toward the Wind Drake like a bullet while forming a fist enveloped by magma . Her body left afterimages as she first entered the range of the cyclone, which couldn't stop her thanks to her unreasonable speed, then it spun in the air, evading the fangs of the beast that tried to bite her, before striking it with a monstrous punch .

The attack left a sizable hole in the target's abdomen, making a lot of blood gush out, and causing the beast to roar in anger and pain . Due to the inability to fly in this floor, Lucy made use of the countless expensive items handed to her by Arthur .

She took out a big white feather and used it to fly in the air, rotating behind the flailing drake, and unleashing a torrent of bubble made from Lava . The drake controlled the cyclone to get rid of the incoming projectiles but wasn't fast enough to defend against Lucy, who descended from above, punching it again, this time on its head, pulverizing it instantly .

The headless beast fell from the air and the cyclone vanished seconds after . As for Lucy, she landed back on the feather and swiftly left the area .

Right after she killed the Wind Drake, the robotic voice belonging to the Red Tower spoke again:

"The Wind Drake has been killed . "

Chapter 567

"The Fire Python has been killed . "

'X', Forne, Celes, and G'am Tir were grouped and managed to easily dispose of the second target, leaving only one remaining . The poor monster died with just one hit from the Grey Seat, Celes . In fact, the woman merely touched it, causing the python to turn into ash within seconds .

"Death Physique, now that is a truly rare thing to see . "

'X' chuckled as he gazed at Celes, who snorted, disliking his whole being, for some reason .

"The Cyclops should be killed soon, prepare yourselves for the second floor . Knowing the Joker, this beginning was purposefully made easy but it won't be the next later on . "

Forne warned the group before sitting in a corner and silently meditating, uncaring about the gazes he was getting from 'X' and G'am Tir .

*Congratulations! You unlocked the passive [Unbound] . *

*[Unbound(passive)]: The user is no longer able to reincarnate but, when facing an enemy with the Death or Life attribute, all stats are doubled .

When below 20% Health, all the physical stats are increased by 30% and Nether Energy recovery is increased by 150% . *

*[Parasitic Soul Shift]: Any host you possess will be added to your [Soul Shift] List . You can transform into anything recorded in the Soul Shift] .

Please note that there is a cooldown of 2 seconds when you change from one form to another . This cooldown can be negated if [Angel of Death] is activated . *

*[Soul Shift(passive)]: A record of everything possessed by Arthur .]

*You obtained a new skill [Nether Aura(active)]: Control Nether Energy to your advantage . The user can dispel skills, spells, and technique that are about to be cast . *

*Status Window:

TITLE: MEAT GRINDER / SEEKER OF KNOWLEDGE / ONE WITH THE SWORD / ARK HOLDER / LIVE WITH HONOR, DIE WITH GLORY / BREAKER OF CHAINS / HOLDER OF THE DARK BLADE'S OATH / MAD DESTROYER/PSYCHOPATH/Dragon Rider / UNSEEN BOND / ONE STALKED BY THE REAPER / DIVINE HERALD

Level: ??

Class: Dark ARK Parasite

Realm: Overgod (Formation)

Celestial Body: 15%

-

Strength: 38 . 7B

Intelligence: 41 . 09B

Agility: 46 . 7B

Wisdom: 29B

Vitality: 45B

Dexterity: 20 . 2B

-

Health: 59 . 4B// Health Regen: 33 . 3m/s

Nether Energy: 11B // Nether Energy Regen: 19m/s(+100%)

Mana: 12 . 6B // Mana Regen: 29 . 99m/s

Stamina: Infinite /Stamina Regen: ???

