

## Once Human 731

### Chapter 731 - Demon and Holy

As expected of the last trial of the competition, the stage was grandiose and, unlike the other trials, it wasn't happening in a separate dimension or miniature world.

An intense tremor spread from the plateau, causing the crowd to momentarily panic. Thankfully, Gutcha calmed them down and explained that this strange occurrence was because the last stage is surfacing.

Slowly but surely, part of the plateau rose into the air, much to everyone's astonishment. Even Isadore sat there, agape, as a huge chunk of the plateau hovered toward the canopy. It seemed to be magically changing its form, transforming into a massive floating island, circular and protected by a rainbow-colored defensive formation.

"You really did your best, huh." Isadore Malfront glanced at Arthur and nodded his head. He couldn't help but admire the myriad and miraculous things the parasite was able to do.

Then again, such feats are not that surprising, especially to those who knew Arthur really well. After all, he had possessed hundreds of thousands of lifeforms and the number of skills he has in his arsenal is simply staggering. Yes, a while ago, a bunch of his skills fused together for better efficiency, but, ever since, he possessed even more corpses and living beings, which made him gain dozens of skills at a time.

From anyone's point of view, creating this plateau or the other dimension might seem hard, though- in truth- it was not. It does consume a lot of Mental Power and Nether Energy but it's definitely worth it.

With the help of his special 'Creation' stat, along with the high proficiency in Spatial Magic, and dozens of miscellaneous skills, Arthur was able to create a separate dimension and fill it with a bunch of things, like reanimated monsters or small pieces of lands.

The widescreen displaying the last stage was in full view, showcasing the whole floating island and the remaining teams, which were as baffled as everyone else.

Gutcha was grinning from one ear to the other, clearly enjoying the exaggerated reactions of some of the participants.

"Get ready!" The pigolo loudly shouted, snapping the youngsters out of their daze and garnering their full attention.

"The individual fights are randomized. Which means that even if you fought the first fight, there is a chance you'll fight in the second one too.

I will briefly repeat the rules. One victory equals 50 points, defeat can also gain you points based on your performance. Three losses and you're out. Is that clear?"

Most of them nodded their heads, while the rest raised their eyebrows and looked questioningly at the hideous host.

"Let's begin!" He added excitedly, his hand fishing out a strange white cube from an oversized back pocket.

The cube flew from the pigolo's hand and rapidly spun before shooting a subtle light that transformed into flashing letters.

\*Leo from the Holy Dominion Team versus Marjory from the Demon Team.\*

As they saw their names flashing brightly, the golden-haired youth 'Leo' and Marjory were instantly teleported to the middle of the stage.

The battling arena wasn't as grandiose but it was big enough for them to fly around and use their strongest techniques and spells. Furthermore, it was protected by a strong defensive formation, which assured the safety of the crowd watching from below.

"This calls for more bets, what do you think, Arthur?"

Isadore cackled, his eyes darting toward the parasite, trying to place a bet for the second time. Although he lost the first one, he still has not given up and wanted to showcase his superior sense of judgment.

"Bets? I don't mind. What do you want to bet on?"

"The participants, of course. Each fight, you and I will choose a participant and if he or she wins, one of us will have to pay the other."

"That's straight out gambling, Your Majesty."

"All bets are gambling."

"No, they are not. Look, even your Guardian doesn't like this idea of yours."

Isadore half-heartedly glanced at the usually nonchalant Dan, who was frowning and, very subtly, shaking his hand toward the King.

"Are you in or out?" Isadore was very persistent.

It's no secret that Arthur was vastly wealthy, much more than Isadore, who was the king of the biggest Middle-Realm in the Cloud Sea Universe.

Before dying, Zodiac was generous enough to leave all of his possessions in his unique storage ring. Arthur had mountains of gold and an astronomical amount of Spirit Stones, and that's while excluding all the treasures and artifacts he kept for his personal use. Even without Zodiac's riches, Arthur was wealthy nevertheless.

He had looted many storage rings and high-graded gear from the people he found dead or killed... if you amass all of that together, it easily makes him one of the richest people in this universe. Furthermore, he rarely spends things on gear and such, which is why his wealth unceasingly increases.

"Of course I'm in."

Right after he responded, Lucy- just like Dan- gave Arthur a strange look coupled with a visible warning, which he pretended not to see. He averted his eyes, looking at the young blonde-haired king, a faint smile plastering on his face.

"Each round, one of us will get to choose first, yes?"

"Why, yes! Fairness is my motto."

"Okay, then. You choose first."

"I'll bet 5,000 High Red Spirit Stones on Leo."

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"Sure."

Arthur didn't seem bothered, he directed his gaze to the huge screen and began watching the fight, which had just begun.

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Marjory's fighting style was different from her junior, Cosima. The demon girl used debuff and curses to hinder her opponent, then she would strengthen her body.

Leo, on the other hand, was the aggressive and explosive type, which didn't suit his calm countenance.

Just as Gutcha signaled the beginning of the fight, the young man shot at Marjory, brandishing two one-handed golden swords, both coated with thick sword essence.

He reached his target within a couple of breaths, crossing his swords in front of him and unleashing a devastating torrent of golden slashes.

In retaliation, Marjory moved her hands mysteriously, writing a purple runic symbol before slowly pushing it forward. The symbol burst with intertwining violent threads of energy, clashing with Leo's slashes and blocking them with ease.

Unfortunately, Marjory didn't expect Leo to suddenly teleport to her side and unleash the same attack without any kind of prior preparation.

The girl was blown hundreds of meters away, a bloody wound could be seen on the left side of her abdomen and on her shoulder. Even with such a severe wound, Marjory swiftly jumped back on her feet and drew more symbols, larger and brighter ones. The symbols orderly lined themselves before abruptly vanishing, much to Leo's confusion.

The young man was charging at her for the second time before was forced to halt his steps and jump back. Alas, he was a tad too late as the curse reached him in a split second and injured him. He didn't know what exactly happened but an excruciating pain assaulted his internal organs, causing him to puke blood and kneel on the ground.

His head was still lifted, eyes locked onto Marjory, but he was unable to defend himself as the girl was already upon him, her legs sweeping horizontally.

She sent him flying like a kite, and before he stabilized himself and counterattacked, she appeared before him like a ghost, her hand tightly holding his ankle and then brutally slamming his body on the ground.

He let out a groan of pain, his hand waving the two swords and shooting Holy Magic, though it was all in vain. Marjory was more than prepared this time, applying another curse that greatly slowed his movement, rendering his attacks practically useless.

For the next fifteen seconds, Leo was thoroughly thrashed by the demon girl. His body was flattened on the ground and he lost hold of one of his swords, his body becoming a bloody mess.

Yet, surprisingly, he was still conscious and capable of retaliation, more or less.

"It's all due to that Dark Magic formation!"

Melissa, the woman accompanying Cardinal Patrick, gritted her teeth and glared at the spheric black-ish formation enveloping the whole city. The dense amount of Dark Magic lingering in the air was greatly affecting Leo, who specializes in Holy Magic.

Although Holy Magic was supposed to be the bane of Dark Magic, it wasn't the case this time. There was just too much Dark Magic for Leo to handle, and its sinister effects were indirect, it nonetheless hindered his Holy Spells and significantly decreased his physical prowess. In fact, the longer he's subjected to Dark Magic, the weaker he becomes. Such a consequence applied not only to Leo and Veia but also the cardinal and Melissa, but the latter two had much higher cultivation so they came somewhat resist it.

