

The Primordial Record

Chapter 1051: Carrying A Universe

Rowan stood in a void, surrounded by heavenly bodies made from gold, with his perception he could see vast galaxies without number, roving worlds, and whispering stars, and in the void, he could hear the whispers of the first part of his True name uttered from the mouths of countless beings whose creator had returned...

Trrshikrhl Velhyez Ywnmryr...

Desolator of Universes...

Rowan paused, peering at the immensity of his consciousness and knowing this was a fifth of his entire power, and it was dormant, yet the power contained in every speck of light could crush a thousand worlds.

This fragile mortal body he inhabited began to shiver, every cell in its body nearly rebelling against the might it was witnessing, and Rowan had to shatter all his nerve endings, leaving him paralyzed for him to just stand in place. His consciousness took over puppeteering the mortal body.

Opening himself up to his remnant, Rowan accepted this portion of his consciousness and as the only part of his consciousness that was awakened, no matter how small it was, the dormant consciousness found a target and began to move toward him.

That whisper that chanted the first portion of his True Name built to a roar that resounded all over the void, and like a powerful black hole drawing reality itself into its crushing embrace, the entire universe of gold began to rush toward Rowan.

A planet hurtled towards him, the first of the many, and it slammed into him with indescribable force, Rowan's tiny body was lost in the immensity of this world and when it seemed as if the planet would crush him to nothingness, his blue robes spread out wide like wings and the massive planet shrunk and embroidered itself in his robe.

Rowan rocked back, feeling a sweet taste rush from his throat to his tongue as his internals were shredded to fine mist. His healing took care of the damage in a second, this could kill him, crush the remnants of the consciousness in this fragile mortal body.

"You shall break... again and again..."

He looked ahead at the immensity of the heavens rushing towards him and Rowan smiled, blood pulsing with blue light falling from the side of his lips, and he roared,

"Bring it!"

His tiny figure was drowned by the endless infinities of the heavens, but his roar never faded.

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The seven Calamity Suns stayed in the skies for seven days before they vanished as suddenly as they appeared, and the three Ascendant Suns took their place.

The Calamities that seemed to have overtaken all of reality, roared in anguish as the majority of them collapsed to dust, only the most powerful at the Legend Rank dug their way into your earth, finding the dark places to hide from the light of Ascendancy, and peace came to a world that had been consumed by madness.

The Shiik groaned under the light of Ascendancy, but its Calamity Aura acted like a shroud over its massive body. The shroud burned under the light of the three suns releasing black smoke that covered its body, and from afar, it resembled a slumbering volcano.

Under the light of the Ascendancy Suns Rowan's form was revealed, he floated cross-legged in the air, and his blue robes were now gold. His appearance was striking, green skin with long red hair, and his eyes no longer entirely black but filled with flecks of gold. At first, he resembled a statue with countless cracks running through it, and it seemed as if a small breeze would shatter him to dust, but the wounds healed, and his frame filled with endless vitality.

His golden robes were now longer than before, stretching more than twenty feet behind him, and hovering a few inches over the ground. Closer investigation of the robe would reveal that its base was blue, and the gold were countless heavenly bodies moving around in a peculiar harmony.

His Natal Treasure was carrying an entire universe.

Rowan appeared calm on the surface but inside his mind was a raging flood of thoughts and emotions as the knowledge that he had been sleeping in death for eight hundred and eighty thousand years filled him with anger and despair.

Anger that he had lost so much time and despair that the fear plaguing his spirit now had a face, the Eye of the Primordial of Time was no longer bound to him.

Opening his eyes Rowan contemplated his next moves for a while, the new knowledge and power he had gained from summoning the first part of his name changed the directions of his plans a bit, but those could still be refined. He was in immense danger if he remained inside the Supreme Circle when the remnants of a Primordial were on the loose.

It would seem that to win the war inside Doom Star, he was not only going against the World's Will an entity that should at least be at the seventh-dimensional level, but a Primordial remnants.

His next steps would be to reach the Deific Rank, where he could increase the number of his Natal Treasure from three to six, for him that meant doubling the carrying capacity of his robes, enough for him to summon another part of his consciousness.

With the destruction of countless Explorers in the claws of the Shiik, Rowan had collected enough memories that he knew his next destination. His lost treasure had been found by the Explorers and Rowan was going to collect back what was his.

He stood up, standing at more than seven feet tall, his majesty stood unrivaled beneath the heavens, with a wave of his hand the mountainous body of the Shiik shrank until it was barely a hundred feet tall, and it began walking behind Rowan, on a cloud of blue Ascendancy Aura that emerged from his golden robes.

Reaching the black building that had endured the devastation of the Calamity tides without a single scratch, Rowan's Aura went ahead of him, seized the entire building, and crushed it to a dot, leaving the hovering prism behind, his Aura entered the Prism and a gigantic tear in space manifested behind the prism.

Golden robes rippling in ephemeral winds, the enigmatic figure of Rowan and the Shiik vanished into the tear in space.

Chapter 1052: Stone Reach

Two Ascendant Explorers were fleeing, their speeds of movements were so quick it was almost as if time had been frozen in place, because nothing around them was moving, even the molecules in the air were frozen in place, and if not for a green flame covering the two Ascendants that pushed away the frozen particles in their paths aside, then every motion of their bodies would be like a nuclear explosion going off, but this protective green flame was slowly dying out.

Their bodies which seemed to be made from black smoke left long trails behind, but their form appeared shaky and on the edge of dissipation as if both Ascendants had suffered grievous damages to their bodies.

This was when the true reality of their situation was revealed, their speeds were ridiculously fast, that was true, but the reality they were traveling past had been frozen in time, and their only protection against this time stop effect was the rapidly vanishing green flames covering their bodies.

One of the Ascendants noticing the rapidly fading flames, sighed and spoke loudly, breaking the silence that had been their companion all this while as they fled,

"We won't make it. The fort is gone, and the Blight has overtaken us."