Creation: 1000

Attack: 36 . 8B (+35% damage [Dark Flame Ring]) (+20% if Dark Magic is used) (+5% [Warrior's Cry][LvMax](Passive)) [+2% from Breaker of Chains Title]

Defense: 40 . 9B (+25% Damage Reduction) (+5% [Solid [LvMax](passive)]) (+10% [Golem's Wall(LvMax)(Passive)])

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Magic Defense: 3 . 9B

Soul Defense: 29m

Enigma abilities : Telekinesis / [Light Operation/ Righteous Death] / Sixth sense / ARK(Activated)

-

Mental Power: 42350

Elemental Resistances(+)

Fire: 100%

Darkness: 100%

Wind: 35%

Water: 75%

Earth: 75%

Light/holy: 65%

Shadow: 30(+20%)%

Lightning: 100%

Ice: 30%

Death : 19 . 9%

Crowd Control : 50%

Life: 19 . 9%

Possessions (472,085)

Races:

Divine Beasts (4)

Humans (283,044)

Demons (84,997)

Beasts (+)(101,529)

Unique Beasts (2510)

Mythical beings (1)

In addition to his stats, which sky-rocketed, Arthur became an Overgod and acquired quite a few useful abilities . The one he favors the most right now is [Parasitic Soul Shift], which makes him much more versatile and flexible .

Now, he doesn't need the body of the Divine Beasts, for example, in order to use their abilities . He'll just transform into one of the four and use their overpowered skills, like the Vermilion Bird's 'revival' or the insta-heal of the White Tiger .

As he was busy looking at the blue window, filled with numbers, a person approached him . Arthur, being a cheetah right now, faced the incoming figure, neither attacking nor running . Seeing the red haired woman, Arthur returned to his original form and bitterly smiled:

"I guess I should've expected to see you here . "

In response, Losha frowned and retorted: "What? It's not like I wanted to meet you here . "

Arthur was never a fan of this outrageously powerful reincarnator, however, he didn't want to provoke her either .

"Honestly, I could never stomach you but due to Lucy's past circumstances, I had to put up with you . "

Hearing this, Losha shrugged her shoulders and said: "Same . "

After a brief and awkward silence, Losha asked: "So? Do we fight or what?"

"Nah, too bothersome, right?"

"Exactly . "

Arthur nodded his head then glancing at the empty desert around him before focusing back on her . Seeing that she hasn't moved and was staring at him with hesitation, he mockingly said:

"Please don't tell me you want ally with me or whatever . "

The reincarnator creased her brows, finding what he said absolutely absurd . She let out a sigh and corrected his statement:

"No, I was just sizing you up . You've gotten much stronger since we last met, though I'll still beat you into a pulp . "

After saying her piece, she swiftly left, not bothering with the parasite anymore .

Arthur returned to the cheetah form and returned to his crazed running, taking large strides and jumping from one hill to another in search of the Cyclops, which was surprisingly difficult to find . The two other targets were out in the open but the cyclops remained hidden, making almost every participant head to the desert, trying to locate it .

...

"Is this it?"

A woman originating from the System pointed at a large humanoid monster with yellow skin and one gigantic eye with her sword, ascertaining that it is indeed the cyclops .

"Yes, it should be the Earth Cyclops . "

The woman was a Lv13,481 player tasked to enter the Red Tower and reach the highest floor to get the Blessing Stone and the Wish Star . These two are the rewards for reaching the peak and completing all the tasks given by the Red Tower . Rumors say that the Blessing Stone is artifact created by The GameMaster, it has the ability to randomly generate cheat buffs which can make an Overgods easily defeat someone a whole realm higher than them . As for the Wish Star, it's the name of a hidden place that, if visited, can grant you any wish you want .

This high-leveled female player is named Maxine Bull, born and raised in the System . She's a century and a half old and had spent all of her life killing monsters and completing missions given by the System hence why her level is high . In fact, she's the strongest player that entered the Tower and despite not having authority over the Lv10,000+ players who also joined the competition, they still respect her and consider her opinion whenever they're about to do something important .

"Max! Ain't this a sorry fucking sight!"

Another player, a thief, to be exact, spoke out loud as he watched the cyclops, which was struggling to leave a pit that was filled with snakes half of its size . Though it had amazing strength and could use its eye to temporarily petrify its target, the number of snakes was too much for it to handle . Even if Max and her friends don't interfere, the Earth Cyclops will die nonetheless .

"The Earth Cyclops has been killed . 979 Contestants will be teleported to the 2nd floor in 1 minute . "

Chapter 568

"Welcome to the second floor, the World of Pillars . To proceed to the next floor, please do not fall . Any participant that manages to knock down others will gain Card Points which can be used in the shop of the 4th floor . "

The robotic voice briefly explained the rules of this floor just as the nine hundred plus participants .

