

The Primordial Record

- Chapter 1031: A Cruel God

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1031 A Cruel God

Rowan had a peculiar notion about size. It could not be helped, he was a cosmic being, and as far as he could tell he was the only living dimension in existence, that gave him a unique perspective on the matter of size.

From the start as an Empyrean Ouroboros Serpent, he had always been a massive individual, and most of the beings he came across and fought were usually gigantic. Old Man Seed, who was nearly fourteen feet tall, did not raise even an eyebrow from him. After becoming a dimension, his true size was like multiple galaxies in scale, and so, humans, planets... they were all so small, and it was hard to even tell the difference between them if he did not focus his sight on them.

Rowan had become used to walking around people with his shrunken size, but the awareness of his real size had colored his perspective, and he liked things big. The bigger the better.

Boosting the size of the Shiik was something easy for him to achieve and when it finally reached the Heroic Rank and aided by Rowan's quick absorption of the vitality it produced, the size of the Shiik had exploded, but for Rowan, this size was still relatively small according to his cosmic standards standing at two thousand thousand feet.

He would have made the Shiik two thousand miles tall if he was able to spread out his true influence in this world, but he had plans for that later on. Forgiveness was for mortals, for immortals, blood would be repaid with a greater amount of blood. This world had incurred his ire, and those at the top would fall, and he would paint the entire horizon until the ends of existence with their blood.

Pushing the thoughts of future vengeance away from his mind, Rowan viewed this new form of the Shiik as acceptable because it was constantly growing and its growth had not yet neared its limits... A limit that he would always be pushing upwards.

However, what Rowan considered important was the energy levels of this creature and its peculiar ability to digest death and produce life that had been further boosted to a great degree with the advancement towards the Heroic level.

A mass of meat would dominate the lower levels, but the true winner in the higher realms was energy and concepts.

The ability to eat death was the reason why the Shiik who had barely been fifty feet tall after becoming a Heroic Ranked calamity exploded in size.

Its stomach suddenly expanded to ten times its previous volume and this expansion did not stop as with every moment that passed, the stomach kept slowly increasing as the temperature inside it kept plunging lower, leaving the only area of warmth to be around Rowan's body.

There was also a third presence with him inside the stomach, it was a single red rune that resembled a withered palm. Rowan quickly recognized that it was this rune that was the foundation of the ability of the Shiik. Its stomach would not have this incredible ability if not for this one rune.

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The cries of the giant Shiik as it evolved rang with exultation and intense hunger. Its new stomach and increasing size needed fuel, and the tendrils from Rowan were not nearly enough. It opened its growing mouth, inhaling tonnes of flesh, bones, and blood that entered its stomach in a deluge of gore that did not last a second inside its stomach before it vanished.

Rowan hardly had the time to begin processing the mystery of this rune when a tremendous wave of vitality flooded his body. He groaned and his mortal body passed out, shut down by the infusion of energy being generated by consuming hundreds of Shiiks at every moment.

His new brains resting inside his spine were not as frail as the one in his head and they stayed awake, transferring the fresh wave of vitality into every cell in his body and creating a stable foundation along his designs.

He was not going to change the essence of this body like he did with Andar who was essentially a fusion with his Empyrean Ouroboros skin and a mage. He would be following the power systems of this world, but he would be breaking every limiter placed in this flesh.

Before long he appeared as a seven-year-old child whose long red hair now touched the nape of his neck. His bigger form able to hold and process more vitality was a boon to the Shiik who had now grown big and powerful enough to shrug off the mounds of body suppressing it to the earth and then it began to slaughter its kind without remorse, it needed energy for its growth. Each of its limbs grew sharp claws that grew red hot as its acid attack empowered by the energy of death sliced through the Shiiks as if it was

curing through water. Strangely the silence of the Shiiks was never broken even as they perished in great numbers. It was as if a part of them was both awed and horrified by the monster that had emerged within their midst.

Perhaps a small part of their consciousness that recognized the presence of a higher power would feel as if they stood before their god, and gods were known to be cruel.

Hundreds fell to a single limb, and the Shiik, except for balancing its growing bulk with ten of its legs, used the other twenty both sliced around and delivered the bodies directly into its open mouth, and in less than a few seconds, nearly every Shiik remaining in the crater had been killed.

Such tremendous growth in this beast could only be supported by Rowan, and their symbiotic relationship reached a brand new level when the dead mind of the Shiik who had no business gaining sapience sprang to life. Rowan's last edit finally coming online.

The first thing it latched onto was Rowan's mind. He had been expecting the birth of a mind in this creature but Rowan had not imagined how quickly it was formed, and the direction it took. This creature was... cruel.

It was a good thing he had already placed aside a single brain node to deal with this blooming consciousness as he focused on understanding the entire changes that had just occurred in the Shiik.

Without his intervention, this blooming consciousness would have taken decades for it to actualize itself, but this process happened nearly instantaneously, and the myriad of urges that governed this monster transformed into a dark intelligence that was eerily focused on a single objective alone—grow stronger and destroy everything in existence.

It would seem the nature of Calamities truly followed their names. They were living disasters.

This new mind captured the sight of the screaming body of an Explorer falling into the crater and quicker than any conscious thought, a limb snaked upwards and gently caught the Explorer in his back, and only the tip punched through the spine of the Explorer and emerged from his chest.

He might have survived this wound due to his constitution, but the death energy mixed with the acid on the limbs and claws of the giant Shiik killed him instantly.

The growing mind of the Shiik caught the platform escaping the crater with two other Explorers, and they might have escaped if not for the bright beam of light being projected by their suit.

Digging dozens of legs into the side of the crater it moved after the ascending platform and in a single bound it reached it.

Getting better... Will push for a second chapter. Thanks for all the goodwill messages.
BRICKTRADER

Chapter 1032: Hidden Hand

1032 Hidden Hand

The Aura of the Explorer that was killed was purified, and as it rushed into the body of the Shiik, headed for the core of its power which was the rune resembling a withered hand, Rowan halted it in place, before diverting it towards him.

Although the growth of Aura did not depend on the type of Aura it consumed, whether from Calamity or Ascendance, for Rowan's future plans to work, the energy of the Shiik must be kept pure, which means any Aura it absorbed must come from Calamities... Rowan on the other hand would be feeding on the energy of Ascendancy.

The Shiik had never killed an Explorer before and so although its body was filled with Aura to a bursting point, the Aura was all the red of Calamity.

The purified Aura flowed towards the sitting Rowan and he kept it hovering above his palm, it resembled a faint ball of blue liquid and it was one of the strangest power systems that Rowan had encountered because it was one of the very few techniques that he had come across—and he had seen an infinite number of technique using the Supreme Circle—that managed to weaponize Aura.