"Yes, we won't make it, but it does not matter if we don't make it, from here we should be able to transfer the data about the spread of the Time Blight. Give me your flames, I shall complete the process. I shall send a small packet of information across to the Council, the flames should be able to protect such a minor amount of data until it escapes this zone."

There was a slight pause before the first Explorer nodded, and touched the second Ascendant passing the remnants of his flames over to him without any hesitation even though he knew he was condemning himself to a date worse than death, and immediately he was frozen in place.

The second Ascendant looked at his brethren for a short while before he began to gather his flames also in a large green orb and a bright blue mist emerged from his smoky eyes and fused to the green flames, about to launch it, he felt a chill crawl past his spine, and his body turned involuntary to behold the creature that had appeared behind him.

It took the form of a Deific Explorer, with hands spread outwards as if crucified, from his body, came a flood of blood and pus, black smoke, and dead snakes. From his thin chest came an unending sound of laughter.

Every Ascendant knew the form of Noah Rithmast, the originator of the Time Blight that had swallowed ten million continents, placing everything, both Ascendant and Calamity in a zone of null time, yet the sounds of anguish from countless multitudes resounded from the bodies.

The Ascendant knew he would not survive this encounter with this unknown terror, but not backing down he pushed his arms upward to launch the ball of green flames carrying the message that the Time Blight was beginning to spread once again, and its originator was on the move once again, the higher Ascendants would need to interfere before more of the world was lost.

The flames did not travel far before it vanished and the Ascendant shuddered when it noticed the eyes of Noah Rithmast had opened, and that was the last thing he saw before his body was frozen in time, and his endless torture began.

The head of Noah Rithmast slowly turned to his side, his dead eyes bleeding blood, pus, and smoke peering past unfathomable distances until his gaze reached Rowan and he grinned.

Below him spread out for what seemed like an infinity were ten million continents, and unless Rowan was here, he would have understood that the overall shapes of all the continents resembled an eye, not an oval-shaped one, but the four-sided square-shaped eye of the Primordial of Time.

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Rowan reappeared above a massive continent, far greater than any he had ever been. This continent was more than ten thousand miles in circumference and covered with nothing but endless forests. This was one of the most important outposts of the Silver Alliance.

Behind him, the Shiik appeared shortly followed by the Prism which collapsed into dust. Rowan had utilized every single speck of energy inside the Prism to bring him to the farthest location it was able to reach, knowing he would be able to get a more powerful Teleportation Prism in this location to bring him to his target.

Looking up at the sky, he noticed that the position of the three Ascendant suns had shifted their position and was closer to the north, confirming his speculations and affirming the memories of the Explorers that he had collected that the Ascendant Suns were no longer powerful enough to cover the entire Realm.

From the memories in his mind, Rowan knew that once there were ten Ascendant Suns and an equal number of Calamity Suns, and they separated the Realm equally between them, but seven of the Ascendant Suns had fallen, for only three Calamity Suns, pushing the balance out of bounds.

This meant that in many corners of the Realm, the light of the Ascendant Sun could not reach them, and they were permanently under the bounds of Calamity.

Dropping his gaze back to the earth, Rowan began surveying the land. The forest covered more than ninety-five percent of the entire land mass, and the rest five percent was dedicated to a massive castle that could hold tens of millions.

This castle did not belong to the Silver Alliance, they were only to serve as watchers over it. This castle was the property of the Council of Nine, the preeminent power of Ascendancy, whose among its members were the three Ascendant suns overhead.

The castle was called the Stone Reach, and it was responsible for holding back the tides of Calamities against a thousand Continent and was an important communication hub for a lot of continents facing the crushing onslaught of the Calamities, however, its most important function was that of a Citadel Hub, the only location that could ensure the immortality of a Deific Ranked Explorer.

Chapter 1053: Temple Maiden

Nyla Sheritz knew she was being resurrected from death. As a Temple Maiden assigned to the Silver Alliance, being reborn continuously was both her privilege and a burden.

The sensation of resurrection was one that she could never get used to, Nyla suspected that no one could ever become used to it. Death was supposed to be final, there was a sense of completion that came to the mind the moment death arrived, and no matter the pain or burden in the heart, at that moment, at the threshold, there was peace.

Resurrection was Conflict. It tugs at the mind and spirit without mercy, it does not care if it caused any damage, for resurrection could heal any wound it caused, this makes it cruel.

The creator of the Citadel wanted an undying army, and in times of war, comfort and stability were not even in the terms of agreement, only necessity was king. It was why the experience was always different, death was darkness, finality... Resurrection was light, new beginnings, and the truth was every time Resurrection took from the dark, it left something of itself behind.

Unlike any other Explorers, a Temple Maiden was charged to strip off a portion of their Core Aura every decade, to ensure that they had an ample supply of their Core Aura in as many Citadels as possible. The first of their order had made a solemn vow that every Temple Maiden would see this war to its end, no matter the result that end might bring.

Their Ascendant Techniques made it impossible for them to run mad from splitting their Core Aura so frequently, but it did not aid them against the pain. They had learned to scream in silence because they knew that others may one day find rest in death, but their vow had forbidden them from this peace.

A Temple Maiden was a unique resource in the war effort. Their duty was to be the eyes and ears of the Council of Nine, and although Nyla knew that her fate was a grim one, it was a duty she faced without shrinking back, and the last death she faced was not the most painful but was surely one of the strangest.

Till this moment she hardly understood what had happened, except for the flames and the feeling of death digging into her soul with hungry claws and a lustful grin. Has she been corrupted? Surely the manner of her death warranted corruption, and this was also under the gaze of Calamity.

