

Once Human 651

Chapter 651

"I've always wanted to fight a para-"

Carpentine wasn't even able to finish his sentence as a massive dragon made of blue lightning flew at him, its mouth open wide, ready to devour him whole .

The serpent man was able to defend himself by instantly summoning a scaled red snake that had the same size as the dragon . The two monsters crashed into each other, one side burst in lightning while the other was covered in a sea of orange flames .

The scaled snake managed to get rid of the lightning dragon and spit flames at Arthur, who remained immovable like a mountain . The flames soon hit him but did no damage, further surprising the chief guard .

These were normal flames and Arthur had complete immunity to normal fire . In fact, even if it was an ultimate fire technique, it'll still not harm him... quite the opposite, it'll help replenish his Nether Energy and even slightly strengthen him .

Beginning from his foot, green lightning covered the parasite, then two wings, one white and the other black, sprung from his back . His appearance drastically changed and his stats increased, Arthur raised his hand, which was now holding a six-meter long dark javelin .

Arthur threw the javelin, which whistled in the air and reached Carpentine within a split second . The projectile was faster than the chief guard's reflexes, it ended up piercing his abdomen and creating a gaping bloody hole . However, hundreds of disgusting black snakes plastered themselves on that hole and regenerated the serpent man .

The parasite wasn't fazed as he threw one javelin after another, his speed simply absurd . Carpentine could only gasp as the rain of javelins flying straight at him . In retaliation, he raised his left hand, the brown snake hissed and sat a weird black ball which expanded into a protective sphere, resisting all the javelins .

Sadly, Arthur wasn't done as his figure vanished like a ghost, and by the next second, Carpentine's ankle was held by a monstrous force which crushed his bones .

He saw the world spin then, like a kite, his body was thrown hundreds of meters away, exactly towards ten creepy-faced orange fireballs, which evilly grinned then detonated .

Deafening successive explosions resounded inside this mysterious world . The chief guard's clothes were incinerated and a third of his body was burned by the hell flames . He managed to get rid of the dark red fire as one of the snakes below jumped beside him and gulped the flames then burped .

The snake was only 1 . 5 meter long, grey in color and had six inky black eyes . It had an unusual appearance for a snake, it wasn't even threatened by Arthur, whose finger stretched to the front and pulled the space, causing the surroundings to shatter like glass . His space attack was enough to disturb the world but it didn't break him free . The grey-snaked was unaffected by the space tears all around it as it flew at Arthur and spat a fireball that was at least two hundred meters in radius .

The massive ball of flames was green and had a poisonous smell radiating from it . Arthur's body transformed into a majestic white tiger, which dived at the fireball, literally passing through it as if it didn't exist .

The Divine Beast's speed was unrivaled as it reached the snake and cut it in half using its elongated golden claws . Arthur didn't stop as relied on the White Tiger's unique ability to ignore all the snakes lunging at him from below, his figure turned illusory as bypassed all the hurdles and reached Carpentine, who took out a lantern .

*Item: Offensive type

Name: Lantern of Doom

Rank: Mysterious

Grade:3*

The appraisal gave him simple and not satisfactory information about the lantern . Although he was aware of its dangerous aura, Arthur still attacked the chief guard . The tiger's mouth opened and a deadly acid fell on the serpent mine . The Lantern shook left and right before a gloomy red light burst from it, however, it wasn't able to stop the acid, which fell on the victim and his artifact .

To Carpentine's surprise, the lantern melted within three seconds and his right hand was gone, not even the bones were spared . With a pale face, he hastily retreated and used the brown snake on his left hand to counter-attack .

The brown snake was very fast as it bit the white tiger's face but what the chief guard expected didn't happen . The Divine Beast remained still for a short period before trembling and puffing out brown smoke out of its big nostrils . The poison of his snake was ineffective, moreover, Carpentine's body was hit by the White Tiger, which slashed at him with its claws .

He was pushed a hundred meter or so but black slash mark could be seen on his shoulder and left side of the chest . The black snakes tried to heal him but it was too late, only the exterior wounds recovered, the Dark Magic infiltrated his body and immediately started weakening him and affecting his judgment .

Arthur returned to his original appearance and looked at the chief guard, who was throwing up mouthfuls of blood .

"Quietly let me possess you . "

The parasite became a lightning bolt which reached Carpentine and zapped his body, flinging him further away but before Arthur could continue, a two hundred meter long snake sprung from below, blocking his way . Its fang made of purple gems and its body crystallized . It seemed even more dangerous than its master, Carpentine .

Arthur distracted the snake by using [Cascading Flames], which is the Vermillion Bird's unique ability . The Divine Beast's flames shone in the sky before falling on the snake like a tsunami . All the other weaker snakes turned into ash while the ginormous monster hissed and curled its body, using its crystal body to resist the orange flames .

It successfully resisted the flames but by the time it raised its head, a black arrow which was over 100 meters in length came flying at it . Its tip was purple and an unstoppable absorption was emanating from within it . Moreover, the arrow had two feathers made of white godly thunder at its back .

The serpent met the arrow head on as opened its mouth and spat a black light but it was devoured by the Void Magic at the Heavenly Arrow's tip . Arthur's projectile easily pulverized the snake's head and hit the ground, splitting it and causing the whole world to shake .

A fast shadow attacked Arthur behind but the latter's body turned illusory before an ugly wraith made its appearance . Carpentine dumbfoundedly looked at the wraith, which couldn't be touched by his snakes . He was about to retreat again but the wraith shrieked loudly before flying at him like a creepy ghost .

It was much faster than him as it stopped before his face and before he could defend, a hand penetrated his chest, causing him to cough a lot of blood .

Arthur grinned as he calmly looked at the serpent man, who looked at him with shaken resolve and a pale face . Now that he was subdued, Carpentine's world crumbled and the two returned to reality .

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Habs was still imprisoned, his attacks were fruitless and he could only wait for Arthur and Carpentine to finish fighting . Their battle lasted a bit over two minutes and when they reappeared, the parasite was standing in front of the chief guard, the former's hand stabbing the latter's chest .

The Warden's face became uglier as he glared at parasite . The short sword in his hand shook as he amassed all of his energy, trying to break free and attack Arthur or at least try to capture him . He has an item which can immediately send a target to the fifth level of the prison but it has to make contact with its victim and the distance between Habs and Arthur isn't that easily crossed, at least not with Zaaarae present and keeping a lookout .

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"Mhmm very handsome!"

Zaaarae let out a moan while licking her lips and gazing at Arthur . Midolf and Radolf heard her words and both instinctively shivered, finding her behavior quite disturbing and bone-chilling .

Arthur spared no time as he possessed the defenseless Carpentine . His body transformed into a black whirlpool which entered the victim's body . The possession process only took a few seconds, in which Arthur gained the chief guard's stats and abilities before swiftly leaving the host .

A flood of notifications covered his view but he discarded them for now and held Carpentine by his throat . He seemed to be contemplating what to do with the enemy, who gave up any kind of resistance and lifelessly let himself be held by the parasite .

The chief guard's eyes were dim, blood leaked out of his half-opened lips, and the hole inflicted by Arthur while slowly killing him . Dark Magic made him powerless and the vibration of Natural Lightning ruptured his organs and shattered almost the entirety of his bones .

Arthur glanced at angered Habs then at Zaarae, wanting to see her opinion about this matter . The Empress shrugged her shoulders and casually said,

"His life was forfeit the moment he appeared here . "

Arthur smiled and exerted a bit of force, snapping Carpentine's neck and ending his life on the spot . This brutal action made Habs enraged as he breathed heavily, his eyes glaring at Arthur like a starving beast .

No matter how angered he was, he could not break free from the blood cage put up by Zaarae .

"Arthur MoonStar, your actions will not be without consequences . "

Surprisingly, he spoke with a chilling and strangely calm tone as he sheathed his short sword and regulated his breathing .

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"His name is Arthur MoonStar?"

The most shocked of all was Shen Shen, who, previously, thought she misheard but now Habs spoke Arthur's name again, she was utterly dumbstruck . She was barely able to control herself as she turned to look at the silent Vyncent, who nodded his head .

With an inaudible voice which no one could hear, the blue-haired little girl mumbled,

"That... that means he's my daddy?"

Her eyes focused on Arthur's figure while her mind was in a tempestuous state . She heard many things about her parents, their feats, and their names, obviously . Timos praised her parents but didn't tell her their appearances, which is why she didn't recognize Arthur when they first met . But, undoubtedly, that man was her biological father .

He was very powerful like the Black Devil said, he was a parasite and was named Arthur MoonStar . All of these were enough for the young but intelligent Shen Shen to conclude his real identity . However, she didn't cry happily or spill the truth and, instead, she maintained absolute silence while her gaze lingered on his silhouette .

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Arthur was delighted to gain a unique ability which will be very useful in the future . To actually be able to entrap enemies in that mysterious world, it automatically became one of his ultimate trump cards . If he's surrounded, he can always isolate one of the stronger targets and defeat him so to make it easier to deal with the rest . It can also help him escape powerful foes by buying a bit of time for himself, and that is without including the countless special snakes living in there .