## **Chapter 732 Genesis Imoogi**

The battle between Marjory of the Demon Team and Leo of the Holy Dominion/Church Team was still underway, however, the outcome was quite apparent. The handsome blonde-haired youngster was getting one-sidedly beaten. He looked absolutely miserable, his body riddled with wounds and one of his swords was lost.

The beginning of the fight wasn't so bad, for him and the excited crowd. However, it suddenly took a surprising turn when Marjory strengthened her body and engaged in close-ranged combat.

Actually, Leo was more focused on melee too but he wasn't on Marjory's level, sadly for him. He was thrashed in front of thousands of people but what angered him and embarrassed him the most was the Cardinal Patrick was also watching.

Leo looked up to the Cardinal and wished to become his disciple, which was one of the motives for his participation. Alas, his future was looking grim and even though he managed to remain conscious, he couldn't fight back against the demon girl.

Marjory excelled in debuffing and hindering her enemies, at least that's what the crowd thought till now. So far, she supported her junior, Cosima, and didn't reveal her true prowess. Her ability to hide her trump cards up until this point was certainly commendable.

Even Arthur, who had bet on her, was slightly surprised. King Isadore Malfront, on the other hand, was cringing in his seat, his hands balled and his expression grave. He kept glancing at Arthur but that only made him irritated by the latter's wide grin, which seemed to be indirectly mocking him.

Two minutes later, Marjory finally stopped flinging poor Leo's body left and right. When she let go of his body, he limply laid on the ground, groaning and spitting dirt and blood.

Although he did try to stand up, Gutcha appeared and loudly declared the winner of the first battle. Sure enough, Leo tried to protest and say that he still could continue but he was ignored.

Put simply, the young man's body was wrecked and even if he managed to stand up, there was no way he would win against Marjory.

The demon girl was expressionless, she nodded her head to the host before getting teleported outside of the arena.

"Alright! The next fight will be.... Sansal From the Imoogi Team Versus Bora from the MoonStar Team."

The two participants soon appeared on the stage, one was looking a bit anxious and the other was brimming with confidence.

The Imoogi race was said to be a descendant of the majesty Dragon Race. There were many variations of the Imoogi Race but the most frightening was the humanoid type, also known as Genesis Imoogi Race.

The youngsters belonging to the Imoogi Race were all part of the aforementioned race. Not only were they equipped with an outrageously strong physique but they also can master Magic easily. They were born with enough talent and power to reach the Exalted God Realm much earlier than their prodigious peers.

In fact, the youngest Exalted God that ever existed had been a Genesis Imoogi, but that record was recently seized by none other than Lucy MoonStar.

"Get ready!"

Gutcha raised his hand and looked at the two of them, both of which changed into a fighting stance. Bora readied an arrow and already pulled the elastic and soft string of his bow, whereas Sansal crouched down and put his hand on the ground.

After a couple of seconds of intense staring, the pigolo signaled the start. Bora immediately shot an arrow at the young Imoogi, but it struck nothing but air.

The one thing that archers must never do was lose sight of their target, and that's exactly what Bora tried to do. Just as he shot the arrow, Sansal literally disappeared, he charged at him like a cannonball.

Bora performed a long backjump, just in time to dodge the incoming imoogi. As he was in mid-air, he pointed the arrow to the sky and fired dozens of arrows made of an orange light.

A rain of arrows cascaded on the imoogi but, again, none of them hit him. Sansal didn't hesitate to use Magic and deflect all the energy arrows. A strong wind wave was invoked, dispersing the projectiles as well as blowing Bora to the side.

As he fell on the ground, Bora somehow managed to shoot an enormous silver arrow which managed to slow down the imoogi and push it to the back, though it dealt no substantial damage.

The several seconds bought by that shot allowed Bora to summon his unique Godspirit... A Godspirit that was actually capable of changing forms, and in each form had its special effects on both the opponent and the user.

A gorgeous horned deer landed next to Bora; The spiritual animal was made of hazy green light and though it didn't emit any pressure, it still did something that disturbed and astonished Sansal.

With the Godspirit, Sansal didn't dare get close to his enemy, at least not before he figured out what the deer actually did.

A gentle light enveloped Bora, alleviating the pain and healing the superficial wounds. On top of that, his longbow's attack power and his attack speed were significantly boosted. Then again, the details of the Godspirit's effects were only visible to Lucy and Arthur, who were the only ones that can use an advanced version of the Appraisal skill.

With the buff in full effect, Bora started shooting arrows like crazy. His blurry hands seemed to be moving slowly as one arrow after the other was shot at Sansal.

The young Imoogi couldn't even get close to Bora. He tried his best to dodge the projectiles but he still got hit continuously, thus he was getting blown farther and farther away from Bora.

When the distance was deemed appropriate, Bora's Godspirit changed into a small arrow which he snatched from mid-air and shot at the target. However, instead of flying at the Imoogi, it literally struck his c.h.e.s.t instantaneously as if it teleported.

Blood gushed from Sansal's c.h.e.s.t but he didn't cry or react in any way. Instead, he summoned the unstoppable gale and coupled it with a simple punch he performed from such a long distance.

The clash between the magma and the arrows was brief and, surprisingly, Bora's arrows were able to emerge victorious, but they couldn't reach Sansal.

### **Chapter 733 - Thunderbolt**

The battle was reaching its climax as both opponents were going all out. Bora was performing rapid and impressive leaps from one spot to the other while shooting high-velocity arrows that whistled in the air. Meanwhile, Sansal was maintaining the use of his strong Wind and Magma Magic, fusing the spells to hinder the archer and possibly immobilize him.

In contrast to his relatively unscathed opponent, the young Genesis Imoogi was bleeding profusely. The wound he had sustained in his c.h.e.s.t was serious enough to stiffen his movements and slow him down.

This final trial did not prohibit flight when fighting an opponent, however, most participants would remain in the ground for many reasons. Firstly, their bodies are more stabilized, especially in Bora's case as he was an archer. Secondly, while in mid-air, one would be an easy-target, easier than when you're

sticking to the ground. Last but not least, flying in this arena, which was decently big, was limited, rendering the participants unwilling to rise in the air.

"The kid has an impressive control over Wind Magic."

Isadore Malfront nodded his head continuously, seemingly approving of Sansal. He cast a cursory glance at the parasite, silently seeking his opinion, but the answer he received was nothing but silence, at least for an indeterminate while.

"It's nothing special."

Unexpectedly, it was Lucy who commented on Isadore's remark. She stared at Sansal for a couple of seconds before redirecting her gaze toward the rapidly-moving Bora.

"By the way, who do you think will win? Or will you side with your student?"

"The winner of the battle is obvious, don't you think, Your Majesty?"

"I don't know about that. Sansal might be injured but he's still a Genesis Imoogi and he has yet to trans-"

The young king could not even finish his sentence, he just sat there, gawking at the large screen. The battle came to an abrupt end as Sansal raised his hand and forfeited, much to everyone's surprise.

"Isn't this too soon?"

Isadore frantically turned his head, trying to see someone who might agree with him. He was the only one who genuinely thought that Sansal stood a chance after sustaining such grave wounds.