When Arthur appeared on the 2nd floor, he found himself standing on a very tall pillar, his feet nearing the edges . Below him, there was a bottomless abyss painted by an inky blackness which brought anyone the shivers every time they look at it .

It was safe to assume that falling meant losing the competition and also dying . The rules were simple but it was bound to be a bloody battle between everyone . Apart from the abyss down below, there were only countless pillars, about fifteen meters away from one another . He transformed into a bird and tried to fly but he wasn't instantly and forcefully brought back to the cheetah form, clearly indicating that flight is prohibited here .

The voice only told everyone not to fall but didn't say how to proceed to the 3rd floor, which made some confused . Around six pillars away from Arthur, there stood a dwarf with a thick red beard, holding an axe bigger than himself while eyeing the targets close to him .

Although he could stay his ground and wait for others to leap at him, Arthur decided to take a more offensive approach . The whole cheetah became enveloped in green lightning as it jumped at a robbed-old man, who seemed to be a mage . He waved his staff and was about to use [Blink] to teleport to another pillar only for his spell to break as Arthur used his Space Magic to disturb the Space in the area . Left in the open, the old man could not defend against a violent frontal impact from the cheetah, which

sent him flying in the air . He was about to stabilize his body and land on another pillar but there appeared multiple fireballs with creepy faces which detonated, heavily damaging him and causing him to fall into the abyss .

The dwarf witnessed everything and knew he was the next target when Arthur leapt again, this time rushing at the short target like a bullet . The bearded man clenched his axe and used it to block the lightning cheetah, stopping its mad charge and locking it into space .

The dwarf was proud of his monstrous physical strength but when Arthur's slam overpowered him and almost pushed him off the cliff, he became surprised .

"Ugly animal! Get away!"

His forearm muscles bulged as he swung his axe, throwing the cheetah in the air then initiating a comical yet surprisingly swift jump, attacking with his big axe again . A red energy erupted from his body, enveloping the axe and increasing his rising aura . Unfortunately, when he attacked the beast, it vanished, appearing on the pillar the dwarf was on a moment ago . Arthur returned to his human form and used black chains that were created with Dark Magic to quickly bind the airborne dwarf, limiting his movements . Once the enemy was trapped inside the chains, Arthur swung them down, attempting to get rid of another target .

It was almost a successful attack as the dwarf fell into the abyss but before he vanished into the darkness, he managed to break the chains and hold on to the stone pillar before he started crawling up like a monkey .

When he saw Arthur looking at him with a smile, the dwarf inwardly cursed and used the pillar as a stepping stone to jump to the closest pillar . Arthur tried to hinder him by throwing several white thunderbolts but target's thick armor warded them all off .

"What a pleasure to meet you!"

Maxine stabbed her sword at Losha, whose body became a big diamond block, resisting all the attacks of the high-leveled player . The two happened to appear next to each other and immediately started fighting, though it was more appropriate to call it a one-sided battle . This confrontation between two powerhouses was deemed as pointless by Losha, who was really interested in fighting the crazed player .

They jumped from pillar to another, one was relentlessly attacking while the other was calmly defending .

At some point, Max retrieved a potion, quickly drank it then attacked the reincarnator again, her one-handed sword was swung at the blacksmith, emitting a vertical green slash . This time, however, this sword attack was able to penetrate through the unbreakable Diamond Physique and cause Losha to slightly bleed . In retaliation, the reincarnator grabbed the still within-reach blade and pulled it towards her then kicked Maxine, flinging her far away .

The green-haired woman, Max, coughed some blood and drank a special Healing potion then retrieved some sort of a grey cannon and fired a large blast at Losha, who was landed on one of the pillars .

"It's fun, isn't it?" Joked Maxine as she saw how the pillar got obliterated and the target was sent flying toward the abyss .

Max thought she managed to win but a few seconds later, a blinding streak of light rose from the shrouded abyss, breaking multiple pillars and then crashing into her .