His stats only increased by several hundred million points but he gained an absolute immunity against all kinds of fatal points and has a new enigma ability . It was called Petrification and it allows him to turn targets in stone, like the infamous Medusa . At first, he was confused because Carpentine didn't use it on him but that shouldn't be right, the only explanation is the passive ability he gained from the White Tiger, which allowed him to negate debuffs . Moreover, his eye also had a chance to block petrification, illusions, and visual deception .

Arthur jumped back on the dark cloud and waited for Fariya, who just finished humiliating Erandil . She didn't forget to cripple him, making him no different than a mortal... the poor angel was reduced to a pathetic and miserable state, even a homeless dog would look better than him .

The succubus was beaming with joy as she stood behind Arthur, a wide grin plastered on her beautiful face . She stored the recording crystal in her storage then looked at Habs, whose face was twisted from angel and rage .

"Bye bye!"

Zaarae waved her hand at Habs, flinging him and the cage all the way down . The warden won't be able to chase after them anytime soon, not after he was injured by Zaarae, furthermore, he has to explain things to the higher-ups, who would also severely punish him for not properly managing the prison .

The dark cloud broke through the planet's atmosphere and quietly traveled the starry space, bypassing blinding stars and weirdly-shaped uninhabited planets . Thanks to Zaarae, who cast an invisibility magic on the group, they were able to bypass the angel patrols scattered here and there .

The speed of the cloud was moderate and the Heaven and Hell Universe is vast, even with Arthur's top speed, it'll take some time to reach the Demon Realm . Moreover, their destination was far south of the Demon Realm, however, Fariya and Esco did say that that place isn't as strictly guarded as the Heaven Realm . Only the border has a bit of demons but they won't bother them, actually, they can't even bother them as the soldiers are pitifully weak .

In the blink of an eye, three days of peace passed . Arthur would occasionally chat with Zaarae or Fariya, asking about things he was curious about . Esco was quite knowledgeable, he also made an extra effort to seem useful as to not be abandoned in the middle of nowhere .

Vyncent kept silent, he sat cross-legged and would study the Elias' coin . As for the mythical beings, they were like statues, immovable, and mute .

"Little Lady, come here . "

Arthur smiled and beckoned for Shen Shen, who was looking at the endless space around him with amazement . The sight grabbed the interest of the curious girl, who would ask the Parasite Empress about anything she's unfamiliar with .

Unlike their first meeting, the girl became less talkative and rebellious, she would also sneak glances at Arthur, who noticed her but pretended not to .

Shen Shen patted her pretty green dress and walked to Arthur, her head hanging low . Now that she discovered he's her father, she didn't curse him or talk disrespectfully, but also didn't disclose the truth .

Perhaps she was afraid he would abandon her after she acted rudely to him, or maybe he'll refuse to believe her .

Shen Shen stopped in front of Arthur, who was sitting on the dark cloud . She held the tip of her dress and didn't look back at him .

"Where are you from little lady?"

Zaarae smiled as she heard Arthur's question while the succubus studied the girl .

"Blue-Water Kingdom . "

Shen Shen didn't have an origin as she was born in the middle of nowhere but, thankfully, Timos did tell her about places with abundant Water energy, locations which can help her get much stronger . Blue-Water Kingdom is, obviously, a prosperous kingdom in the System's universe . It's situated in the local group, which is a group of galaxies that include the milky way galaxy, where the Earth is . More precisely, the kingdom is in a star called BTA-18947 .

The living conditions on that star are harsh and not many people can enter it due to the unstable climate . 90% of the star is covered in water and the kingdom is actually under the vast blue-ocean, inhabited by sea mermaids, water spirits, and the Sharhuman Race .

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"And where are your parents?" Asked Arthur as he motioned for Shen Shen to sit beside him .

"They died . "

"Oh..."

Arthur looked at her sad expression and sighed . He stretched his hand and rubbed the top of her head to comfort her .

"If you want, you can come with me . "

He stopped for a second before continuing, "My homeworld isn't big but I'm sure you'll fit in . Also, you and my daughter are quite alike . "

As he said that, Shen Shen's body twitched as he raised her head and looked at him

"You daughter?"

"Yes, I have a daughter who's a bit older like you but she's talented, like you . "

Timos never spoke of Saly so it's the first time Shen Shen is hearing of this . She became more depressed as she felt left out, like she didn't belong with her parents .

'Did they purposely leave me behind?'

Slowly, tears started flowing down the girl's cheeks, startling Arthur, who involuntarily retracted his hand, thinking that it's his fault .

"W-what's wrong?"

Shen Shen tried her best to control her tears as she rubbed her ears and shook her head, indicating that she was fine .

Unfortunately, her eyes became wetter and she ended up sobbing even more .

Zaarae looked at Shen Shen then slightly moved her index, causing a gentle force to push the little blue-haired girl into Arthur's arms .

The parasite didn't push Shen Shen and, instead, softly patted her back, trying to calm her .

"There there, everything going to be alright . Don't cry . "

Arthur wryly smiled and spoke with a tender voice, "You're a big and smart girl, don't cry . "

Zaarae palmed her forehead as she heard his ridiculous words, which only made Shen Shen cry even more .

Fortunately, she stopped after ten or so minutes, but she remained in Arthur's embrace . His chest became wet because of her tears but he paid it no heed and continued patting her back, feeling inexplicably sad and sorry for her . She did come out as a rude girl when he met her but that was probably because of the tragic events that may have happened to her . She was trying to seem outwardly strong to not get used or deceived, or so thought Arthur .

"I, I'm fine n-now . "

Shen Shen's face a shade of red as she tried escaping Arthur but he pulled her right back and put her on his lap while saying,

"Don't cry anymore, okay? As long as I'm here then no one will bully you . Here, show me a smile . "

He smiled at the girl and pointed at his lips, wanting her to imitate him . His comical actions, which are the opposite of his usual coldness when interacting with others, caused Shen Shen to giggle and feel more relaxed .

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"Ah! I wish master would treat me like that too . "

Fariya complained as she looked at the warm atmosphere between Arthur and Shen Shen . It's the first time she saw the parasite behave so kindly, after all, he's usually grumpy and rarely talks . Zaarae glanced at the succubus and muttered,

"Blood is thicker than water . "

"What?"

"Nothing . It doesn't concern us . "

The Empress turned around and looked at the wall of darkness far away from the drifting dark cloud . This wall was the boundary between the Demon Realm and this desolate space which houses countless stars and barren planets .

Two more days passed, the relationship between Arthur and Shen Shen deepened and the latter opened up to her father . She showed him a few interesting tricks she learned from Timos, like the unique water

magic which is capable of miraculous feats . It's even more effective than Midolf's Life energy, which is supposedly the best for healing injuries, both physical and mental ones .

"Arthur... Arthur! Did you finish it?"

Shen Shen excitedly jumped up and down, trying to see if the parasite finished the item . He promised her that he'll craft a beautiful necklace for her and he's been busy for ten straight hours, making the girl impatient .

She wanted to see the shape of the pendant but his broad back blocked and although she could circle around take a peek, Shen Shen refrained from doing so, considering it as 'cheating' .

"Hold on, I'm almost done . "

Arthur chuckled and did the last touch before appraising the necklace . He felt very satisfied with the result, furthermore, the item looked exquisite and very beautiful, a perfect thing which matches the girl's blue hair .

The necklace was embedded with a wisp of his Ethereal State, which makes the wearer feel calm and resistant to mental attacks .

Additionally, a personalized defensive water-formation was hidden inside, only to be activated if the wearer is in danger . However, this was not all as the pendant, if injected with a bit of Water Energy, is able to teleport the user to a random location thousands of miles away . It also facilitates the flow of Water Magic and helps the wearer accumulate energy at a faster rate .

The necklace was graded as a 1st-grade Godly-ranked Artifact and named 'Friendship' by the crafter, Arthur .

Shen Shen's mouth opened wide as Arthur presented her the breath-taking necklace, which was made from an ocean-blue crystalline material and shiny silver metal . It was a circular necklace with ten of those blue crystals engraved inside, while silver covered the rest .

"Do you like this?"

"Like it! I like it!"

The girl jumped in joy as she immediately put the necklace on only to feel a cool and refreshing energy enter her body, resulting in the relaxation of her muscles and the regulation of her energy and blood circulation .

"Good good!" He caressed her head and said, "Don't ever take it off, okay?"

"Yes! I won't! I promise!"

A wide happy smile could be seen on the young girl's face as she clutched the necklace and danced around . Zaaarae walked up to the girl and crouched down, also handing her a gift .

"Here, little Shen, a gift from me too . "

Zaaarae softly smiled as she gifted a wrist bracelet to the youngling . The bracelet was also blue in color but had three black lines, each with an incomprehensible letter from a foreign language .

Shen Shen accepted the gift and hugged Zaarae before putting on the bracelet too and gazing at it .

The gift of the Empress and the parasite urged some of the rest to give a precious and protective thing to Shen Shen . Fariya blew a kiss on Shen Shen's hand, causing a minuscule, almost unnoticeable purple heart-shaped tattoo to appear . It's literally a protective charm which will entrance any victim as long as they aren't too strong .