Gutcha appeared in-between the two participants and loudly declared the winner before he transported them outside the arena.

Excluding Arthur, Lucy, a few other people, the rest were shocked to see the brief battle and its astonishing result. While it could not be denied that Bora was a talented youngster who excels at archery, none could predict that he'd be able to defeat his opponent with ease.

Actually, by the time the fight ended, he still had Nether Energy to spare and his body was but slightly injured.

The third battle of the last Trial had begun not long after Bora's victory. Holand from the Dark Blaze Team versus Cosima From the Demon Team.

Unlike the previous fight, this one lasted no less than forty minutes, and by its end, both participants were too exhausted to remain standing.

"I like him."

"Ah?"

Isadore turned and looked at the parasite, confused by his words.

"That kid... Holand. He's a hidden gem."

"Does that mean you want to recruit him?"

"..."

Arthur did not give an immediate reply, he cast his gaze toward Rasnod and his group. The Dark Blaze Sect was still aiming for Bora and Cristina so a clash was inevitable. Apart from the eccentric and weirdly-dressed Grand Elder, no one else was threatening to Arthur or the MoonStar Sect as a whole.

After spectating the fight between Holand and Cosima, Arthur was truly surprised. He didn't expect the silent and gloomy black-haired youth to reach the last Trial, much less defeat the demon girl.

He suffered a grievous wound to both his hands but he won, and that's what mattered. The spells and martial techniques he used were average but mastered to perfection. He wasn't strong in terms of cultivation, purity of Nether Energy, or even the arsenal of techniques in his possession. No, what kept him going was sheer will and unmatched resolve to win, and, for Arthur, that was worthy of praise.

It's a shame that he belonged to the Dark Blaze Sect and was even the son of its Patriarch. That made it difficult, if not impossible, to try and rope him into the MoonStar Sect.

Holand may not win the tournament but he was the black horse no one expected. His achievements over the course of the last couple of days will definitely make him famous throughout the Cloud Sea Universe. Subsequently, the Dark Blaze Sect will be positively affected too, but only if it isn't destroyed before that happens.

Gutcha brought Holland's aunt, who tended to him, providing him with healing elixirs and recovery pills. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough to completely heal his hands, nevertheless, the young man vehemently refused to forfeit.

He stubbornly glared back at his pleading aunt and slowly stood up, scanning the two participants that were about to battle.

The fourth battle was between Veia from the Holy Dominion Team and Rosea from the MoonStar Team.

The two girls walked to the center of the stage and faced each other, one wore light golden armor while the other had a pink-ish white attire that offered no defense.

Rosea stood confidently, a chilling aura revolving around her body. Meanwhile, Veia was serene and 'holy', her hands clutching a wrapped around her elbow and an unusually thin sword that looked like a needle or a spike.

"Ready?"

Gutcha raised his hand, looked at the two girls, then with a swift motion, signaled the beginning of the fight.

Block of pink ice appeared all around Rosea, just in time to slow down Veia. The slim and tall girl had her long golden hair tied into a pony-tail, her whole demeanor dramatically changed as she shot toward her opponent like a bolt of lightning.

The princess took flight and fired dozens of icicles at Veia, however, all of them were destroyed in the blink of an eye.



All Veia did was elbow the air, sending an explosive shock wave which got rid of the projectiles and even blew Rosea higher in the air.

Before she could stabilize herself and retaliate, Rosea was suddenly hit by a thick golden thunderbolt.

Veia was clasp the sword close to her chest, positioned vertically with its sharp tip pointing toward the ground. She was mumbling inaudible words, which resulted in that unstoppable thunderbolt.

The crowd cheered loudly as Rosea's figure fell on the ground, almost the entirety of her attire was charred.

She laid on the ground, unmoving for a couple of seconds. Veia charged at her again but before she could reach her, a mass of darkness surged from thin air and locked her in place.

The pigolo host appeared close to Rosea, looked shocked with a deep frown on his face. After a long couple of seconds in total silence, he turned to Veia and said,

"Rosea from the MoonStar team is unconscious. You win."

Veia silently nodded her head and sheathed her sword, though her body was still immobilized by Dark Magic.

"W-well..."

Isadore nervously looked at Arthur, expecting to see him angry or shocked, but it didn't seem to be the case. Both he and his wife sat on their respective seats, looking unperturbed as if they expected such an outcome.

## **Chapter 734 - Clash of Swords**

"Are you okay?"

Not long after her fight, Rosea sluggishly woke up only to see Arthur looking right back at her. Her body, which was wrecked by Veia's attack, was almost healed to full thanks to her teacher's Life Energy. Some of the more serious internal injuries would need a day or two to heal due to the lingering Holy Magic inside, but it was of no consequence.

When the princess woke up from her brief 'nap,' she didn't ask any questions regarding her battle. She sat there, half-dazed and half-disappointed. She had great confidence in her unique ice ability, however, she wasn't able to properly gauge her opponent's strength, therefore getting knocked up very early on.

Nonetheless, neither Lucy nor Arthur were mad at her. The parasite helped her stand up while his wife patted her on the back and said a couple of comforting words, which she didn't seem to hear.

Losing was so humiliating, especially for a proud girl like Rosea, but losing so quickly and like that was even more of an embarrassment. Even as she was led to the VIP box and sat next to Cristina, the princess, who processed what had happened, could not accept it.

Reality had hit her hard and she felt like all her painstaking training over the last couple of weeks was for nothing. Even though losing doesn't mean she was disqualified, Arthur and Lucy took it upon themselves to get her out of the competition, for her own good, of course.

It was crystal clear that she wasn't in a position to fight again, no after such a devastating loss, and even she knew that which was why she did not protest.

So far, two participants were disqualified from the last trial. The first was Sandal, who, despite protesting, was pulled away by his guardian due to the grievous injuries he sustained against Bora. The young Genesis Imoogi was still in a condition to fight, however, he could not force his opinion on his worried guardian.

The second was Rosea, whose defeat mentally scarred her, thus rendering her unfit to continue. All in all, nine participants remains; Leo and Veia from the Holy Dominion Team, Cosima and Marjory from the Demon Team, Ardor and Bora from the MoonStar Team, Holand from the Dark Blaze Team, Eirz and Luke from the Imoogi Team.

The next fight was between Eirz, the youngest Imoogi in his team, and Ardor, the sword-wielding youth from the MoonStar Team.

The two youngsters appeared on stage, both were sword-users, though their stance and aura were dramatically different.

Ardor was calm, his aura bringing serenity and clarity... in more than a way, it resembled Arthur's Ethereal State. On the other hand, Luke's aura, which was mainly emanating from his thin jet black sword, was more brutal and violent.

With Gutcha's signal, the two participants charged at each other, black and milky white sword essences sprung in the air and clashed against each other. Their swords didn't collide, they stopped inches away from each other, one enveloped in translucently white energy whereas the other was bursting with sharp needle-like black light.

They didn't taunt each other, they let their swords do the talking. The loud cheering sound from the crowd or the screeching sound of colliding sword essences wasn't heard by either of the two young men. They were so engrossed in their fight, dancing around and performing impressive yet no flashy sword skills.

Luke and Ardor were enjoying this, more than they should have, actually. They jumped around, unleashing one technique after the other, flew in the air and clashed against each other hundreds of times.

