

The Primordial Record

Chapter 341: The Black Tower

"I have ten left, although I don't think any of them can handle your consciousness." Eva replied, but she seemed to be deep in thought, "But, if I can merge them... yes, it will take seventy percent of the Aether I have in storage, it should be enough to make one condensed Tome."

Rowan was still reviewing the information inside his head, and he distractedly asked, "How long will that take you to make?"

"Not long, but what would be the purpose of inhabiting a Tome? You would hardly make any significant changes in such a forum, it has great utility, but surely, it's not the best to use."

"Inhabiting the Tome is just the first part of the plan." Rowan began moving towards the door while speaking, "The important lesson that Jarkarr taught me was the benefits of having many hidden cards. I will not win the coming fight with my father if I don't think outside the box and keep making decisions that my enemies cannot anticipate."

"Is that the reason you did not kill her?" Eva muttered softly, "The being who claims to be your mother."

Rowan turned to her before he answered, a weird glow in his eyes, "Partly. Notwithstanding that it is a dreadful action to commit, I refuse to believe my father does not have any other failsafe to protect the life of his most valuable possession. Killing her might lead to changes even Elura could not predict, after all, even though she is an Emyrean, she is not infallible. He tried to stop me with words Eva, he is far too powerful to only allow his last option to be words, somehow I think killing her would have played right into his hands."

Eva considered his words and nodded her assent, if she had a conflicting viewpoint, she did not show it, "After inhabiting the Tome, what is your next move?"

"It would be a big one, and I will depend on your spell weaving if I will have any chance to succeed. I used to have a solid stake as a Demon Prince using the Origin Treasure of Ohrox, but as the various situations around the Empire is unfolding, it is clear that this stake was not planted on a solid foundation, and a little breeze would put this position in jeopardy." Rowan said, "I will be trying to repair the bridge that may have sprung up due to my absence, but before that, I will be trying to build another foundation on another Supreme World, and this time, I will be building a better one."

Eva's breath caught in her throat, "you want to possess a mage!"

"Not a mage." Rowan smiled, "a mortal with the talent of a mage. I told you, I would build a better foundation. To achieve that, my background must be perfect. For if I'm going to become the greatest genius the Mages have ever seen, then my roots must be impeccable. During my time in Covenant, I overheard a discussion between the members speaking of a yearly selection for the Black Tower. This is one of the primary branches linked to the Supreme World. Talented Mortals from all over the universe would be fighting for the chance to become an acolyte. That would be my place to start."

" You intend to create a powerhouse that can be a part of the Black Tower."

"Not just be a part, I want to influence it, my goal is ownership of the Black Tower. This is what..."

Suddenly Rowan stopped and looked towards the distance, he could not help but exclaim in surprise, "what the hell is that?"

"Oh, you noticed. They had been following us all the way from Jarkarr. Apparently, it is not every day the remnants of a Divine Kingdom move through the void. More join every now and then, they number fifteen at this moment."

"What are they?" Rowan whispered,

"They are known by many names, one of the oldest is Destruction Banes. They are what comes after great battles that destroy planes. They are nothing but glorious scavengers in my opinion."

"Why are they not attacking and just seem content with following us?"

"There may be many reasons that I cannot understand yet about their actions, communicating with any of them is... difficult to say the least, as they have given no indication of attacking us, I've let them be as their presence seems to discourage any other unknown factors from affecting our movements, there are few powers that would interfere with a Destruction Bane. For now, let me commence with the merger of the Tomes. It would be done within the hour."

"Good, see to it. Let me check on the seeds of Jarkarr for a while."

"Rowan," Eva called him back, "you know they are yours, right? You are Erohim to them, and if these people worship you, then you should be their god. It is the only fair exchange in the universe."

"Do I need to?" Rowan appeared downcast as he spoke, for his intentions were to laugh and joke with them again, perhaps drink a bit, and forget himself in the moment. He thought perhaps he could do that again before it was too late... but it already was. He was their Erohim, and now they worshiped him.

Eva smiled sadly, "you may be fourteen now, but the weight on your shoulders is heavier than a god. Go on, you need practice, if you want to become a symbol for multitudes, such a position requires a fair bit of practice, even for someone like you."

Rowan's smile was colored with melancholy, and then he left.

When Eva found him, he was barely glowing, he barely had five minutes left. She saw thousands of people leaving, their faces enraptured, it was not everyday you could talk to a god.

Sitting directly below him were the family he had stayed with a short while ago, Diane and her parents, Trevor and Olga.

She caught the last part of the conversation.

"... It's an interesting concept, but I fear it's not for you." Trevor was saying.

"Right..." Olga called out, "I told her such pursuit is commendable, but it's not for her... at least not yet. My dear, I know you are trying to chase after the lord's shadow, but you know, ... he's a god Diane, you have achieved so much, is it not enough?"