Midolf and Radolf jointly gifted a thin saber just like the one Lucy's uses . It was half black and half white and complimented Shen Shen's water magic, boosting its efficiency .

Any one of these gifts will sell for an absurd amount of spirit stones yet they were given to a young girl, who doesn't know their true worth yet, nevertheless, none of them regretted it as they received a warm hug from the excited Shen Shen .

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Seven days after escaping the prison, Arthur and co reached the barren and gloomy coast of the Black Sea, also known as the Black Kraken Sea . As the name suggests, the water was the color on ink, you can't see anything under the blackened surface . Moreover, the canopy seemed to be split into two sides, one was bright and the other, the one above the sea, was cloudy and grey .

"Sir Arthur, there is a small town North-East of here . You can hire a captain or some sailors or pay some spirit stones to board with other travelers . "

Esco respectfully explained to Arthur a few things while stating the importing things . He grew accustomed to his role and didn't dare ask anything about Arthur or the others and would remain quiet if he's not needed . The only one who he was kind of friendly with was Vyncent, who's also a bit of an outsider too .

Arthur never talked to the blond young man but he didn't kick him out of the dark cloud either .

"I don't see the point in boarding with others, it'll only make the route longer . We can just go straight to the Land of the Golden Sand . If the Kraken shows up then I'll deal with it . "

The parasite looked at her but didn't speak or agree . Unexpectedly, it was Radolf who stepped forward and politely said,

"Empress, with all due to respect, I don't think it's worth it to anger the Kraken . Its violent by nature and causing a loud ruckus will only attract unwanted attention . "

"So?"

Radolf hesitated for a brief moment, glanced at Shen Shen, who was curiously looking at the black sea, before adding,

"We can board a boat that will pass through the second danger zone... I know of a place called the Waterfall of Youth and Old . I'm sure Little Shen will like it . "

Only when she heard that did Zaarae hesitate as she looked at Shen Shen, who listened to the mythical being . Her eyes gleamed as she looked expectantly at Zaarae as if she was waiting for her approval .

In the end, the Empress relented with a sigh .

"Alright . "

Arthur secretly gave Radolf a thumb-up then said,

"Let's go find a boat then . "

The parasite attempted to fly into the black sea but the moment he flew above the black water, his body started falling uncontrollably as if something was pulling him down .

Fortunately, a gentle aura enveloped him and brought him back atop the dark cloud .

"The Black Sea's gravity is fifty-five times stronger than here and the space is very unstable . Flight is difficult but if you use one of your abilities, it is still possible to do it but it's necessary and costly . "

Zaarae smiled at Arthur and explained the reason behind his sudden fall .

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A few minutes later, the Dark Cloud landed next to a relatively large town bustling with mainly demons . Actually, the word 'demon' is a general term for all the races originating from the demon realm . Whether it's beastkin, succubus, devils, ghosts, skeletons, zombies, undead, orcs, goblins, imps, kobolds, lizards, etc...

The village was called 'Dark Coast' and isn't ruled by anyone, it's only a place for demons to rest and merchants to reload their goods . Though Arthur's group looked no different than humans, no one bothered or provoked them .

They quickly reached the medium-sized port and found a relatively large black ship which is going to depart soon .

"Next . "

A short and fat green-skinned goblin holding a long yellow sheet of paper wrote the names of new passengers while beckoning for the next in the queue to come closer .

Arthur wasn't bothered by waiting but Zaarae seemed extremely bored and wanted to just started get on the ship already, nevertheless, she didn't flare up and obediently stood behind Arthur .

It has to be said that her exceptional beauty did cause a few curious make demons to sneak a couple of glances but that was all . It was the same thing for Fariya, whose clothes were revealing but, as she was standing next to the Empress, her charm was rendered ineffective .

The goblin raised its head and looked at the tall man standing before him .

"Names and number of passengers . "

"Arthur and they are with me . We're 8 . "

The goblin looked at the group, his eyes pausing for a second on Zaarae and Fariya before saying

"That will be 72 red spirit stones or 1,600 gold . "

Spirit stones are a common currency in all of the multiverse but demons also like gold and use it a lot too . Goblins are especially fond of the shiny golden metal and like to collect it, like the deceased Buo Buo, who was quite wealthy though it's too bad his possessions ended up in Arthur's hand .

Arthur flicked his hand and threw a small bag of red spirit stones to the goblin, who excitedly caught it . The demon carefully counted before nodding his head and signaling for Arthur to board the ship .

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Along with his group, there were around twenty other people on the ship, mostly goblin merchants . There were three orcs warriors wearing thick red plated armors but they seemed to be protecting one goblin who had a fake long mustache and was wearing extravagant clothes .

"Ah! We're finally departing . "

Zaarae's mood was slightly elevated as the black ship started moving after thirty or so minutes . She held Shen Shen's hand and went to the side of the ship . The little girl wanted a closer look at the black water so the Empress accompanied her just to make sure nothing happens, after all, this black sea is still a dangerous zone and although this is a safe zone, mishaps can still happen .

At the center of the Black Sea, hundreds of kilometers under the surface, amidst the primordial shrouded waters, a pair of eyes slowly opened, they glowed with an ominous red light as they illuminated a small area . A creature that was bigger than a mountain has awoken from its slumber . Its thick and absurdly lengthy tentacles started moving, slowly stretching to the surface .

A deep and orotund voice emitted from the sea creature,

"Emmmppresssssssss... . . "

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"Not interested . "

Fariya dismissively waved her hand at a goblin merchant her group with a not-so-good intentions . But, just when the first one left, a second one, who has an appearance that was almost identical to the first one, tentatively approached the charming succubus .

"I said NOT interested!"

A gust of wind pushed the goblin, making him fall on his buttocks . The merchant was angry but he didn't do anything and just turned around and left, though he didn't forget to glare at the woman .

Arthur was sitting cross-legged, his eyes closed and his index caressing his marriage ring, it seemed obvious that interrupting him will only lead to problems so Fariya took it upon herself to shoo away anyone who got close . Midolf and Radolf had disappeared, while Vyncent and Esco went to their respective personal room .

The black ship was big and could house hundreds of passengers but the captain, which was, surprisingly, a mutated ghoul, only welcome a dozen or so of people aboard his ship .

As for Zaaarae and Shen Shen, they were at the front of the deck, looking at the calm black waters, utterly void of waves or the expected monsters .

"Tsk! Maybe I should kill all of them?" Quietly muttered the succubus as she looked at the disgusting and annoying stares she was getting from almost all of the passengers . They were eyeing their group, especially Arthur, who seemed to be the leader . They were wondering about his identity as he had two gorgeous women accompanying him .

Fortunately, no one else made an advance on Fariya, who was like an unbreakable wall, allowing no one to come close to her master .

In the blink of an eye, half a day passed, the grey and gloomy sky turned inky black and it became much harder to navigate the sea so the captain slowed down his ship .

Shen Shen accompanied Fariya inside the ship to sleep, leaving only Arthur and Zaaarae . The Parasite Empress sat inches away from him, her eyes glued on his face .

◆◆What do you want?"-Arthur

"Can't I just look?" She replied, a soft smile blossoming on her face .

"..."

Arthur felt a bit uncomfortable to be stared at so intensely but he couldn't tell her to stop . Even if he changed locations, she'll just follow him... it happened back when they were traveling atop the dark cloud so he learned the hard way that he can't avoid this woman .

"You still haven't told me why you're acting like this . "

"Hm? Acting like what?"

Arthur glanced at her and said, "Acting so clingy and oddly affectionate . "

"Well, Arthur, can't a woman be in love?"

"She certainly can but not like this... not like you . "

"It's not because you have never fallen in love at first sight that it can't happen . "

She leaned her face closer to his, her lips an inch from his ear .

"I'm so very in love with you but it hurts me that I can't do anything . "

Seeing his strange and unreadable expression, the woman giggled and added, "If it were up to me, I would bring you to bed before supper . (Literally means she'll jump at him right now .)"

Arthur looked back at her and solemnly retorted, "Enough . "

His stare became colder as he spoke again, "I am grateful for your help, however, this behavior of yours is exactly what makes me unable to trust you . "

Zaaarae didn't seem bothered as her smile widened, she seductively put a finger under her lower lip and responded,

"What can I do to make you trust me? Tell me, I can do everything . " She chuckled and looked at the night sky,

"Do you want to possess me and take my stats and skills? Do you want me to bring you the kraken and make it your pet? Just tell me . "

He intently looked at her but no words came out of his lips . After an inordinate amount of time, he asked,

"Did we meet in the past? Or in the future?"

"Oh... we sure did . In the past, to be precise . "

She paused for a split second before continuing, "I thought you were aware . Back when I and the others were born, you came and showed us many things . You even named us . "

Actually, Arthur was aware that the old him traveled in the past and to many periods, but there were many still-unexplained matters so this revelation came as a bit of a shock to him .

"I did?"

"Yup!" She enthusiastically nodded her head as she remembered the fond memories of the complicated past .

"Bilgart was against your arrival but he didn't interfere . I met you for the first time there then... then you came back to me and I fell for you . "

Arthur didn't need to ask anything as the Empress spoke without stopping for almost an hour . She left nothing unsaid, telling him about dangerous secrets and hidden past events, like how she lost her parasitic powers and why it happened .