With his Titles, he could process this energy of Aura from its source without any waste, and the amount of Aura in front of him was enough to push any Explorer or Calamity to the Heroic Rank. The Giant Shiik had consumed so much purified Aura of Calamities it should have long exceeded the Heroic Rank, but because its potential ended at this rank, all that energy was channeled towards its body.

Two other balls of blue Aura appeared and merged with the Aura and the blue ball tripled in size. Rowan understood that Aura in its base form was harmless, it was present in every living thing and was grown and influenced by their activities throughout their lives.

Rowan no longer had an Aura, it had disappeared when he became a dimension, and the one he kept around him was fake. He knew enough about Aura to create an exact shell around himself. This new body of his also had no Aura, and Rowan hypothesized that the reason he was able to create the strange purple Aura, was that he was essentially a blank slate and had no inherent Aura to interfere with this process, else an energy like that would have long been discovered. However, he needed to be much stronger before he created that Aura again, and that meant he had to walk the path of

Ascendancy and the Shiik would walk the path of Calamities, until they were strong enough to merge as one.

What Rowan found fascinating about this blue Aura was the manner it caused a transformation in the flesh, and he could not shake the feeling that this energy was recognizable but he needed more of this Aura to confirm his hypothesis.

The ability to change the bodies of the natives of this world was truly heads and shoulders above all other Aura techniques available in reality outside.

There was something mixed in with this Aura that intrigued him, and without much ado, he allowed the ball of blue to touch him, he gasped in shock when the realization of what was familiar about this energy touched him—It was a Singularity, and he recognized it.

Rowan tried to scan through the limited memories in his head, yet no matter how he dug into his consciousness he could not figure out how he recognized this power. As far as he could tell he knew of only one Singularity—, but wait... where there not supposed to be a second one?

'Why can't I remember it? There is no reason I can recognize a second Singularity without coming in touch with one in the past. What the fuck happened to me after the end of the universe? Caine, this missing memory of a Singularity and other mysteries surrounding the method I reached outside reality.... Nemesis!'

'Why am I fixated on this bastard and why do I hate him so much?'

'Is it a coincidence I ended up in this world that has the presence of a second Singularity or is someone pulling the strings in the background... it seems there are many bastards I am going to be killing in the future.'

Rowan felt his consciousness begin to ache as he dug deeper to access the parts of his memories that were blank. Perhaps if his consciousness was complete he would be able to resurrect this part of him that was missing.

With that conclusion, he focused on the changes happening inside his body as the Blue Aura diffused itself throughout his entire body. It seemed a bit confused when it reached his spine, but it soon settled on the surface and was unable to pierce deeper into it.

For Rowan to merge the two Auras together in the future he would need a neutral party inside his body that could hold both at once.

For a normal native of this world, this amount of Purified Aura would have pushed them towards the peak of the Heroic Rank and maybe a bit over it, but for Rowan, it barely filled a thousandth of his enhanced cells.

He needed much more to become Enlightened, but he was sure that it would not take long for him to reach the peak of the mortal world with the sort of world he found himself. The preparation at the bottom of this crater was over, he would be leaving it. He opened his eyes and it flashed blue before settling into a deep black that looked like the void at the edge of existence.

Merging his mind with the giant Shiik he discovered in a short while the Calamity had hunted every single Shiik left in the crater, and was now slowly crawling towards the top of the crater, its claws piercing deep into the walls and propelling its bulk towards the top with too much speed for a creature of its size, its movement caused whirlwinds to surround its body and clouds filled with red lightning followed the wind and wrapped the body of the Shiik.

The red lightning was attracted by the impossible amount of purified Aura inside the giant Shiik and the energy of death embedded in all its thirty claws. It resembled a storm as it rushed out of the crater.

Rowan could feel the growing excitement in the heart of the Shiik as it neared the edge of the crater, the prison that had imprisoned it for countless years.

With a shriek accompanied by the loud crack of thunder, the Shiik leaped out of the crater and slammed into the ground causing a small earthquake and shattering nearly a hundred buildings clustered around the area where it landed.

The Shiik looked around and it opened its eyes for the first time. They were white as if it was born blind, then they saw the world and it flinched. The light of the three suns overhead was binding and its species were meant to exist in the darkness, it began to slowly crawl back into the crater when the voice of Rowan stopped it,

"Do not turn away from the light child, look upon it, and as it scars your sight, place it in your memory for one day your limbs shall drag them from the sky! They shall be the first of many. They are not stars... not really, just old monsters that have lived beyond their time, and you need to eat child... They are food."

Chapter 1033: Preparation For Battle

1033 Preparation For Battle

The words from Rowan touched something deep inside the mind of the Shiik, granting it a focus and a goal that its young mind clung onto, yet its fear of light and the sun was still primal, embedded in the part of itself that its new intelligence could not yet control, and it was still returning to the crater but more slowly.

The Shiik fought against its instinct, but the tools for such a battle were yet unavailable to it, and although Rowan could override those instincts, he understood that some battle needed to be fought personally, but he had no time for the Shiik to acclimate, their presence had been detected by the powers in this land and before long, an intense battle was coming for them.

Rowan sighed and borrowed the sight of the Shiik and looked around, even in his weakened condition, he had instantly digested the souls of the three Explorers, and although he had no access to manipulating soul energy, he was able to gain the other peripheral benefit of this ability.

He sent the image of a large metallic building at the edge of the complex surrounding the crater.

The complex was largely automated with only the three Explorers handling the entire operation, this was to keep this resource point as hidden as possible to avoid outside interference.

The Calamities were not the only problem in this world, for as always, where there were benefits there would also be conflicts. There were other Ascendant powers wishing to take control of this Resource area, and the hidden battle to control all of these resource points was both gruesome and terrifying.

This conflict would act as an advantage for Rowan at the beginning, they would never understand the sort of creature he was and his capabilities, and before the true scale of the threat he represented was shown he would be unbeatable.

The building that Rowan placed in the mind of the Shiik contained a volatile mixture that when combusted would release a lot of heat and most importantly a thick green smoke that took an extremely long time to dissipate.

In small amounts, this smoke can cover several meters and make it quite hard to breathe, and in large amounts, it could cover miles.

The building contained enough of that mixture to cover tens of miles. Rowan judged that it should cover the sight of the sun for the creature, giving it time to adapt, and more importantly, draw prey towards them. Rowan did not relish remaining in this mortal form for long.

The Shiik finally seeing a way to block out the sun, pushed through its discomfort and charged at the building. No longer moving with its usual fluid grace, it barreled through the buildings in its way, crushing both concrete and metal with equal ease and reaching the large metallic building, tearing it apart, its glowing red claws slicing through six inches of metal without any hindrance.