It may have been boring for those who did not understand what they were doing, but for fanatical sword-users, it was truly a spectacle to behold. Neither of them deigned to summon their gods spirits, they just relied on their skills and physical bodies... not even Nether Energy was wasted on blinding long-ranged spells.

Put simply, it was a twenty-minute long sword dance, in which both of them were injured multiple times but none dropped their swords or backed away.

Even up until the last second, Luke never used the unique abilities of his race, and Ardor refrained from summoning his Godspirit, which would have definitely put him at a great advantage.

In the end, Ardor won the fight, though it was a very close one. The two participants supported themselves with their swords and stared at each other, both happily and uncaring about the result of

the battle. Win or lose, it did not matter to them for they had gained much by battling each other and learning subtle but useful things.

With the battle won, Ardor, just like Bora, gained 50 points, which put them at a big advantage compared to other teams. The only person who has yet to fight was Eirz from the Imoogi Team, but it was because the number of remaining participants was uneven to begin with. Nonetheless, the youth would be given a chance to battle one random person.

Since there was a slim chance he could be chosen to fight again, Gutcha allowed Ardor to rest and recuperate for a couple of minutes.

So far, the Holy Dominion Team and the Demon Team won one fight each. The MoonStar team won two fights, The Dark Blaze Team won one fight, and the Imoogi Team lost two fights.

However, there were more fights to come and being in the lead right now doesn't necessarily mean it's their win.

...

Fortunately, Ardor wasn't picked to fight Eirz, that job fell to Cosima, who was itching to prove herself after her unexpected loss against Holand.

Suffice to say, the young demon girl did indeed prove her real prowess by absolutely and one-sidedly defeating the youngest Eirz.

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Eirz excelled at speedy attack, however, it didn't work against Cosima, who was equipped with an impressive physical and magical strength. Eventually, the fight, which lasted merely five minutes, ended with Cosima's victory, thus allowing her to increase her team's overall points by fifty.

### **Chapter 735 - Energy Transfusion**

The girl's eyes fluttered and body twitched for a moment. She let out a soft groan and slowly moved her stiff arms to sit up.

"How are you feeling?"

A soothing voice echoed inside Shu Ru's head, startling her and sobering her cloudy thoughts. She turned her head to the source of the voice only to see several people looking back at her.

All of them were familiar faces, beginning for Arthur and Lucy to Cristina and the downcast Rosea. Bora and Ardor were still competing whereas Ho Qing retreated to his personal room to cultivate. In fact, he had not been seen ever since he secluded himself, but since Arthur gave his approval, no one, not even the objecting Cristina, raised a complaint.

"Only a bit dizzy."

The girl shook her head and cracked a faint smile, feeling embarrassed to be the center of everyone's attention.

"You need to rest for a bit more."

Lucy held the girl's hand and reassured her with a simple nod, to which Shu Ru lowered her head and bit her lips.

"There is no need to feel down. Our team reached the final and you did a great job, all three of you."

Arthur's compliment, which was a rare thing to hear, made Shu Ru hesitantly raise her head back again and gaze right into his eyes.

"Thank you, teacher."

Stoic-faced, Cristina wryly smiled and spoke a couple of words, however, both Rosea and Shu Ru maintained their silence, one was ashamed and the other guilty.

The atmosphere was turning a little awkward so both Arthur and Lucy left the infirmary. Although they had become friends only recently, the three girls were still capable of comforting each other and overcoming their mental hurdles.

"You remember our bet, yes?"

"Yes, and before you tell me, I already know that the Holy Dominion Team is leading."

"Oh... how?"

Arthur chuckled as he sat down, "Just because I did not see it doesn't mean I don't know what happened. If anything happens within the city, I'll be the first to know."

"Well, whatever... I had placed a bet on the Buddha Team and the Holy Dominion Team."

"Yes, there's no need to repeat everything, Your Majesty."

"Oh, then look!"

He pointed at the large screen, precisely at the bench specific to Veia and Leo. The quiet girl was currently meditating, but what was surprising was her blinding Holy Aura and her abnormally-increasing Cultivation.

"No rules disqualify a participant that breaks through mid-trial, right?"

"..."

Instead of replying, Arthur's eyes shifted to Veia. Whatever was happening inside of her body, and despite the great distance separating him from his target, he could see everything. It was unknown what she consumed or what was done to her, however, her cultivation was rising insanely-fast. She leap-frogged from the peak of God Realm to being a Fusion Sovereign, and it did not seem to be stopping.

"Arthur..."

Lucy nudged her husband and motioned at Cardinal Patrick. The white-robed skinny old man was, as usual, sitting in the same spot, motionless but strangely pale-faced.

'It seems to be some sort of temporary Energy Transfusion.'

As to not let other people hear her, she used Telepathy, but she only got a response after half a minute or so.

'I don't know about temporary. It seems to be a permanent thing... The Cardinal is sacrificing his Blood Essence and own vitality to strengthen her. I'm starting to understand their plan... it has become obvious by now.'

'I get what you mean, but what is their motive? Even if Veia reaches a cultivation realm strong enough to allow her to participate in the last two trials, it's not like it'll achieve anything. Moreover, the rewards are not lucrative enough for a Cardinal of the Dominion to sacrifice his Blood Essence.'-Lucy

'Maybe they just want to frighten us?'

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'It could be, but I must say that it's not working. Even if that girl reaches the Exalted God Realm, it won't make a difference.'-Lucy

'It's not about the result but the process of achieving it. They are showing us they can turn youngsters into Overgods and whatnot. Of course, our assumption could be wrong.'

'Hmpf! It better be or else they won't be living this place alive.'

"Is it true?"

Isadore, who was excitedly watching Veia's power-up, frowned and looked at his protector, both surprised and confused.

"She's already a peak Sovereign? Isn't that against the rules?"

"Leave her be."

Arthur's voice silenced Dan, who was about to respond. Even Isadore closed his mouth and look at the parasite, who had a sly grin plastered on his face.

"I really don't like that expression."

"Whatever do you mean, Your Majesty? I thought winning the bet would be a happy occasion for you."

"Yes, but not like this. It has become unfair for the other participants."

"Greetings, I'm Melissa, the High Priest accompanying Cardinal Patrick."

She elegantly bowed toward Lucy and Arthur then patiently and politely waited for a response. After witnessing what happened to Veia and, consequently, the Cardinal, Lucy and Arthur expected someone to come. Their brief yet elaborate telepathic conversation helped them speculate about the Holy Dominion's motive and goals.

"I'm listening."

Arthur did not speak, it was Lucy who stood up and faced Melissa, who maintained a straight posture and resisted the White Specter's bone-chilling aura.

"In regards to one of our participants, Veia. If the hosts do not mind, we would like for her to participate in the last two trials."

Melissa, who prepared a couple of arguments to provoke and convince Lucy and Arthur, was met with an immediate and unexpected response.

"Sure, but you cannot blame us or the other guardians if she gets injured."

"As the spokesman of the Holy Dominion Team, you have my deepest gratitude. I will excuse myself now."

Melissa bowed again then returned back to the Cardinal's side, her face filled with a mix of perplexion and astonishment.

While it was a worrying matter for some, neither Arthur nor Lucy were troubled by the Dominion's actions. No one could threaten them or anyone else as long as they were inside the city... and even outside, they had little chance to do that either.