Every Temple Maid was unified in their creed and this was why when Nyla awakened it did not take her long to become furious, for she had died under the light of the Calamity Suns and that meant that she should have been given at least a century for any taint in

her Aura to be cleansed before she was resurrected, but from her internal clock she noticed that barely fifteen days had passed, that meant that her resurrection procedure was enacted almost immediately.

This went against their creed. Temple Maidens were always resurrected, but under from their Temple Mothers, and the earliest a Temple Mother would ever agree to was a year.

No one else except a Temple Mother truly understood the burden every Temple Maiden carried, and they would always allow them the peace of death for as long as necessary, knowing that in return, the Maidens would fight against the madness until the end of everything.

She touched the cover over her exclusive Resurrection Pod and it dematerialized, allowing her to rise from the healing gel, and a long silver robe materialized around her body, she hovered in the air for a while, turning towards the second Resurrection Pod where her Temple sister should lie and smiled in relief that it was still closed.

At least her Temple Sister was still at peace, but whoever was responsible for waking her from her slumber would suffer the wrath of her entire Order. Her legs touched the ground and she yelped, nearly stumbling when she discovered that her Spirit was extremely weakened.

No, it went even beyond her Spirit, it was as if a greater portion of her soul was gone! This was impossible, even the darkness could not touch the soul of a Deific Explorer, their core had become seeped in its light, granting them the possibility of resurrection and immortality. If the news of what happened to her was to spread, it would destabilize the entire world.

Opening her eyes wide in astonishment and fear, a thought reached her spirit and she hurriedly checked her six Natal treasures and her face went pale. Nyla summoned them in shock to confirm what she had just discovered because it seemed so unreal that something like that could happen... was happening, she corrected herself.

It was in this way that the ruler of Stone Reach came to find her, staring at six rusted blades, and it appeared that she had been looking at her Natal Treasures for hours because he had been waiting outside the door for that long and finally had to enter because his superiors had given him an order, and common sense took hold of him over the fear of the Temple Maiden.

He looked again at her Natal Treasure that soon vanished in a flash of blue sparks and a chill crawled down his spine, the last regret for resurrecting a Temple Maiden was stripped from him, for whatever could destroy a Natal Treasure to the extent that it affected them even after resurrection spoke of a truly diabolical force.

The Temple Maiden looked at him, eyes filled with terror and madness and he swallowed. There was something in those eyes—that he had seen nothing but confidence inside for the last century of knowing her—terrified him to the core. He was struck in silence forgetting the purpose for which he had been sent, that is until she whispered,

"Why did you bring me back from death so quickly?"

It was hard for him to respond, even as a Deific Ranked Explorer, the eyes of the Temple Maiden held the weight of countless years and an equal amount of pain, but he forced himself to reply,

"The Divine Ascendant requested it, too many Explorers were lost in the dead continent, and we needed to know the reason."

The Temple Maiden was silent for a while before she asked, "You went in without first hearing my report? How many died?"

"Too many."

Chapter 1054: Giants Of Gold And Blood

Nyla's eyes flashed with anger and through gritted teeth she inquired, "Precise number."

"Seven hundred and forty-three thousand Explorers, among their number were, five hundred and twenty-five Explorers at the Heroic Rank, two hundred and ninety...."

The numbers faded to a dull droning at the edge of her mind, and she closed her eyes, reciting the mantra of her creed within, and for the first time the words that had given her so much strength in the long years felt so meaningless, and her mind could not leave the singular image of that monster on the beach.

The details of his appearance in the ill-fated events were branded in her mind. He had dropped out of the sky in the body of a mortal, but only those who had never been mortal before would be deceived by his appearance. He was perfect, and the one thing that every mortal was not, was perfect.

Those eyes seemed to contain the void and yet filled with such a stark curiosity as if he was a child where everything was new and yet he seemed to know everything at the same time. He was both filled up and yet still empty.

A hand that touched her face and where she was expecting coldness, she was met with warmth. He did not breathe, the entire time he stood in front of her he was not

breathing, he should have been cold... yet his hands held a warmth that drove away ten thousand years of pain and sorrow from her heart.

The hand of a butcher of men, but also a protector of life.

His Beauty made the mind filled with fire and also chill for nothing in existence was supposed to be this perfect or beautiful.

Two opposing natures living inside a single being, yet they did not cancel each other, they seemed to be in harmony, breeding something greater than the sum of their parts... light and darkness as one, becoming something greater than either could ever be... this was...

Her mind went cold and Nyla shook, as fear filled her mind and she unexpectedly released a small whimper of fear, uncaring about the gaze of astonishment directed towards her by the Ruler of Stone Reach.

What she had been contemplating was heresy. It was almost like thinking Ascendancy and Calamity could become one.

Suppressing these thoughts with everything inside her she looked up, "Take me to the Divine Ascendant, we have much to discuss."

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Seven hours later, Nyla, whose presence was almost like a ghost drifted through the mighty Castle that was Stone Reach, her mind was blank and she was clutching a paper in her right hand.

Like always she found herself in the Crescent Garden, a work of art that combined flowers, flowing pools, and delicate animals to create a picturesque scene that represented peace and harmony. The reason she had stayed at Stone Reach and had never requested a reassignment for the greater part of seven centuries was due to this garden.

Nyla sat here for another hour before she carefully opened the note passed to her by the Divine Ascendant. As always no one had ever seen their appearance, even a Temple Maiden like her who had seen hundreds of Ascendants in her lifetime had never seen the enigmatic Divine Ascendant.

She had knelt before a large metallic grate when she responded to the summoning of the Ascendant, and then she had narrated everything that had transpired, including the being she had seen on the beach, and the events that had previously occurred when the Explorers at the beach were able to gain Aura despite their usage of tools only.

Nyla had expected that her confession should have brought a small measure of peace, but her recollection of the event only made what happened seem more complex and confusing, so many things were not adding up, and the silence of the Divine Ascendant for hours did not help matters.