The building was a large storage vat containing nearly a million gallons of the foul mixture that bubbled, emanating pale yellow fumes, they flooded past the legs of the Shiik after escaping out of the confines of the metal storage unit, and the Calamity watched with glee as the green fluid flows past it and spread for thousands of feet.

It brought two glowing red claws forward and touched them together, generating sparks that attracted the red lightning surrounding its body. This lightning snaked forward and touched the liquid and the area for miles flashed white before a large roar and a red mushroom cloud bloomed above the earth that could be heard and seen for hundreds of miles.

The explosion destroyed the entire complex except for a single building, however, the flames did not last for long, disappearing supernaturally quickly.

The mushroom cloud also did not remain in place for long before it flared into nonexistence and a wave of thick green smoke exploded from it that was accompanied by the excited shrieks of the Shiik, who raised dozens of red claws to the sky in the last defiance of the light as it was covered by a wave of green.

Rowan smiled, "good girl."

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This crater was called Feeding Pit # 19. One of the newest Resource points for the Silver Alliance, a powerful force with more than a hundred thousand continents under their control. The Silver Alliance possessed more than a dozen Ascendant Explorers and hundreds of Deific Rank Explorers.

Feeding Pit # 19 was in charge of supplying a hundred tonnes of valuable vitality-infused remnants every decade to the Alliance and earned a sizable amount of profit for them. Its importance would only increase in the future as the Shiiks reproduce and increase their number and levels.

This resource point was located on a dead continent. It was a continent where the war that ravaged its surface had scoured every life from it, leaving nothing but scavengers, and even those had been cleared away for the creation of this resource point.

The previous explosion from this dead continent would draw attention, for the creation of this place was quite secretive, and various parties would begin venturing into this place before long, but Rowan could still muddy the waters further to cause further chaos.

With the knowledge gained from the mind of the three Explorers, Rowan finally knew all the levels of power before the immortal state in this world.

From Mortal, Enlightened, Heroic, Glorious, Legend, Deific, and finally Ascended. With his experience he theorized that Deific Explorers should be equal to Archmages or gods, with powers that were in the range of a Minor God to a High God, and Ascended should be from the God King level and upwards, and with a powerful world like Doom Star, he expected to come across higher dimensional beings across the Ascended Explorers.

He did not expect Ascended class Explorers at this time, and if Deific Ranked Explorers were going to be making their way over, they would not be a lot of them, he just needed enough fodder to quickly powerup and the first few battles would be tough, but after that he should have gathered enough Aura to push him to at least the Legend or Deific Rank.

The green smoke covered the Shiik and ascended to the heavens, and the Calamity crouched after noticing the lack of food around, folding all its limbs underneath and closing its eyes, waiting. It could remain this way for centuries, its body state reduced to something that was nearly lifeless. Consuming death came with benefits.

Rowan observed this creature for a while, trying not to think about the events that transpired in his second deaths and the children he had lost, the pain would drive him mad, his consciousness was still too weak to hold all the weight of those that had perished.

The explosion would draw attention, the Silver Alliance would never allow this valuable resource point to be tampered with.

He only needed to wait and prepare and the battle would be coming, but he did not need to wait inside the stomach of the Shiik at this moment, there was still much to do, and the day was still young.

Chapter 1034: Black Tower

The body of the Shiik that resembled a large crab after it folded all its legs together was still like a rock, its massive female face was relaxed, and from its nose, a small body emerged and silently dropped down a hundred and twenty feet before landing on the ground without shaking a single dust.

Rowan now had the body of a ten-year-old, his green skin shone with an emerald glow and his red hair was like blood, there was a sort of Aura around him that made it quite difficult to focus on him.

He observed the sleeping form of the Shiik and touched a single strand of its red hair that was as large as a python, 'why do I always carry my children into war?'

He thought he knew the answer to that question, but sometimes when he thought about the weight of their sacrifices, it pained him.

'No more... I cannot promise much, but I will never fall so easily again. You all deserve a better father.'

The Shiik had destroyed most of the complex around and the explosion had wiped off the rest.

Rowan turned towards a direction and began to walk. His body was like a spirit being. Naked he glided over the destruction, his young face holding a focus and majesty that was undeniable, no one would look at him and think this was not a mortal.

Before long he found himself before the most elaborate building in this complex, made entirely from black metal and had a trapezoid shape, standing more than a hundred feet; this building had only a single doorway.

In his memories from the Explorer, he knew that this black building was usually glowing with a white light, making it appear like glass. The explosion had only managed to disrupt the process happening inside the building and had not left a single scratch on its surface.

Rowan reached the door. It was sealed and required identification from all three Explorers in order for it to open. Rowan's figure suddenly blurred as he expelled hundreds of thousands of parasitic worms from his body. These worms separated into three portions and began to shuffle themselves quite quickly, and before long, the three dead Explorers stood before Rowan, and even their Aura at the Heroic level was apparent.

The soul was the seat of consciousness and Rowan understood any mortal he had killed more than they understood even themselves, down to every single cell in their bodies. Recreating them was a simple thing for him.

The three naked Explorers stood before the door and placed their hands on the door, and for a while, it seemed that nothing was happening but a blue glow emerged from between their palms and the door and with a sound as if a massive gear had been shifted, the door rose up and vanished.

Rowan absorbed the parasitic worms and entered the facility, knowing his direction he headed towards it—The Teleportation portal. All his plans depended on this device.

To transport the millions of bodies into the Feeding pit without alerting the attention of others then such a facility was a necessity. The destruction of the surrounding facilities and the explosion that followed had disrupted the power being fed into the Teleportation platform and it had been shut off.

Rowan walked towards a blue prism hovering in the air, from his back, tentacles made from parasitic worms carried him up to the prism and he placed his palms on it, accessing the surface encryption he quickly broke through any of its security features and began delving into the secrets of this portal.

Inside the prism, he soon discovered many fail-safes including the ones that would grant remote control over this teleportation facility. Rowan quickly blocked and disrupted them all, he would only allow this portal to work when he wanted it to work and not before.

He quickly learned about the features of dozens of other facilities similar to this one, but he was not interested in those, what he wanted was access to areas filled with conflicts that were on the edge. Places that Calamities had nearly taken over and supervision was lax.

More importantly, he wanted a map of the surrounding territories. There were an unknown amount of continents in Doom Star and the minds of the mortal he would be consuming would not be enough to understand a fraction of the amount. This map was very important to him because when he began to summon his shattered consciousness it might warrant him traveling to those locations.

This might become necessary due to the fact that Rowan was unable to ascertain the sort of commotion that might arise when he summoned the rest of his consciousness. His death had freed his consciousness of the restraint imposed by this world, and it might be necessary that for the first few pieces he collected, he might want to be more lowkey in his efforts.