No one would have expected that Arthur and Lucy would have gotten infinitely stronger since their last public appearance. Lucy had broken through to the Exalted God Realm and had solidified her foundation and honed her destructive spells. Meanwhile, Arthur retrieved Makaze and fused with one of his clones, which had brought him a handful of overpowered skills, such as the ability to control Sand and even the fearsome Telekinesis.

### **Chapter 736 - Third Place**

By the time the process of powering up had ended, Veia's cultivation already reached the middle-stages of the Overgod Realm, but she had yet to complete her Overgod Body. Nonetheless, she had a monstrous quantity of Nether Energy, so much that a constant golden aura was revolving around her body. Quite the opposite of his pupil, Cardinal Patrick looked extremely tired and barely able to lift a finger.

He sat there, breathing heavily and trembling every now and then, his long robe and its cloak did a good job at hiding his pale face but could not mask his turbulent energy and unstable cultivation.

Excluding the fight Veia participated in later on, which ended with her opponent's immediate surrender, the remaining fights were exciting and did not betray the crowd's expectation.

Of course, the Holy Dominion Team took first place even though Leo only one fight and lost four. The second place was actually a tie between the Demon Team and The Moonstar team. To decide who gets to keep the second place, the two teams, after consulting the host of course, agreed on a two versus two fight.

Thus did Ardor and Bora battle against Marjory and her junior Cosima. By far, it was the most entertaining fight as the four participants went all in and actually managed to shatter the supposedly unbreakable arena.

The cheering of the crowd reached its climax when the canopy was filled with blinding white and dark red lights violently clashing against each other. It was a sublime sight for anyone and everyone, and when it ultimately ended, Marjory was the only one on her feet.

When Gutcha appeared and declared the winner, the girl could not hold it any longer and immediately fell unconscious. However, despite losing against the demon girls, Ardor and Bora were in a very good mood, laughing like maniacs as they were being treated by Arthur.

The two of them managed to achieve a breakthrough amidst the fight and, by then, they did not care much about the result of the fight or their team's position in the competition.

Winning or getting first place had been their number one goal, but after personally experiencing what it was like to increase the potency of their techniques and fight different kinds of opponents, they yearned more to get stronger than to win the competition.

"You did well... third place isn't bad."

Arthur smiled at the two youngsters and swiftly treated their wounds. On the other hand, Lucy, who was also smiling, gave the two of them the chills. Her smile was vastly different from her husband's, it was as if she would beat them up in any given second.

"I agree with Arthur but... you will need more training. There were things I taught you that you did not heed of."

A bone-chilling aura spread from her hand and invaded their body and wrapped around their hearts, making them profusely sweat and not dare to laugh any more.

"There will be another long session of training after the competition. Why don't you prepare for that?"

Ardor and Bora did not even reply, frantically nodding their heads and sped off to the distance, ready to inform Cristina and co of their up-coming hell training.

"You did not need to scare them off like that."

Upon hearing the parasite, Lucy let out a soft chuckle and stared back at him, looking particularly pleased with herself.

"Since you've decided to be the sweet teacher, I have to take the role of the strict one. Plus, being scary suits me."

"Oh, really?"

He stretched his hands and jokingly pulled her cheeks while adding

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"You don't look scary, though."

"Iz becwz yu puvvi-"

She couldn't say any coherent words so she tried shaking her head to make him stop but that only made her cheeks get pulled with more strength.

...

"Arthur is talking to the guardians and preparing for the last two trials. Are you all alright?"

Excluding Ho Qing, who was still holed up in his room, Lucy grouped the remaining five and made them sit in front of her. Bora and Ardor seemed to be in a good mood, Cristina looked much better than before, Shu Ru was absent-minded, whereas Rosea still had her head lowered and hands tightly clenched.

"Third place is an amazing achievement considering you've trained for only a week. I'm really proud of you all."

"Thank you, teacher!"

They all replied in unison, though it was clear that some voices were louder and more cheerful than others.

"Now that the compliments are over, let me make a couple of things clear."

Lucy's tone drastically changed, so much that even Rosea had to lift her head and pay attention.

"I will start with Rosea. I'm sure that they spoke to you and tried to lift your spirits, but, as I yet see, it did not work. If one defeat was all that took to crush your determination that your place is not here. Either you stop sulking and start training or you will have to leave, there are no two ways about it. Arthur is too kind to directly tell you this but I will tolerate weak-minded pupils."

The girl opened her mouth, tried to say something, but, in the end, only a long silence left her lips. Lucy wasn't waiting for a response, instead, she shifted her gaze to Bora and Cristina.

"The matter with the Dark Blaze Sect will be solved shortly. You two will stop worrying about them and focus on training... that is not a request but an order. As for Ardor and Cristina, I personally have nothing to say, at least concerning your overall performance, but Arthur did say he wanted to have a private talk with you."

\*\*\*

"To be honest, I expected more of you to participate... oh well, whatever."

Arthur swept his eyes across the eight Guardians who agreed to join the last two trials. Considering how many teams actually joined the competition, the number of guardians willing to participate was relatively low, but it's not like Arthur cared. The last two trials were a bonus, an entertainment for the guardians, who had been spectating so far, and the crowd, which wanted to see real experts fight.

"Please make your acquaintance, sir Arthur."

A green-haired elven beauty took a step closer to Arthur and elegantly bowed, a gentle smile plastered on her snow-white face. The parasite reciprocated with a wry smile and tried to stealthily distance himself from her. For their first meeting, she was acting a bit too friendly, whether it was her expression, her subtle movement, or her sweet and overly-amicable tone.

Unlike her, however, the rest of the guardians were either neutrally silent or giving him a hostile glare, especially the Patriarch of the Dark Blaze Sect.

## **Chapter 737 - The Demon From Hell**



"Please do remember that this is a friendly competition so fatal attacks on already incapacitated opponents is strictly prohibited. Feel free to go all out but... ehm, within the limits, yes?"

Arthur was met with casual nods or silence, which he didn't particularly mind. Most, if not all of the present guardians have lived for a long time so the absence of the excitement emitting from their young pupils is to be expected, more or less.

After adding a few more words and explaining simple things, Arthur left the eight guardians and rejoined with Lucy. She was done talking with Shu Ru, Rosea, and co, and it was finally time for the trial to begin.

Unlike the previous trials, Arthur will take Gutcha's place as a host. If there needs to be an interference mid-trial, Gutcha won't be able to stop the guardians. While it's true that the Pigolo, thanks to the seed of Dark Magic, can compete with Overgods albeit only being a God-Monarch, he still has not enough strength to completely subdue the participating guardians, especially those at the Exalted God Realm.

Including Lucy MoonStar, there were nine guardians who wished to partake in the last trials; Halone, the Ageless Elven Maiden of the Katrisan Grand Forest, Buolong of the Blossom Merchant Company, Veia of the Holy Dominion, Rasnod Ak Dark Blaze Patriarch of the Dark Blaze Sect, Lakandro The Serpentine Patriarch of the Eternal Rouge Sect, Dan of Green-Leaf, Celina, Mother of all Mermaids, and the one of the 72th demons of Hell, The Blood Duke, Xavier Landres.

While not all guardians joined the competitions, those who did were renowned across the multiverse. Whether it's Ageless Elvan Maiden, who was basically like a God to all the Elven Race, or the notorious Blood Duke, who had actually managed to trick Arthur's eyes and fool the system.