A pink-haired woman motionlessly stood atop the flat pillar, neither looking at battling contestants or bothering to gain points . On the pillar right next to her, an individual wearing a grey robe which covered his head and most of his body, turned to face her then said:

"It's the first time we meet, right?"

In response, Lucy tilted her head but didn't reply . She looked at him but could not recognize him through his appearance or elderly voice .

Upon seeing her furrow her brows, the old man chuckled whilst adding:

"Did the boulder make that mask for you? It is indeed very deceitful . "

Just as she heard that, Lucy grew more cautious as she released a threatening aura, not even hiding her Yin power anymore . Whoever it was, he knew her and was able to see through the mask procured by the Yellow Seat of Black Rose .

"Who are you?"

In response, the old man took down his hood, showing his wrinkled and oddly pale face .

"I don't suppose you'll recognize me even if you see this old face, but, I believe you know me very well .
"

Dark Magic oozed out of his body, shrouding his body to give a brief demonstration to the startled Lucy .

"Zodiak?"

"It is I . "

Forne did tell her that they have an additional ally who'll help them with the plan but never revealed his identity . Now that Lucy saw who it was, she was able to piece things together, however, the very fact that Zodiak is still alive still gave her quite the shock .

Seeing that she gave no vocal reply, Zodiak spoke again:

"Fear not, I've no business with Arthur . I just hope he won't interfere... later on, I mean . "

She stared back at this old man, who had a bald head and a not-so-friendly face, feeling rather uncomfortable .

"I will make sure he won't . "

"Hahaha that is good to hear . "

Just as he finished speaking, someone lunged at him from behind, trying to sneak-attack him but it ended up in absolute failure as the assailant just went through Zodiak's, who's body seemed to be made out of a black and dense cloud .

The attacker didn't fall to the abyss but closed in on Lucy only to be hit in the face by a large bubble of lava, disfiguring him and causing him to wail in agony . When Lucy shifted her attention back to Zodiak, he was no longer here as he transformed into a black fog which seemed to defy the rules of the Red Tower as it flew in the air, unrestricted by anything .

Astria, MoonStar sect .

"You still haven't found him?"

Sonia was distressed as she asked Robin, expecting a happy answer . Unfortunately, the glass-wearing businesswoman shook her head, appearing confused about the whole situation .

"He didn't seem troubled when I last saw him . I don't think he did it willingly . "

Rey, who grew up since last time and became less childish, strangely sniffed the air and said:

"The whole tower reeks of Death . "

A while ago, Jakob and his newborn son, Ragnar, disappeared without leaving any traces, causing the sect to become a bit chaotic . He was the temporary master of MoonStar and took of a lot of matters concerning the external and internal affairs, especially after Arthur tasked him to start expanding beyond Astria .

"We'll go check with King Isadore, maybe he can help us . "-Sonia

Chapter 569

"Fucking let go!"

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The dwarf, who tried to send Arthur away, became irritated as the parasite became a monkey and clung onto his axe while screeching loudly . The armor protecting him became charred due to the bursts of lightning coming from the monkey's mouth .

Furious, the dwarf continued inaudibly cursing and chose to let go of the axe, thinking that it'll get rid of Arthur . Sadly, when the axe fell into the abyss, the monkey held his ankle and started pulling him down . He tried kicking him but the beast swiftly crawled around the pillar and transformed into a centipede, which released a poisonous fog, weakening the target's senses and numbing his hands .

Feeling desperate, the dwarf punched a large hole inside the pillar and entered it . As for Arthur, he decided not to continue this little play, moreover, the dwarf was by no means a weak opponent . He had an advantage right now due to the unfavorable terrain, so if they fought in another equal environment, it'll definitely be a difficult fight for the parasite .

Though he may not look like it, the dwarf was Lv12,659 and had four titles, making him quite the powerhouse .

Arthur went back to the top of the pillar and looked around, trying to locate easier targets . Fortunately, there was quite an abundance of them, participants there just reached the Overgod Realm or were still God Monarchs, they, for Arthur, are free points .

For the next ten minutes, Arthur eliminated six more targets before meeting one of the stronger opponents . He was also a player from the System Universe, a really skilled mage who started attacking Arthur the moment he saw him . He was amongst the people present at the Celestial Tribulation and had been eager to find him ever since . In fact, were it not for Maxine, who pressured him to head to the Red Tower, he'd have battled the parasite at that mountain .