It took hours but Rowan slowly collected all the information he could from the Prism and he opened his eyes when with the consciousness node he had connected with the Shiik alerted him that they had a visitor.

This was a bit quicker than he expected, this dead continent was at least a thousand miles in circumference and surrounded by a blighted ocean. He had thought the first visitors might reach this place in a few days, but it seemed either someone was patrolling closer to this continent and saw the explosion or someone extremely powerful who could quickly cover the great distance had arrived here.

Rowan hoped it was the former and not the latter or else he would have to escape this continent with this teleportation portal furthering the time he spent as a mortal.

The Shiik had awakened and crouched in the darkness, unmoving and waiting for its prey to arrive. Rowan also watched, his finger pressed against the prism and ready to activate it at the first sign of trouble.

The smoke shifted and was suddenly torn apart, a massive ship pushed its way into space above and a bright beam of energy slammed into the ground a few miles away from the Shiik causing a massive explosion that shook the earth.

Rowan smiled, his trap had worked. If they could not see through the diversion he had set up, then there was no one inside that ship that could stop him.

Chapter 1035: Ambush

Rowan might have lacked the blue Aura of Ascendancy but what he did not lack was vitality and therefore essence. All the bodies of the fallen and the smaller Shiiks consumed by the mutated Shiik had granted him so much vitality that if he wanted he could have made this mortal body at least fifty feet tall.

However, that would be a limited use of this amount of power, he already had a meat shield and another one was useless, he would rather be the tactician in the next series of incoming conflicts.

Rowan was a mortal but he was hardly helpless. The Shiik might be powerful and was his primary weapon, but he was far more deadly because of his mind.

The ship that attacked a wrong position was not a coincidence, Rowan made his presence nearly impossible to detect, and when the Shiik folded its body, any sign of life was gone.

The Shiiks were originally weak Calamity creatures but their ability to eat death gave them certain unique properties, and any sign of life they had was nearly undetectable if they were not in motion, and in the shadow of the green smoke, it appeared like a building. To deceive this first batch of enemies, what Rowan did was that he had created hundreds of bodies and given them all the characteristics of life, leaving them clustered in certain positions, and this was all to be a diversion. He was used to performing many tasks at once as a Hive mind and when he had been spending hours deciphering the secrets of the prism of teleportation, the other part of his mind had been creating this diversion, and other parts had been focused on other tasks necessary for the battle ahead.

Another explosion rang out as the ship targeted the second cluster of life he had placed in another random area. The smoke that had been shattered by the presence of the ship began to cover the open spaces once again, and as it did, the massive shape of the Shiik hidden within followed closely, hunting the ship overhead.

Rowan recognized this ship from the memories of the Explorers. The natives of Doom Star had developed their warships and transportation capabilities to a rather high level,

and they could stand shoulder-to-shoulder with some of the best warships Rowan had ever come across in Reality outside this realm.

The prevalence of the strange nature of Aura in this realm had given birth to special treasures and resources that could be used to create powerful weapons and vehicles.

This warship was a Falcon Class Frigate, capable of holding between ten to a hundred crew members. The ship was triangular in shape and sleek like the blade of a spear. Although it was a pretty common ship, its functionality was still among the best, and its features had barely changed since it was introduced nearly half a million years ago.

Usually, the sort of Explorers who used these ships were not very powerful, the highest reaching the Legendary Rank, who would typically be the captain of the frigate. To traverse the nearly infinite number of continents in this realm, this ship was the least that could be utilized.

Rowan had left seven distractions around, and from the emanations of power they gave out, the most powerful was at the Heroic Rank, and for the ship to stay above and blast Heroic Ranked powers meant it found them somewhat of a threat, or they might be holding back assessing for traps, but whatever reason they had, Rowan had already given the order for the Shiik to attack.

The warship was barely a thousand feet from the bow to the stern, hovering a mere fourteen thousand feet away from the ground, a supposedly safe distance against whatever threat below, knowing the only Explorers who could effortlessly fly were at the Deific state then they were most likely safe, the Shiik leaped towards the ship, its body a blur in the fog, but something with its size and mass moving that quickly could not be hidden.

Launching itself from the ground, the sound was like an earthquake, and indeed the earth had shattered for hundreds of feet. The Large cannons in the frigate turned towards the massive body hurtling towards them and hurriedly released their payloads.

A series of sporadic shots like lightning bolts slammed against the Shiik as the ship began to attempt evasive maneuvers, but the shot splashed harmlessly against the armor of the Calamity, energy-based weapons seemed to have little or no effect on the Calamity, and even as the ship pulled out, they had not accounted for how far the limbs of the Shiik could stretch.

The Shiik had leaped and folded its limbs, turning itself into a ball of armor and when it appeared as if the ship had been successful in dodging the 40,000 tonnes missile, the limbs of the Shiik exploded outwards, and a dozen of them caught the side of the ship, tearing red long lines through its infrastructure.

Two of its limbsamaged to cut into the engine and something exploded within, the warship engine emitted a loud shriek like a dying crow as it listed to the side spewing

out smoke and electrical sparks, it somersaulting severally in the air before smashing into the ground and bounced, leaving shattered parts of itself in the ground, and its momentum dragged it for hundreds of feet before it finally came to a rest.

The Shiik turned around in midair after its successful ambush, and although it was unable to fly, it began waving its limbs around as if it was galloping in mid-air, and the moment it hit the ground it did not spend a single moment paused before its body broke out into motion, covering the few thousand feet that separated it from the fallen ship in barely a second.

Even when it reached the ship its motion did not cease and it tucked in its head and using its armored back slammed into the ship, crushing a side of the ship flat like a tin can under an anvil, before dozens of legs holding glowing red claws began tearing through the ship.

Before long screams began to emerge from the internals of the ship when the claws of the Shiik caught the unlucky Explorers within. The figure of the Shiik was still hidden in thick green smoke and for those within the ship, they could only see massive red glowing claws slicing apart their ship and instantly killing any unlucky Explorer it touched.

The limbs of the Shiik were extremely dexterous, and it held one aside like a pole while the others dragged bodies and impaled them on that single limb, and in a few seconds, there were more than thirty explorers who had been impaled on the limb, some of the tougher ones lived for a few seconds before the acid crammed with the energy of death shattered every single speck of life in their bodies.

The Shiik had entirely cleared out a section of the ship and was about to dig deeper when a large silver bolt more than a hundred feet long bypassed its questing claws and unerringly pierced in the direction of its forehead.

Dozens of the Shiik gigantic limbs slammed against the silver bolt and diverted it so it pierced through the thick armor in its back, but was stopped after penetrating a few feet.