Arthur was able to figure out the man's identity only thanks to Isadore, who was fairly knowledgeable about the 72 Demons. Now that the truth was spilt, Arthur paid more attention to the tall and stoic-faced red-haired demon.

Unlike his reputation, the demon behaved like a common noble, elegant and slightly arrogant. He wore a thick black furred coat and an expensive attire, which wasn't suitable for combat.

Even Arthur, who hasn't paid any heed to their warfare, which had been ongoing for hundreds of thousands of years, had heard of Solomon, the strongest living demon. It was documented, as well as rumored, that Solomon had a power equal if not stronger than the Mythical Beings, making his prowess equal to the ancient and Creation Gods. Then again, one needs to experience Solomon's prowess firsthand to ascertain said rumors.

"I can't sense his aura at all."

Lucy, who learnt of Xavier's identity, tried to probe the demon but came out empty-handed, but that didn't discourage her. Amongst the eight soon-to-be her opponents, only Xavier and Halone could prove to be a challenge. Furthermore, as she had been resting for quite a while, Lucy had been itching to fight a strong opponent for a while, which was also why she replaced Arthur as one of the participating guardians.

After giving his wife a warm hug, Arthur wished her good luck and, soon, the two of them teleported to the rising plateau, in which the new participants were waiting.

"Let us begin."

Arthur's voice reverberated across the city, igniting the excitement of the chit chatting crowd and grabbing their attention.

The parasite warned the guardians not to resist then, with a swift snap of his fingers, he teleported them all to a vast and flat green plain with massive red circles engraved on the grass.

"This trial is simple; Capture the flying flags, take them to their respective bases and defend them until the timer runs out. Basically, it's a battle royale."

None of the guardians questioned Arthur's words or objected to the rules. Some curiously inspected the green plains whereas others, like Rasnod, were giving him a piercing glare.

The first timer was merely two minutes, in which the guardians readied and distanced themselves. Their auras burst forth, flattening the fluttering grass and distorting the space. This artificial world created by Arthur was clearly not strong enough to contain their combined aura, which caused a chain of spatial tears to appear all over the place.

Not all of the old participants were of the same universe, therefore, accurately measuring their strength was a bit difficult than usual. Nevertheless, they could be categorized into two groups; Those who have, more or less, the same power as an Overgod, and those who were equal to Exalted Gods.

Lucy, Xavier, Halone, Celina, and Rasnod, belonged to the latter, which means the rest were weaker, both in terms of purity of Nether Energy, cultivation, and overall physical and mental powers. However, a higher cultivation does not necessarily mean an assured victory, and Lucy was the living example of that. Back when she was an Overgod, she was still able to contend and even defeat Exalted Gods and the System's advanced combat robots.

With a distance of a hundred or so between each of them, the timer hit zero, at last, and the aforementioned floating flags appeared all over the spacious plains.

In total, there were five circles and five flags, each flag with a unique beast symbol. Six of the nine participants shot in the air, charging right at the closest flags. The remaining three, however, stood motionless.

Lucy, Xavier, and Halone did not budge. The Elven Maiden was sweetly smiling, her hands crossed, seemingly calm and unperturbed by the urgency of the situation. Meanwhile, Xavier was intensely staring at Lucy, though his eyes lacked any kind of expected hostility.

Even Lucy was slightly surprised to see him act as such. He had an unreadable expression, which did not match the suffocating pressure and the twirling red aura around him.

'First, I should pay her back for what she's done to my pupil.'

As she wasn't interested in either Xavier nor Halone, Lucy shifted her attention to Veia, the quiet girl from the Holy Dominion. By now, she had fully become an Overgod, though her Nether Energy was extremely unstable, so much that her Holy Magic was affected by it.

Very much like her husband, Lucy was a vengeful person and she never forgets grudges. Although Veia did what she did to assure her victory, that did not mean Lucy was happy with the result.

Although it may have been unintentional, or simply her normal attitude, Lucy still did not like the way Veia behaved. She was silent but behind her mask of purity there definitely was subtle hints of arrogance. And even if it were not the case, Lucy would have gone after Veia purely due to the fact that she had defeated Rosea, condescending as it may sound.

As Veia and Buolong were busy fighting each other close to a large white flag with a lion symbol, Lucy changed her stance and pressed her feet against the ground. She didn't channel her Nether Energy or ready her Devil Arm, she was purely relying on her physical stats, which should be more than enough.

Like a lightning bolt, the White Specter shot toward Veia, reaching her within a blink of an eye. The golden-haired girl was able to notice the bloodthirsty aura charging at her, however, she was too slow to dodge and only managed to forcefully spin her body and raise her small round shield just in time to meet Lucy's punch.

The shield did its job wonderfully and deflected most of the incoming damage, but Veia was still blown away, her body crashing into the grass and creating a massive crater. She swiftly stood up and started praying with her sword crossed near her chest, but, unfortunately for her, she could not finish in time as Lucy was already upon her for the second time.

"Dear Gods, are ye freak or what?"

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Buolong was shocked by Lucy's sudden interference. He wasted a couple of breaths staring at Lucy before snapping out of it and flying toward the flag, snatching it and instantly retreating to the back, where its designated circle was located.

## **Chapter 738 - Ko'ed**

It was a one-sided beating, quite literally. The other guardians did not even dare Lucy or get in her way.

Veia tried her best to defend herself by swinging around her sword or raising her shield to defend, however, her opponent's raw strength was simply too monstrous.

In just a matter of thirty seconds, Veia was beaten into a bloody pulp. There were bruises all over her body, which was now exposed due Lucy's kicks and punches. The resistant armor that was supposed to defend her had broken in pieces, and even her shield was on the verge of shattering.

There were occasions when the girl managed to land a hit, but even that did not cause a single scratch on Lucy's skin.

"You defeated my pupil using that thunderbolt, yes?"

"..."

"I'll let you summon it. Go Ahead."

The white specter displayed a devilish smile as she stood a couple of paces away from the bloodied girl. Not an ounce of Nether Energy or Mana was emitting from Lucy, she was totally exposed.

Veia gritted her teeth and, with a lot of difficulty, stood up and took the stance of prayer with her sword positioned vertically across her half-broken brèåstplate. With no one stopping or interfering with her brief, Veia was able to quickly conjure the thick thunderbolt, which soon descended upon Lucy.

Even at that point, Lucy did not make use of Ice Lotuses, her exceptional and deadly fusion fire, her devastating silver revolver, or even her Godspirit. Her right arm drastically changed in appearance and thick steam burst from the miniature holes throughout her frightening devil arm.

Just like earlier, she merely clenched her right hand and punched the incoming thunderbolt, resulting in an earth-shattering shock wave that sent Veia blowing hundreds of meters away.

It all happened within a couple of seconds and when the steam and dust cleared out, Lucy was standing still, unscathed and unperturbed.

"Is that it?"

"..."

She was like a ghost, her silhouette blurring and instantaneously appearing right in front of the fallen Veia.

"So much confidence and yet nothing to show off?"

It was apparent that Veia was beginning to taste the bitter taste of defeat, desperation and urgency showcased on her face, which lacked its usual composure.

The girl was glaring daggers at Lucy, her Holy Magic exploding forth, coupled with a loud war cry.