"you don't believe in me, none of you do." Diane sprang up, a hint of tears on the corner of her eyes.

"Do not say that." Rowan finally spoke, "I know of no one that believes in your potential more than these two, and you know what? They were the ones who finally made me understand your position better, but you should step back a little and understand theirs. They are afraid... your wellbeing is everything to them."

Chapter 342: [Bonus chapter]I Will Not stop

Diane looked at him with stars in her eyes and she eagerly listened to every single word he spoke, although she appeared slightly despondent, she still swallowed her argument and weakly replied, "well, if you think so. I have always wanted to do more."

Rowan laughed, "you have done more than enough to help me. You should remember that my body still remains here. What you are looking at is just my shadow. Stay with your family. Protect my people, and when I wake up, I shall bring you to see the ends of the universe."

She pouted, "do you promise?" while holding out her little finger, a universal gesture that could be understood by everyone. Rowan brought up one of his fading fingers and linked with hers, "I promise."

Diane cheered and jumped up, she just became eighteen, and she now had long golden hair similar to Rowan and her ecstatic movements scattered her hair all around her like a waterfall.

Eva must have a preternatural connection with Rowan as the moment Rowan opened his hands, the hairband that Diane gifted him back then inside the Trailer Motor on their journey to the underground city appeared in his palm.

He gestured for her to turn around, and she eagerly did, and she began to laugh when Rowan was struggling with her hair before helping him with it.

"Creator... It is time." Eva appeared before the family of three and smiled at them as they all bowed towards her.

Rowan stood up and addressed the three of them, "Thank you for making me one of your family... It is my honor."

Leaving the blushing Trevor and the smiling Olga and Diane, he asked Eva to bring him to the highest point of the palace in order for him to see the universe once more.

Eva took him into the shadows and they appeared at the tip of a spear of a Divine Statue built at the front of the Palace. She made a panel of darkness and Rowan stood upon it, and he viewed the immensity of the universe laid out before him.

He sighed as he admired the beauty of the stars for they almost seemed like they were singing a song, as with every light they emitted gave out a pulse of Aether that only the enlightened could see, and at this moment Rowan would swear on all creation that this was the most beautiful sight he had ever witnessed.

The sheer immensity of it all humbled him, "This all seems like it could go on forever doesn't it?"

"Others may think it to be so," Eva replied, "But you have seen it all, you have seen the edges of the universe and beyond it. Mortal man may look at the stars and gaze at its endlessness, but you are not that fortunate to have blissful ignorance. You understand what it all holds. You understand where it is heading."

"I can dream, can't I?" Rowan chuckled, "There is so much here for everyone, why must we fight for more? Just because we are capable of something, does it mean we should do it?"

"Creator, it is because you have these thoughts that is what makes it important for you to not stop moving. This universe is beset by Evil, Greed, Lust, Anger, Sloth, Wrath, all the evils a thousand suns cannot shed light upon, and all these evil have been deified and personified. They all walk the universe, and they shall take, and they shall burn until there is nothing left. Our enemies are the same. The greed and lust for our powers

would drive them to hunt us to our extinction, and when that is done they shall look at creation and go after it. Your father is a symptom of a larger malady... so, Creator, it is not enough until you hold every light in the universe in your hands, and make of it, the utopia you dream of."

Rowan nodded, "I will not stop until my enemies all fall, and the lights of creation are all mine."

Eva manifested the Tome and it hovered before Rowan. He could detect the familiar presence of his bloodline on it. It appeared like a gigantic golden book with a rough cover as if it were covered by dragon scales.

In the center of the Tome was an oval indentation that was filled with a milky glow, and was faintly pulsing with the wave of Aether flowing through the universe. Rowan was struck by the similarities between this Tome and ; the design was most likely taken from the enigmatic singularity.

He had been trying to make contact with ever since he left Vraegar's body, and although he could detect the singularity, it refused to answer his call. It would appear that the privilege of controlling it did not fall to the mere reflection of Rowan.

About to begin his possession of the Tome, he saw a golden light approaching from deep within space,

"is that... Suriel?"

"Yes, he pleaded for the chance to become your arbiter, bringing you into this new journey you are about to embark on."

Rowan smiled, "I am very proud of him... let him know that."

With a dull grunt, Rowan pushed his fist into the center of his head and as if he seized his brains, he began pulling it out.

Whatever was inside his fist acted like a massive magnet, and his body was iron filings. His entire body shrank and contracted into his fist, leaving behind a single glowing eye that zipped across into the Tome, entering the oval indentation in the center. The milky glow covered the eye and the Tome began releasing a low and constant vibration.

"Two seconds left." Eva shook her head, "Cutting it a little too close for comfort." She dragged the Tome closer to her side and waited for Suriel to arrive.

In a few moments, a conflagration of flames appeared behind her like an erupting volcano and Suriel came out of the flames, he went down on one knee, and held both his hands outstretched.