Three figures wearing bright glowing armor and holding Halberds gelling with a vivid orange glow emerged from the battered ship and they looked at the massive form of the Shiik hidden in the gloom, and they silently charged.

Chapter 1036: Unexpected Changes

These three figures who stepped forward to battle the charging Shiik were Glorious Ranked Explorer, which was the next step after the Heroic Rank. At the Heroic Rank, the Explorer would have their center of power created linking them to their Ascendant

Aura and their Mental Space could be accessed, and at the Glorious Rank, they could begin utilizing their Natal Treasure.

Natal Treasures were quite special, it was a weird result of the merger between a Mental Space and the mutated Auric energy of this realm. The Explorers in this world had no Mental Space but their souls contained Natal Treasures.

It could either be a weapon or a tool that was closely related to the nature of the Explorer. The Natal Treasure would be born inside their Mental Space before the treasure absorbs the Mental Space creating a Glorious Ranked Explorer in the process, and their Ascension to the higher ranks depended on conquering new Natal Treasures and binding them to their mental Space.

These three Glorious Ranked Explorers had studied similar Aura techniques at the Heroic Rank, and it made them able to manifest the same weapons at the Glorious Rank. It was important to the sort of Natal Treasure to be gained at the Glorious Rank that an effective technique be used at the Heroic level. A weaker technique would bring about the birth of a weaker Natal Treasure, stumping the growth of the Explorer.

The method the most powerful Ascendant powers kept their position at the top of the hierarchy was their ability to collect and control all the potent techniques needed to awaken and control powerful Natal Treasures.

The halberds in the hands of the three Glorious Ranked Explorer sliced the air, and three short silver bolts erupted from it that merged in the air expanding to a hundred feet long bolts whose speed and destructive ability multiplied and slammed into the Shiik, this shot was still heading unerringly at the forehead of the Calamity, a spot that was supposed to be the weak point of this Calamity.

Batting the silver bolt out of the air, the Shiik charged forward but was met by a dozen similar bolts, and this time it was not able to deflect all of them, a bolt pierced its left eye, and two entered its forehead and the last through its nose.

The left side of the Shiik head suddenly swelled and exploded revealing a bright silver glow within its skull, the explosion flinging gore for hundreds of feet.

An unearthly wail erupted from the Shiik as it collapsed, its momentum dragging its massive body and stopping a few feet away from the three Glorious Ranked Explorers.

The pale white blood of the Shiik slowly seeped out of the fatal wounds on its head and for all intent it was dead. The Three Explorers looked at each other and they removed their helmets displaying similar features. They were all male and they should be related.

Sounds began to emerge from the broken ship as the survivors began to troop out, their eyes fearfully accessing the gigantic body of the Shiik, there were barely forty of them

left, and in a few seconds the Shiik had killed almost half of the crew before it was taken down.

The last person that emerged from the ship was an old man whose red hair had faded towards black and his shoulders were a bit hunched. Apart from everyone here, he was the only one who looked at the Shiik without any fear but fascination.

Walking up to the beast, the three Glorious Ranked Explorers bowed and made way for him, this old man appeared to be the captain of this ship and thereby the strongest, making him a Legend Ranked Explorer which meant he controlled three Natal Treasures.

The old man touched a single strand of the Shiik's hair and looked at the beast with clear eyes before dipping his fingers into the blood and bringing it to his eyes, before sighing in disappointment,

"I was a bit annoyed when you quickly killed the beast, but it is just a Heroic Ranked Calamity, although something has definitely happened to it to enhance portions of its abilities, it has not much use for us."

Turning away he addressed the rest of the crew, pointing towards the Glorious Ranked Explorers first, "This is a resource point for Shiiks, enter the crater and gather any of them that are left before my brother reaches this place, I want to be far gone, and for the rest of you, begin restoration of the ship, there are stores of Hunor Metals to fix the damages and..." The voice of the old man slowed as he noticed that the crew was no longer listening to him and were starting with fear and fascination in their eyes at something behind him, with anger blazing in his eyes he turned around and noticed that nothing had changed.

He did not need to turn around because his sense was so powerful, it encapsulated hundreds of feet around his body and he noticed nothing out of the ordinary, the motion he made was just to show how displeased he was,

"I will flay all of you to an inch of your lives if I am not given a proper reason for your misdemeanors at such a critical time."

It was one of the Glorious Ranked Explorers that pointed with shaking hands directly above the old man, "There... there is a child on standing on your left shoulder."

The old man paused and slowed down his breathing, still furious he looked towards his shoulders, but as he expected there was no one and nothing there, he looked back at his officers planning to make one of them an example and a chill flashed across his spine when he noticed that he was alone.

In the moments before he looked towards his shoulder and looked down it was barely a second and yet everyone around him was gone... without even a sound.

It was then that he heard a slight rustle, as if metal was being pushed out of flesh, a cold breeze blew past him and he slowly turned around and went face to face with the massive open eyes of the Shiik.

The fatal wounds were gone, evidenced by the large silver bolts lying on the ground and the supposedly dead Shiik had arisen. The shocking face of a beautiful woman who had no visible flaws on her face was terrifying. Shiiks were deformed Calamities, they were never meant to be this... complete.

"She is beautiful... my child, don't you think?"

That was when he felt a weight on his left shoulders and a calm voice like that of a child but still carrying a note of incredible age.

His eyes slowly looked up to a pair of small feet standing on his shoulder, and tracing the slender feet he was met with the sight of a naked boy of maybe ten years old with his birth cord still hanging from his navel and wrapped around his waist.

The mouth of the old Explorer went dry, but the instinct of nearly two centuries of war made him move even before his conscious thought had come to terms with what he was seeing.

His Aura exploded from his body but he felt a chill around his throat and something wet pouring down to his chest.

Chapter 1037: Kill For This Honor

The old man quickly realized that he had been wounded and instantly manifested his most powerful Natal Treasure, a silver orb the size of a grapefruit, with a great cry.

The appearance of the orb came about like an explosion of light and force that could be seen for miles, enormous blast waves that shattered the earth and left cracks that extended for miles, leaving only the black building that contained the Teleportation Prism intact, even the Shiik was flung away, losing dozens of limbs, and its armor was nearly crushed to pieces.

One moment the old man had seemed confused and the next he had released enough power to level the entire complex. It was apparent that when there was a great jump between the Glorious Rank and the Heroic Rank, this divide only increased drastically when it came to the Legend Rank.

The partially destroyed ship a few hundred feet away was crushed into pieces as wave after wave of destructive silver light carrying intensive concussive forces slammed it to the earth repeatedly, like an egg placed between a hammer and an anvil, the ship

virtually vanished. His cries stopped and the old man who had been hovering in the air looked around him in exasperation as his feet touched the ground, in his wrath and fear he had destroyed everything around him. He wanted to slap himself with anger when he saw that of his ship the largest pieces left were not bigger than a small plate.