The mage blinked next to Arthur then used an ice spell to temporarily lock him on the ground . Then, from behind, an invisible figure revealed itself and back-stabbed Arthur with two daggers, both with a black, sticky liquid on their sharp edges .

It was a thief belonging to Maxine's group, he was the third strongest player in the Red Tower and has mastered his class to perfection . Just as the two daggers were about to stab Arthur's back, they were met with a Dark Barrier, which slightly slowed their fast advance and this gave Arthur enough time to transform .

Although he was impaired, he wasn't stunned so he could still use skills, thanks to that, he became a thin skeleton . The daggers went through the jet black bones and totally missed, which made the thief let out a gasp . Unfortunately, Arthur was still hit by several ice spikes followed by a violent snowstorm that immobilized his feet again . In retaliation, he unleashed an absurd amount of Dark Magic which resisted the storm and pushed away the thief, plus, he used [Nether Aura] on the mage, dispelling his next spell .

Two seconds passed and Arthur was freed but the thief used the back of his dagger to knock on his head, this time performing a flawless stun . After successfully doing that, he dealt a continuous combo of slashes, breaking the bones and decreasing Arthur's Health bar . The mage also cast a spell on Arthur, a wolf made of ice leapt at him and bit his arm though it was unable to rip it off due to the parasite's tough skin and resistant bones .

Arthur lost more than 40% of his Health and he was still stunned, however, when the debuff time run out, the thief tried to stun again only for it to fail, surprisingly . It wasn't that he missed the skill or that Arthur dodged, it just meant that the passive obtained from the White Tiger, which increased the chance of negating Crowd Control skills, was activated .

Finally free, Arthur used [Faster than Death], appearing in front of the mage, who tried to use [Blink] only for it to fail due to the unstable Space . Nevertheless, the caster's reaction was top-notch as he raised an Earthen wall then turned the ground muddy in an attempt to hinder Arthur .

The layer of defense separating him from the mage crumbled after hitting it with a Fire Talisman and when the target was defenseless in front of him, he threw five Dark Talismans at once . Two were blocked by an ice barrier while the other three hit the mage's body . Arthur wanted to follow-up but the

thief exited his invisibility yet again to intercept him, throwing powder in the air while using the dual daggers to attack .

It has to be said that his attack speed was impeccable, nevertheless, Arthur was also in a league of his own . Not only did he boost his stats with [Angel of Death], he also used the buff Talismans, increasing his movement and attack speed .

He blocked four hits from the thief before transforming into a monster with long arms that had long, sharp claws . The red-skinned monster waved its black and white wings, unleashing a death storm to the behind, blocking the mage, while the white wing healed Arthur's Health at an accelerated rate .

"Fuck! Where is Maxine!"

The thief crossed his daggers and tried to back away but the red monster kept slashing at him left and right, its long-reaching claws shredding clothes and cutting his skin . To make matters worse, the ground turned jet black and his legs were getting sucked in, further binding him in place . The mage wanted to land a hand but the Quad-Spirit was doing a marvelous job in keeping him busy .

His exotic dark blue robe was burned by the spirit's fire and his forehead was sweating due to the increased gravity, heavily slowing his movements and making the staff weigh a ton .

Arthur relentlessly attacked the thief, who efficiently protected his vitals but there reached a point where he couldn't block the fast slashes and received a deep and serious injury in his shoulder . The parasite was about to finish him up but the mage cast a spell which made him switch places with his teammate .

Now, he was the one receiving the full and frontal blows of the monster, which vanished, dodging dozens of ice spikes that only hit his afterimages . The thief retreated to a safe distance and signaled for the mage to get away too but the latter was hit by a white thunderbolt which stunned him .

Like a ghost, Arthur appeared behind him and cut down with his claws but the mage somehow got rid of the stun effect and waved his staff in the air, enveloping himself in a blue spheric bubble before unleashing a violent and explosive burst of mana .