A small piece of paper had been slipped through the grate, this turned out to be the only reply she had received, and now hours later, she slowly peeled back the paper and stared at it for a while confused for it held only a single line.

Eyes seek the ring, as giants of gold and blood wander the castle.

The Divine Ascendant had always been a strange being, but this cryptic message only added to her confusion,

"Nyla, can I see that paper?"

A voice sounded just ahead of her position, and she looked up, startled, and there he was. He had only said a few words to her at that time on the beach, and she was now ashamed in her discovery that she had not repeated those words during her report to the Divine Ascendant.

She had asked him, "Are you the one responsible for this?"

He had replied, "I am, now I collect." before bringing his hand to hover above her heart, "You should know inside yourself who I am."

Sheer panic seized her heart, the answer to all her questions had been right in front of her all this while, yet a part of herself had been blinded from the truth.

Her body was frozen in place as she looked back to the being who stood a few feet away, his back resting on a green tree with red flowers. His features complemented the scene as he appeared to be the perfect form of life, the essence of all her worship.

He no longer looked like a boy but a man, taller than most, he did not lose any of the charms of youth but instead, it had been elevated, most especially in his eyes and voice.

At first, his eyes were like a dark pit leading to the Abyss, yet it was filled with a mysterious sort of flame, and now that feeling had taken shape, for golden spots like stars glinted in that darkness, it was... mesmerizing.

Despite all these, nothing held her attention more than his voice, the sheer majesty and power inside them yet still wrapped in a harmonious tone that felt like one was listening to the best

sound under the heavens.

"Thank you," he said as he smiled, and Nyla found out that all these while her mind had been occupied, but her body was obeying his words.

Chapter 1055: Deeper Layers

Rowan had been in Stone Reach for eight days, and in all that time the Ascendant Sun stayed constant in the sky, but he could feel the changes in the wind, he knew that the darkness was not far away, Calamity was coming.

His days had not been idly spent, learning about this world while exploring the abilities he had unlocked with his consciousness was a priority. Although his newly gained Consciousness was still dormant, Rowan was not willing to wake this part of himself up before he had finalized his plans to attack this realm head on, he could still mine the impressive memory banks of his consciousness, closing out many gaps in his memories, sadly not all of them, but enough important memories that guided the next part of his plans, refining it to a higher standard.

It may not seem like it, but from the moment he had stepped out of the universe of his birth, a million years had nearly passed, and for him, it was almost like a month had gone by. Reality was not how he had once made it to be, and he had been handed a mountain pile of mysteries to resolve with his only tool being a small shovel, he had no choice but to dig, no matter how long that would take him.

Peering at the written words by the so-called Divine Ascendant, Rowan stroked his chin in thought, it was as he had expected, although his plans to use the World's Will as a vehicle to regain and overthrow its dominion was plausible, there were certain risks and vulnerabilities that could be exploited against him via his actions, he was not entirely safe. Peering deep into the abyss, meant the abyss also peered into you.

Rowan could not escape the consequences of tying his consciousness with a mortal flesh born from this world, but unlike the World's Will who saw him as part of its overall design and therefore was not on a lookout against him, Rowan had plans for this realm... big ones, his right days of observation had revealed that this realm was far more complex than he thought.

As he had once speculated, the two opposing forces at the surface were just what mortals could observe, beyond that level was something stranger that saturated every fundamental rule of this reality, even the Aura they wielded contained a shocking revelation that had stunned him at first when he understood the entire ramifications and what it might mean for him to control it.

He looked up at the woman frozen beside him, her eyes were wide open, filled with complex emotions, and her mouth opened and closed like a fish out of water. He had

collected her soul, so he knew her better than she understood herself, and yet, it was a truly odd thing to see a mortal whose soul he had consumed standing before him.

Rowan cocked his head to the side, this was yet another unique aspect of this realm that had presented itself to him, revealing a certain flaw in his power, and was certainly one of its most intriguing aspects.

He had killed this Explorer and not just harvesting her Ascendant Aura he had also taken her soul energy, but this world had its special tricks-it could also control Soul energy to an extent.

The Deific Explorer could cut out a piece of their Core Aura and store it away, and in the event of their demise, they could be resurrected with that part of themselves with only a fresh injection of purified Ascendant Aura. That was the generally accepted flow of events, at least on the surface, but Rowan knew that the waters always ran deep.

It turned out that part of the mutation of Aura in this realm had to do with the Soul. It was the reason Aura, both of the Ascendant and Calamity types could merge with a Mental Space and produce Natal Treasures, the reason why Aura could be used offensively in this realm, soul energy manipulation had been molded into the fabrics of this power system.

Every time an Explorer sliced off a part of their Core Aura, what they were doing was separating a small part of their soul, and in the event of their death, their Soul Energy did not vanish but lingered and when their Core Aura was fed with Ascendant Aura, it served as a magnet, drawing back the soul energy into their core once more, giving them life.

In a sense, every Explorer in this realm had a Soul-type bloodline and could manipulate their souls, even if they did it unconsciously with the power of their Aura. It was no wonder at the Ascendant level, Explorers did away with their bodies, and become formless, like a soul. Rowan had just discovered one of the greatest secrets of this realm. Forget Ascendancy or Calamity, what was truly controlling this realm was the Soul.

Memories of the first battle he had when he entered Doom Star surfaced in his mind, not yet completed, he still remembered the energy he created from mixing Ascendancy and Calamity, it was purple!

This color was not simple, because, for one, the color of Soul Energy was purple. Looking back now, it should have been clear from the start. This place was separated from Reality, and yet it could still maintain life, so it meant it needed to have a stable foundation of Soul Origin within its control, something that could ensure the existence of mortals. Rowan did not know if Soul energy was the true foundation of this realm, there may be others, but it did not matter, he had gained an advantage nonetheless.