He could regrow his ship but that would take months, the advantage of reaching a hidden resource point like this one would be lost when others arrived, and that was the least of his trouble, his brother was a Deific Ranked Explorer working for the Silver Alliance, and he would skin him alive if he knew he rushed here to loot this area instead of helping to protect

it.

An opportunity for great wealth like this came about once in a lifetime, and if he wanted to reach the famed inheritance ground, he needed every edge he could get.

Looking at the devastation he had wrought, he understood that he had been fooled, he knew of certain techniques or Natal Treasures that could warp the perception of others, and that was what had most likely happened to him, his men had not vanished and no naked little boy was standing on his shoulder, in one swoop he had destroyed his entire crew.

His throat hurt but it was not a debilitating wound, nothing that his physique was not already slowly healing and he should be fine even without any elixir in a week or at most two weeks. Those conniving bastards had just traded a nonlethal wound for his entire crew and shamefully he had been the one to dispense their will. This thought filled him with shame and rage.

He needed to draw them out any way that he could and then he could crush them like the bugs they were,

"You must be enjoying yourself eeh? Tricking me like the little rat that you are. Don't think you can hide from me, I will find you and make you beg for your death... Do you know who I am and the things that I have done?! I shall find all of you, be certain of that, and my rage, hehehe..."

Rowan suddenly appeared in front of the old man, held up by parasitic tentacles that emerged from his spine so he could stand at the same height as the old man, and he was so close that they were face to face,

"Now I am curious," Rowan drawled, "about the things you have done that give you such confidence, although I fear that as always it is unfounded, but I am willing to give you the benefit of the doubt. Some mortals as it turns out are indeed quite fascinating creatures, I know of one called Telmus, so be warned, I hold a particularly high standard, and if you don't meet them, I would be very disappointed."

"Bassstaard!!!" The old man screamed furiously, releasing several pulses of concussive force from the silver orb, he soon manifested a silver gauntlet and a halberd, and he released waves of destructive forces from the halberd while a silver dome of force covered his entire body.

Summoning his entire trove of Natal treasures made the spine of the old man straighten as his vitality surged, his black hair began to redden at the roots.

Rowan appeared once again, just outside the dome of force covering the old man, unaffected by the destruction, there was a look of disappointment in his eyes,

"In my experience, I have seen that sometimes it is not the strongest who wins the battle, the wisest that wins the arguments, or the swiftest that wins the race, and yet of all the showings of the weak before the mighty, that turned out to be... disappointing. Is this the full reaches of your powers?"

"You are nothing!" the old man spat, a thick vein throbbing on his forehead, "Nothing but a mirage, you hide like a worm and throw shadows at your betters! Come forward and face me, you craven!"

Rowan sighed, "There are many ways that I can kill you. Including the several parasitic worms

I have around your heart and brain, I have evolved them white extensively and they can chew through even tough organs like yours without much trouble, but sometimes, I believe the old ways are best."

Saying this Rowan opened his hands and two short daggers appeared, they seemed to be made from blood before they solidified into ruby. He slightly leaned his body forward like a panther, taking a step, Rowan vanished.

"More mirage!" the old man screamed and launched a concussive wave of force from the silver orb while looking around with a piercing gaze, his waving halberd leaving lines of silver in the air, that hummed with a sharp piercing power.

"Then this should not hurt," Rowan appeared behind the old man, who whirled around to face him, bringing his halberd upwards so he could cut the imposter in two, but then he noticed that his dome of force shook and flashed before vanishing.

'That can't be right?' looking down at his left hand, he noticed that his entire arm from the elbow which held his gauntlet that was responsible for the defensive dome around his body was hanging by a single strip of skin.

That skin stretched down before the weight of the arm tore apart the skin and the arm fell to the ground with a dull thud.

The old man looked at his stump and back at Rowan with disbelieving eyes, "How..."

Rowan rolled his eyes, "This is becoming quite boring, could it be that I was wrong about you?" scratching the side of his face with the sharp edges of his knife Rowan asked with curiosity in his gaze, "From your earlier words it seems you believed that I used your hands in dealing with your crew, but if that is the case, why have you not yet received your bounty of Aura from this mad realm?"

The old man shivered, and stammered, "You... you..."

"Yes me," Rowan sighed and crouched again, "Now focus, Roael, you are about to die, and you should do it as a warrior. Something about your fate intrigues me, and it would be a shame for you to fight me without putting in your all. Rulers of entire realities would kill for this honor."

Chapter 1038: Bloodline Of Shame

Something in Rowan's tone and the etherealness of his existence shook the old man to the core and the realization that he was before something that even in a million years he had no chance to understand struck him,

"What are you?" the old man solemnly whispered,

"You know who I am Roael, not consciously, but something inside your blood, the oldest of instinct of your kind knows my presence as surely as you know your own hand. Fight me with everything in your soul and spirit, according to the old ways, and then I might tell you. You intrigue me, Roael."

The old man growled, "fuck you!"

"That is the spirit!" Rowan smiled, and it was beautiful, his consciousness inhabiting this body was slowly changing according to his image, "Come for me, mortal, let your life reveal its splendor at this moment, show me what called you to my gaze."

The old man did not roar, he only gritted his teeth and brought the head of his halberd to his stump, and with a loud sizzle he closed off the bleeding wound,

Rowan's eyes which were as black as the void analyzed these new changes in the old man and he nodded in satisfaction, before he attacked, some part of him acknowledging the fact that at this moment he must sound as crazy as the World Will who butchered him a while ago. The last thought in his heart before he clashed with Roael and left everything behind but instinct was that 'there were always truths behind the madness.'

Although he clashed with no extra force but his mortal body against a Legend Ranked Explorer, the sound of his short blade hitting the halberd was like thunder.

Rowan had access to all the greatest martial arts across many universes, and with a portion of his consciousness always refining the abilities he knew, he had reached such a profound state in his fighting capacity that every move he made carried an untold amount of domination, but for this battle, he drew upon only the smallest of his abilities, but he nearly overwhelmed the old man in the first second.

Rowan's blades were like a whirlwind, always snaking in from unexpected directions, and the old man defended furiously with his halberd, he had to sacrifice little wounds to avoid major ones, as he quickly realized that his greatest weapon, his silver orb, was utterly useless against his foe.

It was an amazing and fearful thing to watch as his foe weaved through the blast of force as if it was pointless, while still punishing him with blows that would slice his body apart.

Roael knew that this outcome was only a matter of time, without one of his limbs he was not properly balanced and it had been a while since he had to fight with his life on the line like this.