The red-skinned monster was sent flying, its body bloodied . It landed on a pillar and roared loudly but didn't give chase as the two players headed toward Maxine, who was leaping from pillar to another, seemingly ready to engage in another fight .

"What damned regenerative powers!"

The thief cursed as he looked at Arthur, who's body was healing at an absurd speed . The wounds caused by the mage's last attack were gone in a few seconds, making even the caster astonished . Unlike her two teammates, Maxine was eager to fight the parasite, who transformed into a lightning bolt, soon disappearing from her sight .

"Ugh! You couldn't handle him?"

"Max! You haven't seen him fight so you can't blame us . He injured me and survived Tula's Mana bomb, are all parasites supposed to be like that?"

The green-haired pondered for a moment, her gaze lingering on the direction Arthur headed to .

"He still hasn't used his real powers . There is also that sword... the competition will be full of excitement! I can feel it . "

"Teacher! She resembles you!"

Saly grinned as she looked at Maxine through the screen . Her hunger for constant battles was very similar to the Joker's thirst for strong opponents, though it can be said that he calmed down a lot compared to the past .

"Pft! She's nothing like me!" The Joker jokingly said, but his eyes betrayed him as they lingered on Maxine, happy to see someone like him . His fighting spirit was ignited and he could barely hold himself from going there and fight .

They were all weaker than him but that doesn't mean he cannot have fun, after all, he can always adjust his strength . The thrill and thirst that dominated him in the past had died down due to the lack of opponents that are equal to him strength . Even if he went to the strongest individuals in the three Universes and demanded to fight them, they'll refuse as they only care about their own benefits .

Occasionally, he'll fight Leiu but that will end up in him being sent to a faraway place, just like last time, when his brother blasted him to Astria, where he pretended not to know Arthur and Lucy . He knew Leiu had done it purposely but he didn't mind as he got to fight an enraged and out-of-control Arthur .

Chapter 570

"Fancy seeing you here!"

'X' waved his hand to Arthur, who landed on the pillar to his . The parasite returned to his original appearance and gazed at the man whose face cannot be seen, neither reciprocating the greeting or reacting .

"Don't tell me you still bear a grudge? It's not like I tried to kill you . "

"You've used me and that's enough of a reason to treat you like an enemy . "

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'X' scoffed at Arthur words and retorted:

"Oh please! Don't pretend to be righteous in front of me, it really doesn't suit you . I tricked you and you fell for it, moreover, I still granted you a second life... just like I promised . You should be thankful rather than behave with hostility . "

Arthur harrumphed but spoke no more, his eyes glancing around, seemingly in search of someone . Noticing this, 'X' chuckled and added:

"You're looking for your wife? I don't think she entered the Red Tower . "

Although he said that, Arthur kept ignoring him, pretending not to hear him .

"It's true . Eleven people didn't show up and I'm sure I saw all of the rest... not one of them was her . "

"See, the more you insist she's not here, the surer I am that she joined the competition . "

After saying his bit, Arthur took off, leaving a sighing 'X' alone .

"Now I understand why they said he's stubborn . Oh well, I tried my best . "

'X' shrugged his shoulders, took out a chair and sat on it while humming, uncaring about the people who leapt at him . Everyone who got close to his pillar would be teleported hundreds of meters away and have their five senses temporarily disoriented . 'X' didn't even budge and wasn't interested in gaining points either, though he was fortunate enough that no Exalted God was in the area .

Six hours after all the contestants entered the 2nd floor, the Red Tower announced the completion of the task, which wasn't stated at the beginning . To proceed to the 3rd floor, one hundred people must be eliminated one way or another . As only a minority were God Monarchs, it took more time than one might expect from such a thing to happen .

"All contestants will be teleported to the 3rd floor in one minute . "

"I will announce the players with the highest points:

Ranked 1st: Arthur MoonStar: 27 points .

Ranked 2nd: Maxine Bull : 25 Points .

Ranked 3rd : Hach'ara : 19 points . "

"I will announce the players with the highest elimination combo

BSD: 10 points in 9 . 8 seconds . *

Exactly one minute later, all 879 participants were teleported to the third floor, this time randomly separated into another vast world . Unlike the two first floors, Arthur was surprised to see himself inches away from another person, a woman, to be specific .