"Now, do you believe me?"

She smiled as she asked him, her voice containing a bit of anxiety which she couldn't hide .

In response, Arthur sighed and just nodded her head, there was a lot to process so he excused himself right after .

The Empress looked at him disappearing back, her smile slowly vanishing, and her expression saddening for some reason . Perhaps seeing his lack of affection and coldness, she felt like she didn't belong by his side, at least not in this time period, not with Lucy in his heart .

"Captain! We've spotted three pirates ships!"

An orc wearing average sailor clothes reported to the short and pale-skinned captain, who looked West, where you could three black silhouettes heading towards them .

"Imps?"

"It appears to be so, captain . "

The ghoul thought for a moment before saying, "Turn 45 degrees left and increase our speed!"

Mutated ghouls are actually normal ghouls which kept their conscience and are able to think like humans and other intelligent species . They are a higher variation of undead and can be as strong as Lich Kings if they train really hard .

Captain 'Faded Grass' is strong but he, after all, he was still a captain of a traveling ship . At best, he can fight people that accumulated 70 or 80 white stars, which is equivalent to someone at the Immortal Realm . As for the merchants' guards, their only duty is to protect their employer . To not suffer big losses, merchants would just offer a few their goods to the pirates and be done with it . If they attempt to fight, their guards would get injured, basically, it isn't that beneficial .

This was also another reason why Captain Faded Grass wanted to escape the pirate ships rather than take them head-on .

They just departed from the coast yet the imps appeared, it was awfully bold of them and problematic .

"Master, want me to take care of them?"

Fariya glanced at the pirate ships and nonchalantly said . Such a minor threat can be taken care of with just a finger, she was an otherworldly existence in comparison to the captain and the rest and only the Kraken and a few deep-sea kings can threaten her .

"No need . "

Arthur looked at the pirate ships, which were only a few hundred meters away and kept getting closer . The goblins merchants and the rest of the passengers were panicking and changing their clothes into less extravagant, some even went to hide inside their rooms .

'It's a good opportunity to test Buo Buo's Telekinesis . '

His body blurred and appeared at the corner of the central deck, facing the incoming pirate ships . Of course, his actions were noticed by the orc guards and the captain .

The parasite raised pointed his palm at the closest ship, which had ugly red imps excitedly jumping on it . They were celebrating before they even obtained the loot as they didn't expect any resistance .

Sadly and unfortunately for them, they weren't aware of the fate that was going to befall on them . Arthur's palm was slightly pushed forward and, at the same moment, an invisible and terrifying force struck the pirate ship .

The sight was no different than an egg being squished into pieces . The ship crumbled almost instantaneously, the imps were crushed to death by the invisible force and fell on the water . In just a few seconds, all that was left were sinking rubbles, the only thing that remained from the pirate ship, which was no way smaller than Fade Grass' ship .

The other two pirate ships hastily tried to turn around but Arthur moved his hand again . The two ships were lifted in the air then crashed into each other before something sharp cleanly cut them along with all the imps . Just like the first one, they fell on the black water and were sucked into the bottomless sea .

Arthur also noticed that the black waters were like a vacuum, first pulling a handful of lucky imps that managed to survive, then absorbed what remained of the black ships .

Seeing this frightening sight, the present passengers, sailors, and even the mutated ghoul were dumbstruck . The undead was soaking with cold sweat as he looked at Arthur's emotionless face, the latter just went back to his initial position and sat back as if nothing happened .

Faded Grass that he had unfathomable individuals aboard his ship, making him dreadful and a bit excited . If he could curry favor with Arthur and co then it would bring him endless benefits but, unfortunately, the moment he walked toward the black-haired man, he was stopped by the succubus .

"I, I would just like to thank sir Arthur for his help . "

"Master does not want to be bothered, just go away!"

She coldly dismissed him but the captain just wryly smiled and left . All in all, the safety of their trip was guaranteed as long as he had them here .

'It's pretty strong considering that I only used a bit of it . '

Arthur was thinking about the goblin's enigma ability, which was truly a strong power . He reckoned that, at full power, it can even injure an Exalted God .

As he was thinking about the Telekinesis, Zaaarae sat next to him but he didn't pay her any heed . Only when her face was dangerously close did he open his eyes and glare at her .

The Empress ignored his warning as she whispered,

"That Telekinesis of yours is strong but let me gift you something even better . "

She winked at him as leaned her face even closer . Arthur was about to jump back but he found himself completely bound . His eye shone with a blue light and time was slowed, however, even after succeeding in doing that, he still couldn't escape the grasp of the invisible power pressing down on him .

In the end, the woman's lips pressed on his cheek for one full second before slowly and reluctantly retracting . Feeling that he was no longer bound, Arthur jumped back like a frightened chicken, his heart beating insanely fast but his expression was completely frosty .

He was about to attack Zaaarae but was stopped by the sudden appearance of a row of system notifications .

[Thought Telekinesis] has evolved into [Psychic Mind]

[Psychic Mind] has evolved into [Thought and Effect]

Creation Magic has affected [Thought and Effect]

[Thought and Effect] is now [Thought and Effect+]

*You gained a new title: The Empress' Sweetheart

*You gained a new title: Lord of Parasites

*Your stats increased, please check the status window for more details . *

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/DAGON RIDER / UNSEEN BOND / ONE STALKED BY THE REAPER / DIVINE HERALD / THE EMPRESS' SWEETHEART / THE LORD OF PARASITES / SLAVE MASTER

Level: ??

Class: Dark ARK Parasite

Realm: Overgod (Formation)

Celestial Body: 26%

-

Strength: 41 . 9B

Intelligence: 45B

Agility: 48 . 1B

Wisdom: 33 . 3B

Vitality: 50 . 1B

Dexterity: 26 . 7B

-

Health: 66 . 6B// Health Regen: 39 . 7/s

Nether Energy: 14B // Nether Energy Regen: 23m/s(+100%)

Mana: 13 . 4// Mana Regen: 29 . 99m/s

Stamina: Infinite /Stamina Regen: ???

Creation: 1000

Attack: 39 . 4 (+35% damage [Dark Flame Ring]) (+20% if Dark Magic is used) (+5% [Warrior's Cry[LvMax](Passive)] [+2% from Breaker of Chains Title]

Defense: 48 . 2B(+25% Damage Reduction) (+5% [Solid [LvMax](passive)]) (+10% [Golem's Wall(LvMax)(Passive)])

Magic Defense: 4 . 2B

Soul Defense: 29m(-29m 'no soul, clone')

Enigma abilities : Thought and Effect / [Light Operation/ Righteous Death] / Sixth sense /

-

Mental Power: 44000

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 (472,097)

Races:

Divine Beasts (4)

Humans (283,054)

Demons (84,991)

Beasts (+)(101,529)

Unique Beasts (2511)

Mythical beings (1)

[Thought and Effect]: An enigma ability that allows the user to control things with their mind . It can deal significant damage to spiritual beings (Ghosts, wraiths, etc . .) and deals 5% more damage to material beings and objects . Highly effective against those with lower Mental Power than the user(Arthur MoonStar) .

It cannot work against those with the title 'Death's Beckon' . It cannot work against those with the 'Feather Wind' Physique . It cannot work against those with the 'Emerald Soul' .

Can be fused with *Dark Magic* and *Natural Lightning* but the cost will increase from 0 to 500 Mental Power/s . *

*The user (Arthur MoonStar(clone) cannot continue the formation of the Celestial Body . The real host will acquire the Celestial Body when the formation is completed . *

*All increase in stats will be applied to the real host when the clone is called back or dies . *

*Please note that in case of the death of the user (Arthur MoonStar(clone)), the obtained skills, titles, and stats will be automatically transferred to the original within a period of 1-7days . Additionally, the memories of the user (Arthur MoonStar(clone)) will be instantaneously sent to the main host . Any disruption to the System may lead to a problem in the transfer phase, please proceed with caution . *

Arthur had just read this long list of notification only for another louder blue window to appear again, blocking his sight .

*To all System users, please maintain a safe distance from the X-TR500 Universe for the foreseeable future . We are currently taking care of the B-32 Virus and advise all players to avoid each other for the time being . *

*To all System users, the Tamtar Galaxy, Milky Way Galaxy, Andromeda Galaxy, Kamstar Galaxy, and the T-99 Supercluster are under quarantine . Any player seen entering or leaving it will be attacked on sight, please be aware . *

To all System Users, the general System under maintenance and therefore absent tomorrow from 1AM to 1PM

The day Arthur and co escaped the prison .

The place was chaotic when Habs was sent flying and was injured by Zaarae . Although the injuries weren't that fatal, they still slightly weakened him and, to make matters worse, there seemed to be another invader, one who was much bolder and destructive than Arthur .

This mysterious individual broke in when he was away and brought one prisoner back with him . He attacked any angel that retaliated and didn't hesitate to kill .

The human Warden held his short sword and glared at the black figure, his face ugly to the extreme . He was humiliated after Arthur killed Carpentine but now another person was worsening the situation for him .