As if the blades from the child had multiplied, dozens of them headed towards all the vulnerable spots on his body from his head to his toes, and the face of the old man went pale despite his dusky green skin tone, the moment before his death, his eyes brightened and the arm left on the floor combusted with a silver glow and the gauntlet around the arm released a force field that did not wrap around the body of the old man but Rowan, freezing him in place. The breath of the old man caught in his throat, and he gasped aloud, sweat and blood pooling down his legs. The fight had barely taken three seconds, but he had nearly died a hundred times. In this moment the blades of Rowan had stopped a millimeter from his right eye and his heart, a slight delay in the activation of his gauntlet and he would be dead.

Unexpectedly this understanding did not make him angry, instead, he began to laugh. The eyes of Rowan that had been frozen in place slowly turned towards him, the motion drawing a loud shrieking sound from the gauntlet similar to a fingernail scratching at a board, and his voice emerged from the confines even though his lips were not moving,

"You see... that was unexpected, according to all my knowledge about Explorers, cutting off the limb that had been bound with your Natal Treasure would deprive you of the ability to channel the power of that treasure, that is until you become a Deific Ranked Explorer, how are you able to perform this feat Roael?"

The old man continued laughing, "So there are mysteries that you are not aware of monster."

His left hand which had been sliced off began to rapidly regrow, and when they did they contained faint brown scales like those of a serpent. The gauntlet reappeared in the hands of the old man and his demeanor changed, his skin that was formerly green began to shift towards purple, and his reddish-black hair began to turn golden,

"It is said that we are only able to use these words when we become a Deific Ranked Explorer, and I have waited for most of my life to say them, but for someone like you... I think it would be fitting to use it here, my shame is no longer a burden to me when it can be used against the unknown in this world," the old man spoke aloud, power rippling through his voice,

"I am an Explorer of the unknown and the wicked, and this is my fate."

The force field covering Rowan's body began to creak as sparks leaped out from it, before long he would be free, and the light in his eyes was dangerous and filled with fury.

The old man, filled with new power, disregarded this incoming danger, seized his halberd with both hands and charged forward, driving the weapon down on the forehead of the shackled boy.

However, two small hands caught the heavy ends of the blade and halted it an inch from cutting into the forehead of the child, but the old man grinned and twisted the haft of his weapon and the blade caught between the palms of the boy exploded.

"Today you shall die, monster!" the old man screamed.

"Not today," a calm voice replied through the rapidly facing explosion, revealing the body cradling a silver flame in the center of his palm, "not on any other day. Now tell me, you pathetic mortal... Who claims my bloodline is one of shame?"

Chapter 1039: Blood Bound

Rowan no longer fought with any bit of fairness anymore, now understanding that his softheartedness came from the kinship he had felt with this old man that emerged from a diluted part of his blood flowing in his veins. This was so unexpected that his bloodline could escape his control and in such a prevalent manner that Rowan shook with anger.

When Rowan died the first time inside this world, his consciousness had been placed in a coma and he was unaware of the battle that took place between the serpents and the Ascendants, only awakening at the end to futilely fight against the World Will where he lost, and although he should have regained all his missing memories the instant he had awakened, he was killed once again, his consciousness likely scattered all over Doom

Star and so at this moment was not complete, leaving a large chunk of the previous battles a mystery.

The presence of this old man and the bloodline he contained meant that in that battle Rowan's bloodline must have spread through the world. It was unlikely he would get the full picture from the memories of the man, but it would be a first step.

He feared that pieces of his body were spread all over Doom Star and its influence was already spreading throughout this world, but this spread was chaotic, or at least he hoped it was, his reawakening was strange, it still felt that he had not awakened from death naturally, but was summoned.

Roael, not knowing the great changes happening inside Rowan's head, cracked his neck, screamed his defiance, and charged toward Rowan, "I am an Explorer, and today you shall fall!"

Rowan stretched forth his hand and the old man's body stiffened in mid-charge and rose into the air, carried by an invisible hand that rendered all his actions futile, he could more easily move the world than move even a single finger. Rowan's eyes closed a bit as he focused, the large shadows of the Shiik emerged behind him as the Calamity had finished healing its wounds and came to rest behind Rowan looking at the old man with fury in its dead white eyes.

"I once thought that you were something special, but it was not you, it was what inside your blood that calls to me, a shame, and I was expecting more from you, I wonder why that is? Have I truly fallen to such an extent?"

Saying these words, Rowan pulled. The broken state of his consciousness had made it hard for him to find traces of his blood inside this Explorer, but he had sensed it, a faint connection that made the old man favorable in his sight.

Roael wanted to scream but he could not, suspended in the air, the absolute dominance of those with bloodline authority was fully displayed at this moment as from every pore in his body, every single drop of liquid contained inside his mortal frame was extracted in an instant.

In one moment there was a vibrant man filled with bloodlust and righteous fury, and in the next moment, a shrunken bloodless cadaver with no single drop of moisture in his body remained in the air, thankfully Roal lived for a single second after this before the hands of death mercifully took him, even his impressive physique as a Legend Ranked Explorer was useless to fight against such a terrible injury, and when his remain touched the ground they collapsed into dust.

Rowan floated the nearly eight liters of fluid that contained the blood, marrows, and every other liquid content in Roael's body to him even his urine was part of this mass, and he swiped his hand to the right repeatedly, every time he did this, a part of the liquid

was flung aside, as he ejected everything in the blood that was not needed by him, and what was left was a golden drop of blood the size of a pinhead.

Rowan closed his eyes as he assimilated all the memories of Roael from the soul of the Explorer and when he was done his eyes snapped open in fury.

His body shuddered as the infusion of nearly a hundred Heroic Ranked Explorers, three Glorious Ranked Explorers and a Legend Ranked Explorer filled him to the brim, accumulating with so much density inside his cells that they all turned blue, and there was a faint cracking sound that seemed to reverberate in the heavens above as Rowan reached the Enlightened Realm as an Explorer.

His body readjusted itself, no longer like a ten-year-old, now he was a teenager at fourteen years old and his hair now reached his waist. With the dense amount of Ascendant Aura inside his Enlightened body.

Rowan's feet no longer touched the ground, no more a mere mortal, he had enough Ascendant Aura inside him to rival a Deific Ranked Explorer, his body no longer obeyed gravity, and he stayed a few inches away from the ground, his legs would no longer touch the earth.

However, his primary focus was not on his realm advancement, it was the memories he was still riffling through and the dot of gold on his fingertip.

According to the limited knowledge inside Roael, his kind, those with the fragments of Rowan's blood inside them were called the Blood Bound, and the period when they first began to sight them was primarily unknown, but it was generally placed between five hundred thousand years ago and a time period more enshrouded in dust.