It did not take a genius to figure out what she was doing; Veia was using her Blood Essence, consequently, weakening her future potential and shortening her lifespan, in order to gain a brief but explosive burst of power.

\*\*\*\*

Outside of the trial stage, Cardinal Patrick, who was rendered dumbstruck by the miserable defeat of Veia, was currently panicking, especially after he witnessed his pupil's foolish attempt to retaliate against Lucy.

Very much like Veia, a threatening amount of Holy Magic emanated from his body and shining staff, but before he could do anything, an invisible and mountainous pressure weighed down on him.

"Cardinal, I don't think you should do that."

Arthur appeared a couple of meters away, his eyes locked onto the old man. The High Priest, Melissa, attempted to interfere and explain things but one glance at Arthur made her lose the will to speak or even move. She dumbly stood there, trembling in fear and sweating profusely.

It wasn't the effect of the Black Dragon Formation, it was only Arthur and his unseen Dark Magic. It was so concentrated and seemed to devour everything in its way, including the Cardinal's pure and supposedly unrivaled Holy Magic.

"No one is allowed to interfere in the trials. I think I've made myself clear before."

"I want my pupil out."

The Cardinal, who was already weakened due to sacrificing much of his power to strengthen Veia, was barely able to squeeze those words before coughing a mouthful of blood and falling back on the chair, his expression extremely pale.

"Out? I'm afraid that's not possible, Cardinal. Unless a participant falls unconscious or willingly surrenders, there's no way out. Also, wasn't it you who wanted that girl to participate? I'm not pointing fingers but... such an outcome is to be expected when you throw an inexperienced young girl amidst a fight between experts."

"If Veia dies, the Dominion won't stand fo-"

"I'm sure I also told you that threatening anyone with your background is forbidden. I'll let this slide but if it happens one more time then..."

The parasite winked at Melissa and Patrick then added with a chilling voice,

"You won't be able to return to your lovely home."

\*\*\*\*

"Did you have fun scaring them?"

Seeing both the Cardinal and the High Priest pale-faced, Isadore chuckled at Arthur, who had just come back to his seat.

"I was only reminding them of the rules."

"Is that so..."

The young King rolled his eyes and shifted his gaze back to the screen. He had to admit that Lucy's fighting capabilities were beyond his expectations, even as someone particularly close to the MoonStar couple.

"Your wife is really going all out."

"All out? No way... hahaha"

...

Thanks to consuming her own vitality and Blood Essence, Veia's cultivation increased again but it could not break through the limits of the Overgod Realm.

She was enveloped by a majestic golden light, her sword now elongated and her shield transformed into a bigger, square-shaped one.

Veia no longer cared about the flags or the trial, she was wholly focused on Lucy. When her transformation, which took a fair amount of time, was done, she lunged at the White Specter while thrusting her shining sword.

Alas, before she could grasp what just happened, Veia found herself flying backwards, her aura diminishing at insane pace and her sword nowhere to be seen.

Mid-air, the girl, still in-shock, saw Lucy appear right above her and spin around, lashing out with a lightning-fast kick which struck her abdomen.

It was a series of simple attacks but it was more than enough to incapacitate and defeat the young girl. Before she even touched the ground, Veia had already fallen unconscious. The golden aura vanished and her gear along with her weapons were completely broken.

"What a waste of time."

Lucy coldly looked at the girl and clicked her tongue, not feeling as good as she had expected. Veia had strengthened herself multiple times but she could not fight back or provide enough entertainment, which meant that it was time to switch targets.

Lucy wasn't that interested in capturing or defending the flags, so she opted to attack those who successfully acquired one of the flying flags. There were a decent amount of targets she could fight, but, by far, the most interesting ones were the Elven Maid and the Demon, both were still standing still and nonchalantly talking to each other.

### **Chapter 739 - The Ageless Elven Maiden**

Lucy and Arthur knew that the Dark Blaze Sect did not participate in the competition just to gain fame or to showcase their talented youngsters. They were after Cristina and Bora and their special weapons, which had previously belonged to the sect.

Rasnod Ak Dark Blaze, the Patriarch of the sect, was the guardian participating in the last two trials. In comparison to his other peers, he was relatively weaker, both in terms of cultivation and overall magical and physical prowess.

Still, when the timer had hit zero, no one chased after Rasnod, which allowed him to safely catch one of the flying flags and swiftly take it to its respective circle. Now, all he had to do was defend it for a short amount of time.

It has only been two minutes since the trial had started and, excluding Veia, who had been overpowered and knocked unconscious, the rest of the guardians were still either fighting each other or defending their flags.

Xavier Landres and Halone did not budge from their spots, the rest, however, were determined to qualify for the last trial to uphold their reputation and increase their prestige. The rewards, albeit lucrative, were of no interest to wealthy and distinguished individuals such as them.

Bulong, the armored and thick-bearded dwarf belonging to the Blossom Merchant Company, was currently defending his flag from the relentlessly attacking Lakandro.

The Patriarch of the Eternal Rouge Sect had the unique ability to transform into a massive black-scaled and five-headed serpent. He stood at a towering thirty meters and emitted a dangerous poison mist.

Bulong was a minuscule, barely noticeable in front of the humongous figure of Lakandro, however, he was still able to hold his ground and defend the circle and the flag with the sole use of his expensive and flashy gear.

Though not the head of the Blossom Merchant Company, Buolong still had a high status and was well-respected, both for his prowess and intelligent economical decision.

Lakandro Serpentine and Buolong were evenly matched so the other guardians did not interfere in their explosive fight and just watched from the sidelines.

There were only five circles and five flying flags, Bulong was defending one, and so was Rasnod Ak Dark Blaze. As for the other three remaining flags, one was caught by Celina, Mother of all Mermaids, and one by Dan, the loyal protector of Isadore Malfront, King of the Green-Leaf Realm.

After thoroughly inspecting the other seven guardians, Lucy finally picked her next target. She did not take the same approach as before, meaning that she did not recklessly get close to her target.

Instead, she summoned her Godspirit along with the rotating ice lotuses then channeled her pure Mana, which caused a chain of actions to burst forth from her body and affect her vicinity.

A half-blue half-white mist covered her and her surroundings, then there was a soft explosive sound followed right after by a bone-chilling aura which froze the grass and cracked the space.

[Absolute Zero] was a high-leveled Ice-aspected spell used by the strong mortal mages on Astria and other similar worlds. Such a spell would not normally work on powerful cultivators, however, thanks to Lucy's Godspirit and her vast quantities of Mana, the spell was empowered to an unimaginable degree.

The freezing ice and the mist spread at a fast pace, creeping closer to Halone, the Ageless Elven Maiden.

Xavier Landres chuckled and jumped to the back, however, Halone did the opposite. She took out two gauntlets made from what looked like emerald, then shot straight into the incoming ice and mist.

Only when she got close enough did the elf realize how effective Lucy's mist and ice were. Her movements significantly decreased and, for a split second, she was even rooted to the icy ground.

She did manage to break free and continue her charge, though she was soon met with dozens of massive icicles shooting at her.

One would expect a graceful elven maiden to rely on Nature Magic or archery, like most of her race. Halone, however, didn't follow the orthodox route, she was a melee-fighter, and a very strong one, at that.

"It's a p???sur? to meet you, Madam Lucy."