Apart from the Primordial Keepers, the Soul-type bloodline he had found in Mira, the Third Prince backup, the Soul Origin experiments he had found in the eye of the Primordial of Time and Evil, vague hints about a River of Souls, this was the fifth place he had seen clear indication of Soul power at work, and unlike the rest, this realm had reached an astonishingly high level of Soul energy manipulation, it was even engrained in their power system.

Chapter 1056: Pastimes

Rowan had never expected to find a Soul-type realm, one that was separated from Reality, it meant that finally he could experiment and discover deeper layers of souls in this realm.

Perhaps his survival after he was struck down by a Primordial Weapon could not just be because of the lack of expertise by the wielder, but perhaps because he was in an enclosed realm that had its Soul Origin system which had therefore given him the boost to push past the edge of death.

It was in his nature to never back down when he had seized an advantage and would pursue this course to its completion. Leaving his introspection and his plans clear for the future he peered at the mortal beside him.

When he had killed the Explorers in that dead continent, he had harvested all their lingering soul energy, and therefore the woman before him was like a fading flame, it did not matter if her vitality was still robust, her soul energy was at its limit, and in a while, she would be gone, what was left inside of her was not enough to carry the weight of her power.

In Rowan's eyes, she was like a shining star, pouring out her radiance one last time into the universe before it vanished forever. Her fragile soul was filled with countless holes all leaking out lights of various colors that were eerily similar to his Primordial Sea of Ambrosia and his Prismatic eyes... This was the color of the soul when it was wrapped by the experiences of one's life.

Gently holding Nyla's hand, he led her to her designated spot and sat beside her, she usually sat at this spot alone, a habit she had found herself doing for centuries, it would be a peaceful death if she could die in the midst of such beauty, he wanted to leave, but something within him urged him to stay, Rowan sighed and tapped her nose once, drawing a hint of life back into her eyes,

"Breathe... I know what you are feeling right now. It's like you are howling your lungs out in the middle of a crowd. Yet no one can hear you scream. Understand that this feeling will never fade away, you have seen deeply of my nature when you are yet a mortal, even an Ascendant would run mad. You have been scarred for it. However, you can

choose to remain inside this hole in your spirit and languish there until your fragile mortal flesh ceases or you could see it as what it is... just a scar, one among the plenty that you bear."

Not waiting to see if his words would have any effect on her, he sank back into his mind. The fight was left to her now, the only solace he could offer her was to sit by her side as she died, even if she was resurrected again, she would only last a few hours before she perished.

Rowan manifested a pen and paper in his hands, and for the first time in an extremely long time, he began to draw. He set the paper in the air and his pencil began to slowly crawl upon its surface.

Perhaps it was due to his weakened consciousness, or for another reason entirely, he tried not to think about it too much, he knew it helped him in the analysis of the nature of this realm and how he could use them to his advantage in the future.

Already he had another great advantage, what the World Will was seeing of him was disjointed and chaotic because most of Rowan's consciousnesses apart from the one driving this Explorer's body was dormant. Without a guiding mind that was awake, it could never take shape.

In addition to the fact that this body was an Explorer, it granted Rowan a double cover against the World's Will. No matter how much the Will of this world could peer into Rowan's consciousness, the only thing it would find was placid and dormant, and of the few details it would discover, they would all be meaningless.

He focused on what he was drawing because his mind had wandered and he realized he had drawn the entire garden. It was a perfect picture even though it was rendered in black and white, but Rowan frowned. Once drawing had brought him peace, but now, even while he drew, his mind had been focused on nothing but plotting and war.

This odd mortal pastime was not something he could indulge in any longer, he blinked and the paper and pen vanished.

The soft voice of Nyla whispered beside him, "How can you do that?"

"Do what?" he replied distractedly,

"Hold two separate natures inside you. Hot and Cold, Light and Darkness, Death and Life..."

Rowan paused his internal musing and looked at her, "Is that the question you want to ask of me?"

Licking her lips in nervousness, Nyla placed aside every doubt in her heart and forged ahead, "I believe that is the most important question I can ask you. You are not a Calamity God or an Ascendant, none can hold two differing concepts in their soul."

Rowan was silent before he asked, "Can you paint?"

Nyla shook her head, "there is no reason to learn such a skill in the times of war. To become a Temple Maiden is to accept a life of service and sacrifice. We learn no skill that does not suit our cause."

"Ah, of course," Rowan nodded, "That creed of yours. But perhaps you can see from my position how lacking your question is in merit. You ask how can I hold two things in my heart at the same time yet you have never looked outside your Creed for other answers, you have always chosen warmth and never tried venturing out into the cold, so you will never understand what I will tell you."

Nyla shook her head, "Your argument is false. We do not share the same baseline. I know the only thing waiting for me outside the light is the darkness, outside of my life is death, I cannot be both light and dark at the same time."

Rowan smiled, "Says who?"

Chapter 1057: Honor A Mortal

Rowan watched the play of emotion flit through the face of the mortal and he waited for his words to sink in. He thought he was about to get through to her but the next words she said made him sigh,

"Why should I believe anything you say, you are the enemy."

Rowan nodded, "Yes, I am your enemy, I am the one responsible for your death, and countless more, and in time perhaps the death of every mortal and Explorer in this realm, yet at this moment that means nothing to your questions about my nature and the reality around you."

Nyla chuckled, a disbelieving smirk on her face, "You expect me to believe the word of my enemy? Why would I ever want to do such a thing?"

"You won't be doing it because of me," Rowan smiled at her expression, "the thought of doing something that goes against your nature... Can you resist? You do not have much time left in the endless rat race this realm has placed on you, helpless mortals. What would you like your end to be like?"

Nyla went silent, and she remained like that for another hour, her life kept fading away and when she spoke, her voice was so low, that only a supernatural being like Rowan could have heard her,

"I was wrong, I thought you were different from the others, because you had two natures inside your body, but you are all the same... Ascendants, Calamities, we are all the ants beneath your feet. You claim I want to do this because of my curiosity as if your design was not part of it."