She had a grey hair despite looking in her twenties, her eyes seemed lifeless and her expression stiff .

*Celes Ardborg(Race: Human): Realm: Exalted God (Link Stage)

Age: 299 years old

Titles: Moving Decay - Physique Mastery - Soul and Body

Skills : Killing Touch (LvMax) / Truthful Copy (Lv430) / Death Blast (LvMax)

Information: She is the notorious Grey seat of Decay of Black Rose . Born in a prestigious family in the Heaven and Hell Universe and was once a priestess but was excommunicated due to her rare Physique, which negates anything related to Holy Magic . Hates talking and despises crowded areas . *

Arthur quickly read through the contents of the appraisal then looked at Celes, who was also staring at him with an expressionless face .

"Read enough?"

Her voice was even more chilling than when Lucy talks to strangers(males), her piercing gaze made him feel uncomfortable but he didn't act arrogantly as he remembered having a connection with Black Rose . He became the Red Seat of Blood but never met with Artid ever since, which made him think that they sent Celes specifically for him, though, unfortunately, he was completely wrong .

Celes had heard of Arthur but never actually met him . She wasn't interested in fighting him and, from the looks of it, they need to cooperate to clear this floor .

"For the 3rd floor, each one of you will be randomly paired with another contestant and cooperate together to find whatever the tattoo in your hands is . If the paired contestants are more than 15 meters away from each other, they'll be disqualified and sent outside the tower .

If more than one pair have the same tattoo, whichever acquires the target first is considered to have passed the task .

Please note that killing in the 3rd floor, the Ancient Land, is prohibited and is punished by immediate disqualification . Good luck . "

Arthur looked at the back of his right hand and found a tattoo of a fat bee which had four transparent wings . Celes had the same exact tattoo but, unlike Arthur, she didn't seem to be ready to move .

He walked a few steps and when he noticed her not following her, he frowned and looked back only to find her sitting on the ground, on which a colorful tablecloth was spread .

"I'm exhausted from all the fights in the second floor . We will move after a short break . "

Then she took teacups, hand-made sandwiches, and fresh fruits, ordering them in front of her and ignoring the dumbfounded Arthur .

"We have to move no-"

She cut him off by saying: "It never gave us a time limit . Finding the bee may take days if not weeks and I don't want to move around with an empty stomach . "

With a hand on his temples, Arthur paced around, pondering about this outrageous situation . No one would think she's do something like that if they saw the appraisal status or her face, which was utterly void of any emotion . The phrase 'don't judge a book by its cover' applies well in this kind of strange situation .

'I could still force her to come with me . She's a Death Magic user so [Unbound] will give me advantage but... if Lucy sees me carrying a woman on my shoulder... ugh'

In the end, he sat a distance away and patiently waited for Celes to finish her sudden picnic .

Hach'ara was a very strong Exalted God, his appearance was that of an old man with green, poisonous skin and lengthy and dirty nails . He had an horrendous smell and looked borderline grotesque as flies and other buzzing insects floating around him . Mind you, these insects were his 'pets' and the strongest thing in his arsenal . Basically, Hach'ara controls his insects to attack his targets, however, his melee fighting is not to be underestimated either . He has the Rat Poison Physique, a rather weak Physique

which seemed to have been drastically altered, making Hach immune to anything poisonous and allowing him to move his organs all over his body .

Currently, Hach'ara found himself paired with an old man wearing a grey robe . Just by standing next to him, he felt an uncomfortable eeriness that forced him to jump ten meters away, unwilling to be influenced by the black fog emitting from him . Even his insects took a rather defensive stance, some even clinging onto his sticky clothes .

"You know, I've traveled to all kinds of places to procure precious materials for my pets... in one of them, I've stumbled upon a temple that had a statue with a face just like yours, hehehehe"

Zodiak glanced at the nervous yet excited Hach'ara, not confirming the former's suspicion . He looked at his hand and saw a jet black circle that lacked any necessary description .

"We should move . "

"Yes yes, of course, we should . I'm sure this meeting is a fortunate event for us both, Zodiak . "

"Quit your rambling and come on . "