Halone somersaulted to the back and sweetly smiled at the White Specter. Contrary to her soothing voice and bright expression, her actions were intense and savage; She violently banged her left foot on the ground and changed her stance, swiftly crouched down and punched the ground, obliterating it and causing countless miniature plants with creepy laughs to jump from below, exploding left and right.

This attempt forced Lucy to retreat and use the ice lotuses to block the incoming damage, meanwhile her GodSpirit, which had taken its time in blooming, released a thick and massive snowstorm.

It resembled a tornado more than a snowstorm; A chilling and unstoppable gale, needle-shaped snowflakes, and a threatening pressure encompassed the area, grazing Halone's clothes and piercing her skin.

The elf was fast to respond, but it was still not enough to defend against everything the snowstorm launched at her.

Thirsty seconds, Lucy was startled to see a glowing silhouette surge from the ground and strike her rear. She spun her body and tried to defend with the ice lotuses but she wasn't fast enough, unfortunately.

Thus she was blown away like a cannonball, her body crashing into the icy ground and rolling several times. Still, she quickly stood up and regained her balance, her clothes slightly shredded but no wounds, light or severe, were sustained, much to the elf's surprise.

"I had heard that you and yours trained your body beyond the limit but... this is just ridiculous."

Halone expected her attack to deal some substantial damage, but it didn't seem to be the case. Even when she had caught Lucy off-guard and hit her with the gauntlets, the latter wasn't the least bit injured, which goes to show how resilient and absurdly strong her body actually was.

"Mother of Mermaids, please do not take this personally."

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He stared back at the cautious mermaid and apologetically bowed, a soft smile plastered on his face.

"..."

Celina did not reply, she glared at him and invoked her magic. First there was a forty-meter long tsunami that appeared out of nowhere, from which flying sharks burst from within and crashed into the motionless demon.

Xavier had stopped dozens of meters away from the circle and did not resist the incoming sharks or the massive tsunami.

"Hmpf!"

Upon noticing that her attacks did practically nothing, Celina mumbled an inaudible chant then pulled a unique-blue spear from a black circle-shaped hole. Although he was not attacking or retaliating, Celina still did not give him the time to react to her attacks.

A dangerous amount of energy revolved around her, soon concentrating on the spear and elevating its already impressive aura. The preparation took but a couple of breaths, and when they were done, the mermaid raised the spear and threw it at the Duke.

The second it left her hand, the spear became distorted... It was so strong that the space around it was not able to withstand the pressure. It was accompanied by a pillar of azure light, causing the gentle weather to turn into a disastrous storm.

## **Chapter 740 - Forfeit**

Chaos unfolded in the stretching green plains, which were either frozen by Lucy's ice, destroyed by Halone's fists of fury, or wrecked by Celina's gigantic water wave.

The battle between Lucy and her opponent has reached its climax, with the two finally going all out.



The elven maiden cast a spell on herself, which wrapped her body with an armor made of literal plants and significantly boosted her speed. Meanwhile, Lucy preferred to maintain her distance and bombard the enemy with the explosive elemental bullets from Lonely Moon, the silver revolver specifically crafted to her by none other than Arthur.

It has been a while since the revolver has been upgraded, nevertheless, every bullet shot from its glistening barrel was truly frightening, no matter the attribute used.

The ice lotuses were rapidly spinning around Lucy, deflecting the incoming shock waves caused by Halone's fists. They were an effective defensive measure, which made Lucy practically untouchable.

Although Halone's agility and strength were strengthened, she still could not catch up to Lucy, thus did she resort to long-ranged blasts that had a wide radius and dealt substantial damage to the environment.

Lucy loaded another bullet, aimed at the speeding elf, and fired a red bullet with three spinning magical circles in front of it. The second the bullet was shot, a scorching heat and a blast of purple flames encompassed the azure-colored canopy, slowly cascading onto Halone.

In retaliation, the elf rooted her feet onto the icy ground, mumbled a couple of words then shot right into the sea of flames. She met the purple flames head-on and surprisingly managed to split it with a torrent of blurry punches. Meanwhile, the ground down below cracked and from within, a moving enormous tree appeared.

It was actually a Treant, a higher-variant of the plant-type monsters. This Treant, however, has impressively long and thin limbs, the face of an old man, and an absurdly long white beard.

The vines were too fast for Lucy to evade them so she swiftly loaded another bullet and shot it at them. The bullet didn't directly affect the vines, but it did shatter the space and cause a series of large spatial tears to appear all around her. The spatial tears easily su?k?d the vines and even forced Halone to circle around them.

Unfortunately for the elf, this bought Lucy enough time to cast her next spell. The White Specter channeled her Mana and, within seconds, a miniature golden sun manifested itself, wrapped in blinding flames of the same color.

The sun slowly rose into the air, its light shadowing the artificial sun of this small dimension. Lucy wasted no time and, with her signal, the sun exploded, bringing forth a storm of golden flames which blew Halone away and even spread to Dan, who was minding his own business and protecting the flag in its respective circle.

The Treant down below suffered the same fate as its master, its massive body crashed into the ground and was struck by the raging golden flames.

The Golden Crow Fire caught the attention of all the participants. Xavier and Celina stopped fighting, the former backing away and the latter protecting herself with a small bubble of water.

Lucy's spell affected half of the green flat plains, scorching the earth and grass and spreading across the sky, in which the artificial sun was replaced by a real, burning one, emitting a suffocating heat.

Lucy calmly landed on the ash-covered ground and looked around, spotting no traces of the treant. Halone, on the other hand, was still there, but she didn't look unscathed.

Her clothes and her whole left arm had burn marks, she didn't have the same easy-going expression and her breathing was heavy and uneven. It was apparent that Lucy's attack dealt a considerable amount of damage to the elf, though it wasn't able to defeat her, unfortunately.

"I'm impressed, madam Lucy."

"I have to admit that I didn't expect to be thrashed... and so badly, at that. My apologies for underestimating you."

"..."

Lucy maintained her silence, she kept her guard up and cautiously looked at the elven maiden.

"I forfeit."

Halone raised her hand and surrendered, her aura vanished on the spot and, soon, she was teleported out of the stage.

With one more opponent down, Lucy, albeit a bit tired from the previous fight, focused on another participant.

\*\*

"What are you doing?"

Holand was meditating in silence but soon stopped upon seeing his grandsire take out a bunch of ritual materials from out of his ring.

"Come on, Holand. We're leaving."

His aunt grabbed him by the elbow and tried to drag him outside. There was urgency in her tone and actions, which made the situation even more confusing for the youth.

"I asked you what you are doing!"

Even though he already knew the answer, Holand insisted, but he got no answer. His usually kind grandfather nonchalantly waved his hand at him, which made both he and his aunt get dragged outside by a gentle magical wind.

"We have to leave the city."

It was obvious that his aunt wasn't in cahoots with his grandfather, nevertheless, Holand refused to cooperate. Those materials were a bad omen and trying anything within the parasite's territory was simply suicidal.

"He's going to summon our ancestor's avatar, right? Why? Is my father still after Cristina and Bora?"

Holand bombarded his aunt with questions but she kept her lips tightly shut. Although Holand vehemently refused to leave, his cultivation was eventually sealed and he was forcefully taken outside.

"Forgive me, Holand."

"Let me go! I need to warn them."

"There's no need to. I'm taking you outside because I know my brother will fail. They will get killed but at least you will survive..."