"Who are you? What are y-"

His words got stuck in his throat as he saw an unconscious man laying on the invader's shoulder . Surprisingly, it was none other than Edward Ortberg, the serial-killer from earth . The Warden's eyes sharpened as he charged at the enemy, who was wearing a strange black suit made of metal and had many changing numbers all over it .

The unknown invader held a silver spear and swept at it Habs, cracking the space and unleashing a silver burst which clashed with the warden .

...

"You won't be leaving this place!"

Habs spat some blood and looked at the enemy, who was also bleeding from his shoulder and knee . Although Habs knew he was stronger than the enemy, he still couldn't win due to that black suit, which fired laser beams that are only found in the System universe .

"You're a white specter... is this the White Specter Clan's doing? Do you know that you're offending Heaven?"

An illusory white tail enveloped in white flames was swaying from behind the individual . The White Specter's transformation was famous and easily recognizable . He didn't know who this masked person was but it was definitely a specter and not a strong one, at that . Were it not for that technological suit, he would have already won but the fight lasted for more than two hours and he was even injured in the chest .

The silver spear pierced his chest, exactly where Zaarae hit previously .

'If I'm dying here then it's your damn fault!' Cursed Angelina as she looked at Habs and his increasing aura . She had to fight this Warden with Edward on her shoulder and make sure he doesn't die .

She was talking to Claud, who was behind her arrival here and her current unexpected actions . She learned to believe in him and, especially his prophecies, furthermore, his recent one made her come all the way here and break out Edward .

Angelina threw the man's body to the side before swiftly jumping in the air and holding the spear with both hands . A majestic dragon cry reverberated across the area, it was quickly followed by the splitting of the sky and the appearance of an enormous silver dragon . The woman was inside the dragon's mouth, her spear pointing at Habs, who bent his body and coat his sword with sword essence .

He pressed his foot on the shaking ground, shooting at Angelina with lightning speed . His short sword glowed with black light as it was raised toward the heavens, ready to meet the dragon .

The clash between the two was explosive and pulverized half of the area, even taking a big chunk of the black structure above the prison . In the end, both sides were injured but Habs was much better off, nevertheless, he wasn't able to pursue Angelina, who turned around and hastily fled .

While holding his bleeding arm, Habs shouted at the angels:

"Chase after her and find Edward! NOW!"

...

Ten minutes later, Edward, who was supposed to be unconscious, slowly opened his eyes and checked if there was anyone around . Ever since the beginning, he was just pretending to be comatose and wondering what's happening . Angelina thought she cut his consciousness but not even she was able to control someone with a soul like his, she underestimated him because he was but a fragile mortal .

The man got on his feet and looked at the lush and eerie forest surrounding him .

"Should I just go back? I don't see the point in wandering around . "

He let out a sigh and looked downward, noticing a small piece of paper which was totally out of place .

Chapter 656: 656

"That looks on your face tells me that my gift pleased you, hehehe"

Zaarae cheekily laughed as she looked at the dumb and surprised look plastered on Arthur's face . He stood motionless for a solid five minutes before he lifted his head and looked at the Empress, who blew another kiss in his direction .

"Was 'that' even necessary?"

He looked angry but his tone indicated otherwise .

"Emm..." She giggled and replied, "It's a give and take . I gift you a useful thing and you give me a 'kiss' . "

"You..."

She signaled for him to stop talking as she put her finger on her lips .

"One more word and I'll take you to my room and eat you . "

Arthur glared at her but he didn't dare speak another word . He let out a helpless long sigh and sat, wanting to read more about the new skills and ambiguous titles . Buo Buo's Telekinesis was already strong but the one Zaarae just gifted him seemed overpowered, to say the least .

"With that, you don't need to fear anyone with Purple Stars or any Exalted God but do be careful of those who mastered their techniques, they're the most dangerous . "

Just as Zaarae finished speaking, her expression abruptly changed . She appeared in front of Arthur and unleashed a domineering aura which made the calm black waters become turbulent . Ten seconds or so passed before a red light pierced through the grey clouds and stopped dozens of meters above the black ship .

The Empress' face seemed unusually serious as she glared at the mysterious individual who was looking down at all the crew and passengers .

"What a pleasant surprise!"

The man was wearing a funny costume that had a mix of red and purple, cards danced around him as he heartily laughed while looking at Arthur then at Zaarae, who recognized him . She never met the Joker but definitely knew of his existence, moreover, she felt inferior now that he's before her .

Her figure blurred and by the next second, she was in front of the Joker, punching his chest . Unfortunately, her fist stopped inches away from his body, a small card absorbed the force behind her attack, shocking the woman .

"There's no need for violence, I'm just passing by . "

He waved his hand before vanishing and appearing in front of Arthur . Zaarae's face twisted as she was about to attack again only for Arthur to stop her with his hand,

"It's fine, I know him . "

She fully trusted the parasite but didn't dare drop her guard . Her figure stood next to Arthur and her aura was still unleashed, causing most of the passengers to faint, with the exception of her companions, of course .

"Oh! You're a clone! Nice!"

The Joker patted Arthur's shoulder while smiling, appearing very happy . The parasite also smiled back at his brother and responded, "What brought you here?"

"The octopus is safeguarding something for me . I've come back to retrieve it . "

"Octopus? You mean the Black Kraken?"

"Yeah yeah whatever, it's the same thing . "

The Joker curiously looked at the nearby Shen Shen, who was also looking at him . He then shifted his attention to Fariya, whose face was incredibly pale .

"Bro, I get that Zaarae is with you but a succubus will surely anger sister-in-law . Just make sure to hide her well . "

Arthur chuckled and retorted .

"There's nothing to hide, she's a slave but I'm not planning to bring her back . "

"Good good!" The Joker snapped his fingers, causing a wide golden table and big leather chairs to appear around him . He sat on one of them and motioned for Arthur and the rest to sit too .

"I happen to have some good whiskey with me... how about a few glasses? Like the good old days . "

"Sure . "

Arthur immediately agreed as he laughed and sat opposite of his brother . Zaarae, still stone-faced, sat at Arthur's right while Shen Shen sat on the left, her blue eyes glued on the Joker, who acted strangely and comically .

Glasses filled with whiskey were pushed toward Arthur, Zaarae, and Fariya, while Shen Shen had a cup of hot milk .

The little girl glanced at milk then creased her brows, she didn't want to be treated like a little kid, despite the fact that she is .

"I want that too . "

She pointed at the glass of whiskey but the Joker laughed and stated, "Brat, just drink your milk, 'kay?"

"I'm not a brat!" Protested Shen Shen but the man ignored her and emptied his glass, which was automatically and immediately filled again .

"Shen Shen, you're a bit young for this . Next time, okay?"

Only when Arthur spoke did the blue-haired girl calm down and obediently drink the hot milk, although reluctantly . However, her expression betrayed her, she licked her lips and looked at the empty cup with a disappointed look as soon as she emptied it .

"You see? You're a brat!"

The Joker mocked her and pointed his finger at the empty cup, filling it with chocolate hot milk this time .

"So, what brought my lil brother here?"

"Little brother?" Zaaarae frowned and looked at Arthur, who just shrugged his shoulders .

"Got a little errand to do in the Land of Golden Sand . "

"Is that so?" He swept secondary glances at the succubus, the Empress, and Shen Shen, then added, "Lively company you have here, especially the rude brat... she falls a little short in comparison to Saly . "

...

The Joker and Arthur talked for several hours before the former bid farewell as his matter was a bit urgent .

"I didn't know you were brothers . " Zaaarae was very interested in Arthur's relationship with The Joker and she didn't hold back her questions but the answers she got were nothing but silence .

"Hey! Wake up!"

The Joker kicked the gigantic head of the black Kraken, which violently shook before it opened its red eyes and looked at the man .

"Move your fat ass so I can enter . "

The Kraken obediently and slowly moved its body to the side, revealing some sort of a whirlpool blacker than the mythical being itself . It was half of the Kraken's size and resembled a wormhole, though it emanated no light or energy .

The Joker was about to enter but, at the very last second, he turned to look at the black Kraken and said,

"Oh, lay a finger on that black ship and I'll cut, roast, and eat your useless tentacles . "

He snorted and dived into the wormhole, disappearing the moment he got too close . The trip through this strange portal lasted three seconds and when the Joker appeared on the other side, he was standing on a moon-like planet, the sky was a vast black starry space .

"Time to fix the line conjunction... what a mess . " He sighed and looked at an entity shrouded in a crimson fog .

"Wassup man!"

He energetically waved his hand at the man enveloped by that fog . He had the same appearance as his brother but the Joker knew better than to act recklessly and get close .

"Geez... vampires here are so scary . "

54 cards appeared from his hand and spun around his body like a tornado, each emitting either a red, grey, or black light .

"I don't think you'll let me do my business quietly, right?"

A crimson beast soaked in blood leapt at the Joker, causing him to jump back and throw three cards, which were ripped by the blood droplets spat by the ferocious beast .

"Yeah... of course you won't . "

"Lemme see..."

Edward Ortberg held the piece in paper and read it for the tenth time, feeling lost .

"The past kingdom now within reach, for the golden sand will rise, its glow full of praise .

The tomb raider now here, and the thief's identity is clear .