"My design?" Rowan asked in curiosity,

"Did you know how many Explorers you have killed? No, do not answer that question, something tells me I will be horrified by that number, I know how many Explorers you killed in front of my eyes. You have no regard for our lives or the issues that plague us. I would expect that my question would be met with indifference, but you seem strangely interested in twisting my thoughts. I know only one reason for any immortal to be concerned with the affair of mortals, you stand to gain something!"

Rowan blinked, "That's a rather interesting way of looking at the matter, but still too shallow. You see, you look at this situation, your so-called moral dilemma as the greatest question you will ever have to ask in your life, the biggest mystery to uncover, but for someone like me, the answer is as simple as a thought. But I think your true question is why am I interested in you and the answer is quite simple, because of chance. If there was someone else in your position, then I would be here sitting by them."

"If you know the answers to my question," Nyla coughed, "If you know what I am about to find out... even what I will do next, why bother with all of this?" she gestured around, "Why do you sit here with me?!"

It was now the turn for Rowan to go silent, and he replied a few minutes later, "I do not despise mortals, I was once one, there are parts of me that I will always consider to be mortal, and you cannot imagine how many mortals I know... I know them all so deeply."

"If you know us so deeply, why bother talking to me dammit?!" Nyla yelled, but her weak voice hardly carried,

"It is because you remind me of someone," Rowan whispered.

Nyla was stunned, she looked at Rowan's perfect features and suddenly she broke into laughter, "Hahaha.... I cannot believe it. This must be a joke, the almighty immortal still feels losses and sorrow... hahaha."

Rowan watched the mortal laughing in silence, and soon her laughter transformed into weeping and then wailing. Rowan had once experienced helplessness, but even at his lowest he had always known that he might come out triumphant, and even if he could

not do so, the journey for him was a reward all on its own, but he knew that it was not everyone who had his mindset.

This mortal had been born into a world of misery, and sacrificed her entire life in the service of a cause, Rowan should know, because he had all her memories from the day of her birth, and with a wave of his hand the surrounding transformed and Nyla felt the change, and the sound of a baby's cry, this strange yet familiar sound drew her attention, and she was held in place by the sight before her.

"Even as a child, your voice is particularly loud," Rowan's voice broke her from the reverie, this scene before her was so lifelike, it was almost as if she had been transported back in time.

The scene was one of beauty, but also horror; a woman held a crying baby to her breast, and above her was a man with his back turned to them holding a weapon, his face was filled with anger, fear, and desperation because he was the last defense standing between his wife and newly born child.

Nyla stood up and stopped in front of the man, tears in her eyes, "It was said that he was only a Heroic Explorer but he fought against three Glorious Calamities before he fell. He held his ground for days, and not a single harm befell me or my mother. I have never seen my father's face before, I thought it was lost to the past."

She grimaced and turned towards Rowan, "Why are you showing me this memory? To torture me, or perhaps to appease a sick desire of yours?"

"I show it to you because I understand what it is like to feel loss. There are parts of my actions you cannot understand, for it would seem like the ravings of a lunatic. You might think I have taken countless mortal lives, yes I have, but in my eyes, I have taken none. I have only changed their state of being, for their origin is intact."

Fury suddenly colored Rowan's gaze and he looked at the heavens, "There were many moments where I could have easily taken another path, mined the origin for its strength, but I do nothing of such, but my enemies do not share my mercy, they have killed my children, and this is the only way I know how to mourn... by honoring a mortal."

Chapter 1058: Behind The Curtains

Nyla looked at this strange immortal in confusion, he was right, she had no idea what he meant, how was the death of others meaningless in some instances and in others they were meaningful? What origin was or who could affect it? What was the reason why an immortal would show his grieving side to a mere mortal was also impossible for her to understand, however, what she could understand was pain and loss.

It seems like this immortal understood pain, and very deeply, also, he was not like the rest of his kind who knew only indifference towards those that were lower than them. Perhaps she should not be too surprised, was he not a killer as well as a protector? He claims that he had never crossed the line when he kills, and although this was a line that she would never see nor understand, Nyla found herself believing in his words, and in this manner, her decision was made.

She smiled and sat beside her mother, and watched her mother's face, the fear, love, and protectiveness frozen in her features as she looked at the baby was heartbreaking, and Nyla "whispered,

"How can I see beyond my nature?"

Nyla was not expecting a quick response but Rowan did not delay before he replied, "You have always been at the door but you had no idea how to push past it. Have you ever wondered how it is possible for you to absorb both energy from ascendancy and calamity at the same time, and still have your Ascendant Aura free from the taint of Calamity? You have only been using just the surface portion of your birthright. Look beyond the surface of things and explore what's beneath."

Nyla's heart shook, hearing it now it seemed so simple. Why did she not imagine the deeper interplay of the forces she had always been absorbing into her body? It had always been seen as normal for an Ascendant to grow with the Aura from both Ascendancy and Calamity because it had been purified by the world, it had always been regarded as harmless.

It was said that it was the Core Aura, which was the central power location, was the essence of every Ascendant, and purified Aura, whether from Ascendancy or Calamity was just fuel to feed the Core Aura.

Yet as this strange immortal had said, she was only looking at the surface of things, what could she find if she no longer looked at Aura as just energy and considered them for their individual Aspects? Her Core Aura was not just Ascendancy, it was more.

If Ascendancy was life, then she was accepting death every time she took into herself the Aura of Calamity. Perhaps both Ascendancy and Calamity were just two faces of a single coin.

Her thoughts entering new dimensions, Nyla did not realize that her speculations, the presence of Rowan, and the fact that she was on her last breath all created a unique state where her body essence began to unravel.