Knowledge of those periods was left in the dark, especially for those beneath the Ascendant ranks whose lifespan could only be counted in decades and centuries, it was nearly impossible to know what happened in the depths of history for those of their ranks.

This realization that he had slept for half a million years and perhaps even more was not as shocking to Rowan, he could detect the flow of time to a limited degree even with his broken consciousness and he was aware that a long time had passed since he slumbered, and it had indeed taken this long for this minor fragment of himself to wake up.

Yet this confirmation that he had slept this long filled him with great fear, but the reason he was afraid was unknown, his memories were still too shattered, but Rowan knew that the only thing he truly feared were matters involving Primordials, and if that was the case, whatever was missing in his memories was crucial, and time was a fundamental aspect to it.

His mind immediately focused on the word 'time.' He knew that what was troubling him deeply was linked to time, but he could not remember, he frowned but pushed these worries aside as he perused the last of the memories.

Blood Bound were Explorers whose blood had become tainted, their potential was halted at the Deific Rank, unable to cross to Ascendancy, because the corrupted blood inside their bodies was so dominant in its control over the flesh, it held the Explorers bound to their fleshy body.

An Ascendant was supposed to leave the fleshy body behind and take the form of Aura, only in this manner would they become truly immortal and no longer bound to the frailties of the flesh, but the Blood Bound was unable to take this step.

Chapter 1040: Enlightened

For the entirety of their history, no single Blood Bound had been able to step past the Deific Rank, and although there were rumors of ancient monsters within the ranks of the Blood Bounds who had remained at the Deific Rank for hundreds of thousands of years, no one could confirm that rumor.

The only advantage of the Blood Bound was their quick growth rate, somehow they were able to gain far more Aura when they fought and killed their enemies, whether they be Explorers or Calamities. This made them flawed but useful tools, and the Blood Bound traits were no longer killed off or bred out of the population but the opposite actually occurred.

Massive continents were filled with Blood Bound slaves, bred for nothing but battle used as shock troops, and other deadly aspects in the battle against the Calamities. They could be given few resources and yet quickly grow to become Deific Ranked Explorers, and they were one of the primary reasons why the Explorers had been able to fight off the invasion of the Calamities for the last half a million years.

It would seem that his blood had affected the outlined destiny of this world, but Rowan did not know if that would lead to his advantage or disadvantage in the long run.

Roael was a Blood Bound but he had hidden this trait of his for long, willfully slowing down his advancement speed and traveling to the Silver Alliance, an area that was far from the influence of those who utilized Blood Bounds in their service.

Yet there were still mysteries behind this man and that was related to his brother. A portion of Roael's memories was missing, sliced away so deeply it affected his soul, and whatever was in that portion of his memories must be very important because his brother was an Ascendant! This was an interesting development, but not one Rowan

was particularly interested in. It would be a side project to his overall pursuit of exterminating this World's Will.

"Blood Bound!" Rowan growled, never in a thousand Eras had Rowan ever imagined that his glorious bloodline would be reduced to the dirt, made slaves and fodder, and his light was painted by shame. He clenched his hand in fury and assimilated the dot of golden blood, pushing it inside the safety of his spine where it would be hidden from the gaze of the world.

He might have just discovered a shortcut in piecing together his shattered consciousness but this method was nothing he would ever choose willingly.

Pushing the matter of his bloodline to another consciousness node in his spine, he focused on the new state of his body, unraveling its secrets and preparing it for the next level. New companies would not be far behind, and his elevation would be swift and merciless, but a foundation needed to be built first.

For an average Explorer in the Enlightened Realm, the main growth they saw after leaving portions of their mortal body behind and officially climbing in the ranks of an Explorer, was their senses.

Everything from sight, smell, touch, and other mystical senses were fully activated and dialed up to eleven, the reason they were called Enlightened was that they were now able to peer into the hidden realms of this world, and for the first time, they were able to see Aura. Not sense it vaguely as some talented mortals were able to, but truly see it.

Rowan had never had an issue with viewing Aura but that was not the case for the average mortal, only at the Enlightened Realm could they begin coming in contact with this mystical force and the stage to start their foundations as Explorers began.

Another gift of the Enlightened Rank was the ability to manipulate the Aura inside the body in order to build the foundations for higher rankings as an Explorer.

Explorers would select the techniques that would carry them throughout the course of their lives and give birth to their Natal Treasures at the Glorious Rank.

Rowan focused inside himself as he analyzed all the techniques in the minds of every Explorer he had killed. He soon figured out the crux behind the creation of these techniques.

It was just a simple application of the mutated Auric properties of this realm in a specific pattern that could draw out some of the mysteries in this space that aligned with the nature of the realm, giving the Explorers the chance to control a very tiny portion of the World's Will.

The method if Rowan was to admit was genius, but in the end, it would do nothing but tie the Explorers deeper into debt with this realm. A realm that seemed to favor their enemies the Calamities more than the Explorers, and Rowan understood that no matter how this game was played, the winner in the end would still be the World's Will.

Rowan had no intention to partake in this rat race with the rest of the Explorers seeking to utilize a piece of the World's Will as a weapon.

Instead what he wanted to do was to craft his own path forward, but he paused in this consideration. Perhaps if he followed the path of his own making, he would be stronger, but that would do away with the advantages he had with the occupation of this body that still fit into the overall pattern of this World's Will.

He had not forgotten the way he had previously died, the creature below the earth tricked his senses and the World Will bounded his consciousness in a rocky shell. His major advantages were crushed and he could not fight with his greatest strengths, if he had learned anything from that encounter it was that he would have to repay the enemies in their own coin, and against the powers of the higher dimensions, he still had much to learn.

Rowan had almost been tempted to follow his pattern of breaking the Will of the worlds he was in and making their rules his plaything, but sometimes the best way to destroy something was from the inside.

There were many mysteries in this world that might be linked to events that happened in the first universe he had inhabited, in addition to this unknown danger he was sensing from 'time' itself. He needed to walk this path with great care.

If all this was the case, then he should not break the current pattern he was pursuing here, he would still remain an ant under the World's Will but a terrifyingly large ant.

He would hide in the most obvious place possible, which was in the full gaze of the World's Will, but no matter how much splash he makes, he would still fall under the permitted patterns that were acceptable in this world, and like a frog that was slowly being boiled to death inside a pot, the World's Will would be unable to do nothing, because although it was crazed, it had to still obey certain rules, because breaking them would risk its destruction. "So which technique should I now create that would fit the pattern of the World Will but taken past its limits?"

The horizon vibrated as in the distance tens of heavy warships appeared, zooming towards the dead continents, Rowan paused and rubbed his face,

"Let us put that matter on hold for the moment."

Turning to the Shiik, he nodded, "Time to feast. I shall be making you a Legend by the time this battle is over."