Since time immemorial the leaf is unshaken, it's time for it to be taken . '

I mean, isn't this a bit cheesy and out of place? What am I supposed to speculate from this?"

He looked at the awfully quiet forest then took out a brown apple and took a large bite, fully savoring the taste .

"What golden sand and past kingdom? I'm bored and stuck here... what the hell woman, can't you explain a bit before throwing me here?"

He chuckled, finishing the apple in three more bites before leaving the area, heading towards a random direction, which seemed to be the safest .

Chapter 657

Captain Faded Grass was having a serious headache due to his current situation . Usually, a trip from the 'Dark Coast' to the golden desert takes around seven to eight days if the ship passes through the third danger zone, which is the safest and has way less sea monsters, however, Arthur wanted to see the Waterfall of the Youth and Old, which is in the second danger zone .

Faded Grass already accepted the fact that Arthur and his group are powerhouses which shouldn't be provoked so he obeyed the parasite and unwilling sailed the ship toward where the waterfall is supposed to be .

The rest of the passengers were scared shitless of the parasite and especially Zaaarae, whose aura made them fall unconscious, waking up only several hours later . Even the orc guards protecting their employers didn't dare glance at the Empress and stood as far away from the strange group as possible .

Three days after their departure, the black ship reached a unique and strangely beautiful place . The black waters seemed to be stopped by an invisible barrier, which protected a small floating island, from which fell a breath-taking shiny waterfall . The clear water fell into the bottomless abyss down below, however, what makes this particular waterfall special is that it's eternal, it keeps flowing until the end of time itself .

It's a magical place not easily reached or entered, in fact, were it not for Arthur's presence, the captain wouldn't have come here, after all, the sea is crawling with monsters, there were even sea kings .

He didn't see any in their way here but that's only because Arthur killed them the moment they got too close . Furthermore, some of the intelligent ones kept a safe distance and only watched the passing black ship, it was as if they were ordered not to interfere with the ship or its passengers .

"It's beautiful!"

Shen Shen's eyes shone as she watched the falling translucent waters, her soul and body were being drawn to the waterfall as if it was calling her .

"Let's get a closer look . "

Zaaarae held her hand and walked on the air with Shen Shen . Arthur and Fariya followed but Esco and Vyncent remained on the ship . Radolf and Midolf were still nowhere to be seen, presumably at their rooms or invisible somewhere around .

When the little girl was a hundred meters or so from the waterfall, her hair starting floating upwards and a blinding white light emanated from her chest . Zaaarae smiled and gave the girl a gentle push

"Have fun . "

Shen Shen didn't respond, her eyes were closed and her heartbeat significantly decreased . When she passed the 50 meters mark, the shiny water slowly went to her direction and started 'dancing', enveloping her but not hurting her . Actually, it seemed to be careful as to not startle the girl, which was in the midst of enlightenment .

"I told you she'll like it . "

Zaaarae spoke to Arthur, who was standing next to her and looking at Shen Shen .

"What's this place anyway?"

"The waterfall is the tears of Poseidon . It'll cleanse her body and strengthen her soul . "

"Poseidon? On earth, he's the Greek God of Sea . "

The Empress nodded her head and explained, "Yes, he's the God of Sea and, overall, a good person in my opinion . He's one of the higher-gods but wasn't the creation of Dmitra or 'God' . "

"Did he die?" curiously asked Arthur .

"I know what you're thinking but his body merged back with the sea and only his tears still remain . It may look harmless but a single drop of that water can kill you . "

Hearing this, Arthur instinctively took a step back, which caused the woman to giggle .

"Don't worry, as long as you don't purposely get too close then it won't do anything . Plus, it recognizes you as Shen Shen's companion so the possibility of being attacked is non-existent . "

Zaarae paused for a breath before stating, "There was this old legend with a mysterious origin❖❖❖ it says that Poseidon's tears, Dmitra's Origin Water, the dust of the First Star, a Devil's blood, and the Seed of the World Tree, if properly fused together, can produce a miraculous thing . "

"What's this miraculous thing?"

She shrugged her shoulders and answered, "I don't know . Some say it's eternal life, invincibility, the ability to control the space-time continuum . No one really knows . I reckon that the Garden of Words knows the true answer . "

Now that the garden was brought up, Arthur couldn't help but ask .

"The Garden of Words... do you know anything about it? How to reach it or where is it?"

Zaarae felt happy that Arthur was more talkative than usual, she sweetly smiled, stepped closer to him, and replied .

"The Garden of Words holds more knowledge than Qihea amassed in her entire, long life . It's a place outside of this existence, the multiverse, I mean . Unaffected by the natural, unbreakable elemental laws, or even time and space . I have visited once but there's a rule to not disclose anything about it so even if I wanted to tell you, I can't . The restriction is beyond my understanding or anyone else's, that is . However, I can tell you that it's in the boundary between Life and Death but I think you already know that . "

She briefly paused before resuming, "The elemental laws affect all the living but time doesn't spare the dead . It's not a simple question of 'where' is it... or even 'when' . Anyway, those two followers of yours may come in handy later . Their assistance is essential but, Arthur, reaching the Garden is not an easy feat . Many tried but ended up falling into a place opposite of their expectation . "

Arthur nodded his head and asked again, "What about its origin? How was it created? By whom?"

"Let me answer you with a question, then . Who created the dragons? Vampires? Blood Magic? No one knows . They just appeared . It's just the same for the Garden of Words, it is its mysticity that makes it so sought for and unique . "

Zaarae looked at the spiraling shiny water flying in the air and questioned . "Have you heard of the Frog of Destiny?"

"Isn't that one of the mythical beings?"

"Yes, but it is the most mysterious of all the twelve . In the past, I spent ten thousand years looking for it but I found nothing . If it wants to appear then it appears, that's just how it is . The frog is able to take you where you desire, no matter where it is . It's one of the ways to reach the Garden of Words but I really doubt you'll stumble upon it . As far as I know, the only one of the Twelve who met the frog was Moriah... geez, one meeting and look how he turned up . Its ability is really 'heaven-defying' . "

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Chapter 658: 658

Poseidon's tears considerably strengthened Shen Shen's already powerful soul, it also cleansed her body of any impurities . The girl's Lvl or Realm remained non-existent but her foundation was solid and perfect so if she embarks in one of three orthodox strengthening routes, she'll power-up at an absurd speed . In fact, Zaaarae said that by the time she reaches twenty and if she trains diligently, she'll become an Overgod or a Lv10,000 player .

Surprisingly and despite the Empress' objection, Shen Shen wanted to become a player as cultivation seemed too boring for her taste . She's the curious and adventurous type and killing mobs to become stronger is much more fun than cultivating in an empty cave for months or even years .

So, Zaaarae ended up providing a personal system only meant for the little girl as, per her words, the universal system isn't that good and could possibly endanger her later on .

Anyway, the black ship of captain Faded Grass reached a lively port situated on the East Coast of the Land of Golden Sand . Beyond the port laid a golden land which would take anyone's breath away, the grains were shining under the blinding rays of the sun hanging high-up in the sky .

"Sir Arthur, I think the Fallen God Clan is in the Ramel Kingdom . It's the only kingdom here and it rules over the whole area . "

Esco explained a few things to Arthur, he also spoke of the neighboring lands and the forces which they may potentially encounter in their travels . Though Arthur paid him little attention as he's strong enough to take care of simple armies, moreover, Zaaarae is still accompanying here .

Unless it's a truly powerful being then there should be no problem .

Apparently, the Land of Golden Sand is considerably big and neighbors two other equally big pieces of land . The first is the Phantom Treant Demonic Forest, and the second is a mountain range that houses a few second-rate sects and clans which immigrated from the Cloud Sea Universe .

Unlike the Black Sea, flight is possible above the desert, furthermore, traveling by foot is dangerous as the earth is crawling with all kinds of underground monsters and non-sentient demons . Also, just like the Cloud Sea Universe, the most common method of traveling here is by Spirit Boats, which are fueled by Spirit Stones or Energy crystals .

The Chief Guard Buo Buo had two Spirit Boats, both prestigious and big enough for hundreds of people . The flying ship was made of silver and had black gold exquisite lines on both of its sides . The group has no business to do in the port so they got on the Spirit Boat and departed almost immediately .

"What are your plans?"

Only now did Arthur talk to the quiet Vyncent, face to face and alone . The blond-haired man looked at the golden desert stretching as far as the eye could see, then replied,

"Thanks for your help . I think I'll leave when we reach the Ramel Kingdom . "

Arthur nodded his head and spoke again,

◆◆ You can stay if you want . I'm not forcing you to leave, we date way back, after all . "

"No, now that I lost my sect, I want to explore the world . "

"Sure, you do that then..." Arthur paused for a second then added, "But it's up to Shen Shen if she wants to go with you or stay . "

Vyncent wryly smiled and said back,

"Coming with me isn't safe for her . I'll just leave quietly, don't worry . "

The young man bowed his head toward the parasite then left the room, his face containing a determined expression . Arthur remained alone for a brief period, pondering about a few things, all about Vyncent .

Noticing the arrival of a relatively tall and gorgeous woman wearing a short black dress, Arthur asked,

"What do you think about him?"