Her feet left the ground and her skin began to go transparent, revealing internal organs and a cloud of Ascendancy Aura that had been engrained inside every cell in her body. Nyla's body arched as if she was in pain, as faint glowing spots of black began to appear all over her Ascendancy Aura.

These spots of black were Calamity Aura, as the realization that the energy she had been consuming was two sides of the same coin triggered a mutation inside her body. However, this mutation was not benign nor was it accepted by the Ascendant Aura inside of her, and her body began to collapse.

Rowan's pain and fury vanished as his eyes began to follow the path of destruction trailing the body of this Explorer, making sure his presence was not interfering in this process.

Of course, some of the things he had said to Nyla were the truth, but that was not all of it, he knew that the best lies were wrapped in truth, and understanding the fine line to straddle between truth and lies was one of the foundations of his Will.

Due to the severe limitations he faced while inside this realm, there were some experiments he could not perform on himself or using his hands. Aura was an interesting power system and it was extremely versatile when it came to matters of identification. At this time he was walking a tight line that kept him aligned with the Will of this realm.

He needed answers to some of his questions about this realm, and Nyla was the best candidate for this investigation. The only problem he had was that he could not personally interfere with the process in any manner, at least not using his Aura in any way, no one said anything about his words and how Nyla would choose to interpret them.

Nyla was an interesting mortal, and the seed of his influence had already been planted inside her mind when he came across her for the first time, he only needed certain encouragement for them to bloom. Rowan knew her better than she knew herself, and so doing this was extremely easy.

He just needed to show the right scene, present himself as the right candidate, and allow her to see what her mind thought she needed to see to make a reality-altering decision like doubting her state of being and pushing her mind to see reality in a way it was not supposed

to.

It was like convincing a mortal that fire was cold, and ice was hot and allowing them to believe in this concept so deeply that when they entered the fire, they felt cold, but the fire was still hot and despite what their feelings were telling them, it would consume them.

The truth was that Ascendancy and Calamity, while both from the same root, were not necessarily two sides of the same coin. Rowan's present body also had a unique Aura signature, and because he kept his Aura pure without any trace of Calamity inside of it,

he was able to push this mortal body and the technique it could unleash beyond its pinnacle.

This also left certain loopholes and mysteries he could not yet touch because if he did, his Aura would be stained by Calamity, ruining his plans for the future. What Nyla was experiencing was a window to observe another facet of Ascendancy and Calamity and solidify his thoughts on this power system.

Chapter 1059: Corrupted Maiden

Nyla's mouth opened in a soundless scream as more of her body began to vanish, but the expression on her face was strange, it was filled with happiness and pleasure. Even in the face of her incoming destruction, she had never felt so alive.

A Temple Maiden was expected to become the perfect vessel of the Wills of the Ascendants. They were to serve as watchers, guardians, and witnesses, and they were never to falter in their duties. It was written into their Creed.

They could never know love or have a family, their duty was the first and the most paramount aspect of their existence, they could only find solace in the end when their task was complete, for they carried within them the legacy and the burden of all Temple Maiden that had come before them.

On whatever day in the future that this endless battle ended, either in favor of Calamity or Ascendancy, then a Temple Maiden would be there as a witness.

This task was a burden that all Temple Maiden had borne with grace, but the weight of it was truly heavy.

And so Nyla found to her great delight that Calamity Aura, which she once thought was ruinous in its purpose alone was only scratching a small part of its property, and the closest word she could find for the new dimension it showed her was... passion.

She had once wondered what it would be like to live inside the body of a Calamity beast that was not mad and in full control of its emotions, and now she thought that she had finally peeked beyond that curtain, and she delighted in how unexpected and rich everything turned out to be.

Everything was dialed up to eleven, different from what Explorers felt when they reached the Enlightened Rank which mainly boosted the perception of the Explorer. In this instance every single emotion she had ever felt in her life, from sorrow, rage, happiness, lust, and anger was heightened to a ridiculous degree... yet they were not overwhelming, for as they came into her mind like a storm, they fell into an endless

abyss, because it seemed Calamity would accept the emotions as they come without any limits, and it made them feel good.

It gave her a drastic realization about her past experiences that made all the suffering and heartache she had endured as a Temple Maiden seem so childish, and she wanted to weep in joy because she knew she needed to bring this enlightenment to every Temple Maiden across the entire realm.

Nyla discovered that Calamity gave her a fresh perspective on life. Everything she had experienced had no bearing on her emotions. The rain did not fall because she was sad, nor would the sun stop its setting because she was feeling lonely, all her emotions were hers to control, and in fact, Calamity did not care about the sort of emotions she had, it would accept them all, for they were good.

Her body continued to shatter to pieces, as her life signs began as faint as those of an ant. In death, she had never felt so alive.

"Thank you.... Thank you.... Thank you..." her soul kept screaming.

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Rowan watched as Nyla was brought to the edge of dissipation. Her entire limbs and torso were gone, shattered into pale glowing smoke, and of what was left of her head, only a wide grin and crazy eyes remained, in a few seconds her head would explode and she would fade away, no matter how many times she was resurrected, this would be her fate.

Her soul was not just weak, the corruption Rowan had placed in her mental faculties would make her Aura incredibly explosive, ensuring she would never live past a few minutes at the most.

Rowan would never allow this to happen after reaching this point. That would ultimately be a waste after all the time he took to prepare her.

Opening his right palm, a swirl of black and red smoke manifested that was interspersed by red lightning, as a fiendish storm took shape, and within was a creature that resembled a nightmarish vision of a spider, crab, lobster Chimera with a woman's face whose body pulsed with scarlet flames.

Bringing his hand over the grinning mouth of Nyla, he shoved the Shiik into it, and the creature adjusted itself inside the fluid mass that made up the skull of the mortal, and finally settled into her brain.