Zaarae furrowed her brows, not understanding him at first .

"Him? Oh . . Ah! You mean that boy?"

She crossed her arms and thought for ten full seconds before replying .

"There is nothing to say really . I'm not sure what you want to know... if it's his talent then he's average but he does have an incredible Corrupted Zen Treasure in his possession . "

Arthur wasn't surprised, he turned his head and looked at her .

"It's that grey coin, right?"

"Indeed . Corrupt Zen Treasures are just like Zen Treasures but they don't require a unique inheritance . Plus, they tend to be malicious and inflict self-harm upon the user . I don't know anything about that coin but it does have something to do with Space and Souls . Were it not a corrupt one, I would have given it to you as it may be useful in reaching the Garden... a real shame, really . "

Arthur just waved his hand as if he didn't care .

"He's a sly but good kid . I owe him . "

"You do? I thought you brought him because you needed him . Should I give him something special then?"

The parasite shook his head, disagreeing with her . "Leave it . He walks his own path and if it's meant to be then we'll meet again . Hopefully under good circumstances . "

...

The silver Spirit Boat was unquestionably fast, much faster than even Arthur's full speed . The cost was an exorbitant amount of Spirit Stones, which Arthur didn't have much of as Zodiak's storage is with the original, nevertheless, the goblin's ring did have enough for the boat to function for at least a year . There was also a lot of gold, shiny treasures and books about some techniques, which aren't useful at all for the parasite .

The Ramel Kingdom is the ruler of this golden desert and the group's destination is precisely the kingdom's capital . The Fallen-God is actually the real power behind the kingdom and the King is none other than the son of Kass' grandson . Unlike the desert, the capital city was grand and majestic, truly deserving of a kingdom which existed since the Era of Beginning .

It was surrounded by walls so high that they pierced the clouds, they were made of solidified golden sand and were emitting rich Earthen Energy . As for the entrance to this city(Ramel City), it was an equally large gate made from black obsidian . What was more awe-inspiring was the two life-like statue standing at the left and right of the gate . They were holding spears made of sand and facing each other, their height easily surpassing one kilometer . If you look at them from the ground, you can't even see their faces .

Arthur's sense wasn't able to penetrate inside the city, it seems that the walls were not only meant for protection as they were embedded with magic that negates everything, which means that trying to probe the forces of the city from outside isn't possible . Even his Sixth Sense didn't work, moreover, the two statues made him a bit uncomfortable .

"They're Sand Protectors . There are 12 of them across the whole city and 21 in the whole kingdom . " Said Esco as he gasped at the sight of the wall and statues . He's knowledgeable but he can't help but be shocked at the marvelous before him .

"No, I feel 13 protectors inside the city . " Zaaarae glanced at the statues and commented but a frown soon appeared on her face .

"Hahahaha what luck! My man!"

Hearing this, Arthur creased her brow and looked back at her with confusion . The one who answered his question was Radolf, who materialized right behind him .

"Master, there's a mythical being in the city . "

"Oh? Which one is it?"

"The Monkey King . I've met him only once but he isn't the aggressive type . "

Midolf butted in and coldly stated .

"He's cool but for a mythical being, his actions contradict his nature . He fools around too much, all he knows is drinking and fucking... ugh . "

The white-haired youth spat on the ground, clearly not satisfied with the way the monkey king behaves .

Arthur was just about to speak again only to hear a deafening cry coming from within the city . A silhouette appeared from far away and in just a few seconds, it became clear enough to distinguish its appearance .

He had a humanoid body but the features of a monkey . His ears, nose and skin resembled a monkey but what made him eye-catching was the dark red tight clothes he was wearing, on his back there rested a golden staff with a round ball on both its edges .

"My Empresssss!!!"

The monkey king's voice reverberated across the whole area, he didn't decrease his speed and, instead, opened his arms and charged at Zaarae, ready to hug her . Unfortunately, Zaarae snorted and raised her kick, striking him with a sideway kick and sending him flying like a kite . His body violently crashed into the thick wall, leaving a deep hole that resembled his figure . The monkey king didn't seem bothered as he recovered and shot back again but didn't repeat the same action . He stopped before Arthur's group, a wide smile plastered on his animalistic face .

"Monkey King Sun Wukong . "

Radolf spoke the mythical being's, causing the latter to look at him then at Midolf .

"Oh it's the inseparable duo! Good seeing you . "

After casually saying that, he shifted his attention back to Zaarae . He didn't even spare a glance at Arthur, Shen Shen, or the rest .

The man cautiously looked around before focusing his attention back on the fist-sized creature three meters away from him . It had a hundred green eyes, a slimy white body and a slippery thin tongue which was licking the grass around it, though those eyes were all gazing at Edward Ortberg, whose breath was taken away and his body was frozen, shocked by the strange creature before him . It was similar to a frog but looked scary to the mortal, who only saw fantasy-like creatures in books or movies .

"Awfully creepy and unsettling . Best to leave it alone . "

He retracted his gaze and turned around, slowly distancing himself from the frog . Alas, Edward wasn't able to escape from the frog, which leapt a great distance, landing right behind him . He ignored it and quickened his steps but the white and small creature kept following him even after he started madly running .

Twenty minutes later, the man was gasping for breath and sweating profusely, his hand resting on a tree and supporting his fatigued body .

BONUS LORE

The 12 Mythical Beings are often talked about and ranked based on their mysterious powers and their offensive and defensive abilities . Some are incapable of battling and can be easily defeated but that doesn't make them weak, in fact, those that have non-oriented battle powers are more sought for and revered .

However, if we were to rank them based on their battle strength then the first one is definitely the Headless Soldier, who has an ability that can infinitely strengthen him as long as he fights .

The Queen Arachne, Spectral Bone Ghost, and the Monkey King tie for the second place . As for the third place, it's taken by Radolf and Midolf, who are often regarded as one entity as they are always together .

Fourth place is Fire Phoenix, followed by the Ice Phoenix, the Black Kraken, the One-eyed Flamingo, the Rainbow Qirin, then at last place, it's the Frog of Destiny .

Chapter 659: 659

"Monkey, what are you doing here?" Questioned Zaaarae as she looked at two silhouettes coming from the same direction Sun Wukong flew from .

"Nothing special, my dear Empress! I was invited as an honorary adviser for the current king . "

"Oh?"

Zaaarae nodded her head then looked at the two men who appeared right behind the mythical being . One was wearing a full set of brown armor and was holding a greatsword in his hand, his piercing eyes sizing her up and the rest . The other one was wearing a robe and an unusually long black and pointy hat .

"Venerable one, did something happen?"

The man in thick armor politely asked the monkey king, his gaze never leaving Zaaarae, who was the only one he couldn't see through .

"I came to greet the Empress . " He glanced at the two men and snorted .

"Behave respectfully before her!"

"T-the Empress?"

The two were surprised by the monkey's sudden shift in attitude . He was usually arrogant and never bowed to anyone but he's behaving like an obedient puppy, making them question the reality of the current event .

"We have business with the master of the Fallen God Clan, lead us to him . "

It was actually Arthur who talked, his eyes assessing the two men then the mythical being, who couldn't be appraised, as expected .

"Sect master? Who are yo-"

The armor-wearing army commander, named Tuili, was interrupted by Sun Wukong, who also didn't like how Arthur spoke so casually in Zaarae's presence . He raised his aura and was about to do something only to be smacked by Zaarae again, she coldly glared at him and warned .

"This man is my husband! His words are higher than mine . "

She seriously declared, confusing the oblivious men from the kingdom but astonishing the monkey king, who's face twisted in surprise and hidden anger . He loved Zaarae since the day he met her but he has always been rejected and now, she appears in front of him with a man she claims is her husband!

In the end, he managed to hold himself and bowed his head, not daring to act recklessly . His golden pupils were inspecting Arthur but the parasite didn't seem that special or strong, at least not enough to stand toe to toe with Zaarae .

"Kass Boler, you know him, right? He sent me here to deliver a Zen Treasure and I am to deliver it only to his grandson . Lead the way . "

Arthur briefly explained the reason behind his visit, however, Tuili didn't outright believe him, though he didn't rudely retort either . He turned to Sun Wukong for help only to see him nodding his head, signaling for him to comply .

Although he still felt skeptical, both the commander and the mage led Arthur and his group directly toward a massive royal castle made of golden sand situated at the center of the capital city, which looked like a real maze filled with millions of people .

Under two minutes of moderate flight, they reached the majestic sandcastle, where they were welcomed by no less than a hundred well-trained soldiers . They were royal guards and even one of them was able to fight against a cultivator at the God Realm, they were the pride of the kingdom and its strongest strength, excluding the protectors .

As they saw the commander return safely, the soldiers relaxed but didn't disperse as strangers appeared . Tuili waved his hand, dismissing them, before guiding Arthur, Zaarae, Fariya, the mythical beings, and Shen Shen inside the castle . As for Esco and Vyncent, they remained aboard the silver spirit boat .

"Woah!"

Shen Shen was fascinated by the place, which was decorated using the finest and most expensive material . It has to be said that this castle was a unique piece of art, unlike anything Arthur had ever seen . Even Isadore's castle back in Green-Leaf paled in comparison to this structure made of golden sand . The ground was made of countless white cubic plates, exquisite and engraved with different things, sometimes a mountain or even a lion's head .

Soon, they reached a tightly protected room, which was where the current king was hiding . Sun Wukong's sudden departure alarmed everyone, including the king, who chose to hide until the danger is gone .

Arthur and the rest patiently waited as Tuili entered the small room and brought the king, who controlled his shaking body and tried to look domineering as he faced the strangers .

"This king greets the honorable guests . "

His gaze shifted across everyone, stopping on Fariya for five full seconds, his lustful gaze unable to be hidden . A wide smile was plastered on his young face, he was only twenty years old but he was purposely appointed as a king because his father, the current sect master of the Fallen God Clan, was no longer interested in running the kingdom and he also wanted his son to learn how to rule a nation and prosper it .

As Arthur didn't speak, neither the succubus nor Shen Shen opened their mouths . The Parasite looked at Tuili and said,

"I said I wanted to meet the clan master, not a king . "

"Honorable guest, my father is absorbing the stars and is unable to come out . If the matter is urgent, you can still talk to me . "

From the way Tuili treated the guests and when he saw the monkey king stand by the side without interfering, King Craus didn't behave angrily or rudely but deep inside, he didn't like how these people barged in his castle, uninvited and demanding to meet his esteemed father .

"No, I don't need you . "

Arthur shook his head and retorted .

"If that's the case, why don't you stay at this king's humble castle until my father finishes . I'll prepare a banquet to welcome your arrival . "

The Parasite turned around and headed outside of the castle, leaving those words behind,

"Just notify me when he's out . Don't expect me to wait for long . "

To begin with, he wasn't in a hurry and he was interested in exploring this ancient city . As long as the sect master doesn't take long, he doesn't mind waiting . Shen Shen and Fariya followed Arthur but Zaaarae remained, though Arthur didn't ask her to follow him, figuring that she has some business to attend to .

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"My king, should I send people to monitor them?"

Tuili knelt before Craus and asked but the latter shook his head and coldly replied,

"No, didn't you see the two youths? They were mythical beings!"

Craus was young but more knowledgeable than the commander . As they had Sun Wukong 'advising' him, he was naturally aware of the other mythical beings and how they look in their humanoid forms .

"If possible then go notify my father . "

"Yes, my king . "

Tuili left shortly after, leaving only the very quiet mage with a pointy hat with the king .

"Anything I should take note of?"

The mage caressed the short golden wand on his waist and calmly answered,

"The man and succubus are stronger than me but weaker than the venerable one . I couldn't gauge the woman's strength but from the way the venerable one acted, she should be of an even higher than he is . "

"Higher than him? The only ones who are above mythical beings are..."

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"Yes, the Twelve and the dragons . I speculate that she's the Parasite Empress, Zaarae . I once read that the venerable one is infatuated with her and has been courting her for a long time, which explains his previous behavior and his obedience . "

"I see . "

King Craus felt conflicted and unable to come up with a good decision . After spending a few minutes pondering, he turned around and left, heading toward the sacred grounds of the Fallen God Clan to pray .

"Speak, why are you here?"

Zaarae was sitting in front of Sun Wukong, who respectfully stood before her, his eyes wandering across her body .

"Empress, the kingdom hired me as an adviser but it's only a cover . Recently, there has been a thief roaming the kingdom and stealing all kinds of priceless treasures . The king is worried that the thief will infiltrate the castle and enter the treasury . "

Hearing this, Zaarae frowned . "A thief? Really?"

"Yes, Empress . He's not a normal thief . "

"I can tell that he's not an ordinary thief but I didn't sense anything unusual inside the city, he's not here, at least . So, you were goofing around instead of catching him?"

Embarrassed, the monkey king scratched the back of his head and replied .

"Empress, a-actually, I've met with him but was unable to do anything . He's deceptive and is as fast as that flamingo!"

"Interesting . To think there is an existence that can even escape from you . Was he human?"

"I don't know . He looked like a human but it could have been a fake appearance . He's basically looted all the treasuries of the kingdom's large cities so his next target should be the royal treasury . "

The woman snickered and said, "Heh, even if he's good, it would take a remarkable skill to enter the royal treasury . "

Chapter 660: 660

"Arthur, this place is awesome!"

Shen Shen was looking at every shop and food stall, barely able to hold herself . She was holding Arthur's hand as they walked around shopping district and sightseeing . Arthur didn't force Esco and Vyncent to accompany him but Fariya stuck close to him, claiming that wherever her master goes, she follows .

Her outfit garnered a lot of attention so she was ordered by Arthur to change into a more respectable clothes, which she did, in the end . The succubus was now wearing a flamboyant green dress, which wasn't as revealing as her original clothes but still pulled the gazes of almost every men, causing the parasite quite the head-ache .

Fariya wasn't a heavenly beauty but her charm caused by her race naturally grabbed the attention of every male around them .

"Are you sure you want to go?" Asked the red-haired Esco . Vyncent was his only friend in here and it didn't seem like he'll be able to go convince him to stay .

He could go with him but he was weak and can't protect himself out there, furthermore, he can't hope to always count on Vyncent .

"I can't linger here forever . There's a time and place for separation and I think it's here and now . "

Vyncent kindly smiled at the criminal, patted his shoulder, and jumped off the silver Spirit Boat . The flying ship was still outside of Ramel City and its only passenger was Esco, who obediently remained aboard and patiently waited for Arthur and the rest to come back . He trusted his instincts and knew that sticking with the parasite would him to the best outcome and guarantee his safety .

Fortunately, no one was foolish enough to attack the massive silver Spirit Boat and its interior was able to accommodate the red-haired man, who was extremely bored now that he has no one to talk to .

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Vyncent safely landed on the golden sands, his long brown robe fluttering in the wind as he took a deep breath and looked at the sky-piercing black gate hundreds of meters away . After an inordinate amount of time, a sigh escaped his lips as he took out the grey coin, which was a corrupted Zen Treasure . It was giving off an ominous black light, pulsating like a real heart . The black light entered his body and seemed to be telling him to head South, wanting him to reach a certain place .

The blondie didn't have a clear destination in mind to he listened to the coin's wishes, his body melted into the sounds as he used his secret technique . With incredible speed, the unseen Vyncent departed from the entrance of the capital city, his presence soon disappearing from the vicinities .

"Arthur..."

Shen Shen timidly pulled Arthur's sleeve, her eyes were looking at a pitiful figure standing at the side of the road . It was a sun-weathered elder wearing dirty clothes, his face suffering from the vicissitudes of

times, his eyes half-open as he hand was stretched, his palm opened as he silently begged anyone who passed by .

"It's no use taking pity on any beggar you see . "

Arthur shook his head, unwilling to do anything . Unlike her, he had seen this sight everywhere, even on Earth and, from his point of view, helping one would only lead you to help another, which will make you fall into a never-ending cycle .

"But..."

The girl's expression turned into a sad one as she refused to give up . Her puppy-like eyes looked back at Arthur, making him let out a long sigh as he pulled her hand and walked to the elderly beggar .

"This is the first and last time, okay?"

Unbeknownst to him, the girl was a newborn and it's the first time she saw such a sight . She was far too innocent and could not ignore the old man, who was thinner than a stick and appeared dead on the outside, were it not for half-open eyes .

Arthur stopped in front of the beggar, crouched down, and put a gold coin in the latter's palm, causing him to flinch . The old man smiled and bowed his head but didn't say anything . Shen Shen was relieved but Arthur didn't feel any emotion, he stood back up and left the area along with the little girl and the slave .

...

"How much is it?"

Pointing a beautiful swaying blue flower . It wasn't for him but for Shen Shen, who wanted it to buy it but had no money on her .

"3 silver coins, sir . "

Arthur didn't care about the price, he was about to retrieve the money from his storage only to feel nothing . He was shocked as he looked at his middle finger but didn't see the storage ring .

'I've been robbed!'

He looked around and stretched his sense but found nothing suspicious . Arthur's face twisted in anger as he remembered the sun-weathered old man, the very fact that he has been robbed and only discovered it now infuriated him even more .

Even if the ring was taken, he should have noticed it almost immediately but it wasn't the case .

"What's wrong?"

Shen Shen asked him but Arthur just wryly smiled . He turned to Fariya and said,

"Buy it for me . "

The succubus sweetly smiled and bought the flower before presenting it directly to Shen Shen, who put it on her hair and giggled .

"Take care of Shen Shen for a moment . "

Right after saying that, Arthur vanished from Fariya's sight . He was like a ghost as his figure instantly appeared where the beggar was but he found the place empty .

"That mother fuck-"

He held back his curse and looked at everyone around him, his eye emitting a blue luster .

Unfortunately, the people were normal and harmless, which means that the thief had long since fled the scene .

'How come I didn't notice a thing?'

His awareness was higher even than Exalted Gods . Moreover, if the beggar was really a thief then his eye should have warned him, it was truly weird .

After a minute or so passed, Arthur harrumphed and muttered .

"Let's see whether you can escape or not!"

Invisible and small snakes came out of his sleeves and dispersed, each taking a direction, some even drilling into the sandy ground or passing through the walls .