Inside its new home, the Shiik opened its mouth and began to feed. The death energy was abundant all around it as not only was Nyla a Deific Ranked Explorer, but her flawed but unique insight into the nature of Ascendancy and Calamity ensured that the

death energy she produced would have killed hundreds of Deific Ranked Explorer. She was now simply toxic.

Her influence was a corruption and the Shiik gleefully fed on that energy and in return, it gave her vitality. Nyla's mouth opened wide and a stream of energy and essence began to slither out of it, transforming into blood, flesh, and bone, and before long Nyla returned to her previous state.

She appeared flawless, but her soul was still dying, dissipating even faster than before, but a brush of Rowan's finger across her brows fixed that issue, filling her up with ten times the amount of soul energy she previously had.

With the addition of the first portion of his consciousness, Rowan was finally able to solve the mystery of the unknown vitality that had been entering his body even as a mortal infant.

It turned out that even though he could not manipulate soul energy consciously with his limited mind, he had been unconsciously transforming soul energy into vitality.

Once he understood this, it was as if a lightbulb went off in his skull. Rowan's greatest source of strength was his ability to utilize soul energy as a resource, the ultimate resource. His greatest asset had finally returned to him, and the entire dimension of the oncoming battle had been shifted in his favor.

He instinctively understood that for what was coming ahead, he needed every advantage.

Chapter 1060: Faith

Rowan was overflowing with Soul Energy after all the time he had spent within and outside the universe, with him being around the death of so many lifeforms. Even in death, his consciousness still held power and he would not be surprised that for the near million years, he had been harvesting souls.

For a long time he had not been using these souls, he simply prepared himself as he waited for the right moment. Although Rowan claimed that he wanted to perfect his foundation to a ridiculous level before pushing forward with the resource available to him, and while there was great truth in these thoughts, there was a rather hidden justification for why he had been gathering soul energy all this while without utilizing them, it was all in preparation for something terrible, but he could not find the source of this fear.

The addition of a large part of his consciousness did not reduce this fear, instead it increased it. It was not even the knowledge that the eyes of the Primordial of Time had left his control, it was something even deeper.

He knew that even when his consciousness was previously completed, he was missing memories, and there was an additional name that always plagued him-Nemesis.

The idea of this mysterious power seemed to have been born out of nothing, but Rowan believed that all his setbacks, all his pains, even the two deaths he had rapidly suffered in this world in the hands of the World Will were all due to Nemesis, and it was as if even if his mind and spirit had been scrubbed of every detail about this unknown power in the past, he would still remember its name because it had become branded into his consciousness.

This enemy seemed powerful beyond reason, formless and untouchable but one thing Rowan knew about himself was that he would never lay down and take abuse from the strong, his past was enough proof. Even under the tyranny of the Third Prince, he had found a way to sequester his bloodline across time to aid him in the right moment.

Plans within plans were made at every step of the way to make that event possible, and Rowan would never count himself out of this fight or any fight in the future, no matter who he would be challenging. He might not yet understand certain mysteries in the past, especially those related to his lost memories but Rowan firmly believed in himself and whatever decision he had made in the past.

He knew the importance of sacrifice, of laying your hand bleeding into the water to draw in sharks, of suffering countless abuse for the right moment when your abuser looked down upon you to gloat, and in that moment reveal their throat.

Yes, if there was one thing Rowan understood about himself, it was sacrifice.

With how special his consciousness was, Rowan knew that it was nearly impossible to wipe his memories without his permission. The fact that portions of his memories were missing meant that he made himself forget. He would never doubt his plans, only move forward according to his instincts.

With the previous computational powers of his consciousness, Rowan was sure that he would be able to predict his future actions with a near-perfect level of accuracy, and whatever might be happening to him at this moment or any decisions he had would be making in the future, he would have made arrangements and left safeguards in place.

This was a daunting prospect to believe in something he could not easily prove, but Rowan believed in himself, the return of his Soul Energy manipulation ability was all the tools he would need to survive and thrive.

He did not have to chase after the rat race everyone else in existence was subjected to when he could create his resource seemingly out of thin air.

It was the primary reason he did not rush out of Stone Reach towards his first target.

Having isolated the stream of soul energy this limited consciousness of his was channeling, he simply switched it from a vitality creator to one that created Purified Ascendancy Aura. It did not mean that he no longer had to kill for Aura, it just meant he did not have to take unnecessary risks in doing so. Risks like turning an entire continent into a battleground. If he had been unlucky and an Ascendant had been present in that battle, it would have signified his end.

At this moment the trillions of cells in his body were being filled with so much purified Ascendancy Aura that nearly ten percent of his consciousness nodes were tasked into masking the radiation of Aura that should have made him resemble a walking fountain of Aura.

At this moment Rowan's appearance was truly shocking. The face and body he showed Nyla, although supremely beautiful, could be acceptable by immortal standards, but perhaps if she had noticed his shadows, she would have fainted in horror.

His robes that were twenty feet long, billowed around him like a golden cloud, his red hair was also the same, and his eyes...

At the Legend Rank, his Natal Treasure kept growing as his foundations grew larger and firmer with every breath he was taking. With so much access to all the Aura he wanted, Rowan began to push this mortal body to the limit imposed by this world.

As a Maker of Worlds, Rowan had unique insights into the formation and creation of existence, and had slowly begun to peel apart the layers of control this world had to offer. He was not changing anything, only learning about the rules so he could break them.

To create his first World Core, Rowan basically had to understand every component of a world, even those of a higher realm like the Supreme Worlds, and he integrated every knowledge of a World's Will into his consciousness, no one else he knew was capable of hacking into a World's Will like he was.

Doom Star power system favored the soul and so no much focus was placed on the body, giving Rowan a door to extend his manipulation. The ceiling for a mortal's bodily growth as it turned out was not specified, but since no mortal creature would grow to be very large unless they would be squashed under their own weight, this oversight was meaningless.

But it was perfect for Rowan.