Eva placed the Tome in his hands with the message, "He is proud of you." She turned and vanished into the darkness. Suriel spent a few moments bowing before the darkness she departed into before he unfurled his glorious wings.

Chapter 343: Andar Erikson

Suriel was the first Angel to be created and he shared a unique connection with Rowan, making him the Angel with the fastest rate of growth among all the rest. At this time, his powers were equivalent to a Dominator of the Third Great Circle.

This was the reason Rowan spoke of his pride for his child. With his current capabilities, Suriel was capable of quelling any unreal act that may occur inside the Divine Palace, he could even hold back Vraeger if he ever went rogue.

Rowan had collected all the Essence that the dragon stole from him, thereby making it impossible for him to grow at an accelerated pace once more. If Vraegar was to be used as a weapon, it must be done in a very controlled manner or the consequences may be dire.

Suriel spread his wings, and he began to slowly vibrate each feather dozens of times per second. Golden spots of light like fireflies began to converge on his wings as the space around him began to crack like a shattered mirror. His wings were approaching 7,000° degrees Celsius when Suriel unleashed all the momentum stored inside of it.

The surrounding space around him quaked for millions of miles as his body vanished like a phantom leaving long cracks in space behind.

Suriel was especially talented in using his Angelic flight ability, and as he approached the speed of light, he folded his armor around his body making it more streamlined, and his body stretched as thin as a wire with his two long blazing feathers trailing behind him.

The location he was headed to was in a distant galaxy, and before he could reach it, he intended to scour any worlds he came across to find suitable candidates.

His search only ended when he reached his destination.

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Andar Erikson's sudden death was unexpected, and if he knew at the very moment of his passing that it was avoidable would amuse him. Dying in the hands of the creatures you were supposed to be feeding was ironic in its sheer macabre nature.

The provider becomes a true provider, serving his host with a healthy measure of his flesh.

Andar Erikson was fourteen when he died. He was apprenticed to the sole Mithril Rank Alchemist in the entire federation, Jonathan Melbrooks, who decided to settle in their small town, and a great part of the reason for that was because of Andar Erickson. A once-in-a-lifetime genius or failure.

The federation was blessed in the universe as a place where geniuses grew like weeds, and for Andar Erikson's talents to be acknowledged by the masses meant he was something special. He was born with a raging storm of Silver Aether around his body which filled him to a brim, and kept a constant storm of Aether around him.

He was three when he was first apprenticed to the Alchemist, who came all the way to settle down when he heard the stories of the boy whose body was loved by Aether.

Yet, the talents of Andar turned out to become his greatest crutch and he could not unlock his Spirit Matrix.

To become a Mage, the talented individual must unlock their Spirit Matrix, it was most advantageous to the prospective Mages to unlock their Spirit Matrix when they were still young for them to have a more malleable Spirit Matrix that could be molded into the proper channel for greater powers in the future.

A hundred-year-old mortal could unlock his or her Spirit Matrix, but they would hardly reach beyond the ranks of acolytes their entire life. Geniuses could unlock their Spirit Matrix from as early as five years old.

Andar was fourteen years old and had been trying to unlock his Spirit Matrix for ten years now with little to show for his efforts. Due to the dense amount of Aether surrounding his body, made the manipulation of his Spirit a hundred times more difficult than normal, and with every year that passed, the difficulty increased.

His master had tried every available Alchemical solution to ease the process for Andar but he did not succeed. The mockery from his peers increased daily as he was left far behind by all those who originally could only look upon him with awe.

Andar Erikson, if placed within a crowd of ten thousand, would be easily recognized. The ever-swirling storm of silver Aether around him gave him a presence of elegance and gravitas that could not be equaled, his charming features and his height as he grew up placed him on a pedestal that could not be matched by most people.

The Storm of Aether protected him against most physical harm; he had never gotten sick or injured in his life. However, Andar chose to forget the benefits of his talents and only focused on the fact that he might never unlock his Soul Matrix, thereby making him the most talented failure to ever exist.

Perhaps if he had chosen to focus on the positives and strive diligently to overcome his affliction he might have grown to become one of the great powers in the universe, but Andar Erikson did not.

His master usually supervised him when it came to feeding the mutated electric eels, and it was normally not a very dangerous job for the eels were quite docile when they were being fed.

His attention was not on his task as Andar distractedly deposited slices of treated meat that were spiked with concentrated Aether, his mind on the celebration taking place inside the mayor's house as the representative of the Black Tower would be picking the candidates.

His hands slipped below the safety line, and his limbs were set upon by dozens of giant eels that dragged him into their enclosure. Any other person may have not faced this situation because the feed given to the eels was far more nutritious than what was contained inside the bodies of any person, but Andar was different. His body, even as a mortal, contained enough Aether to rival a mage.

His shielding by his Aether did not last long, and for the first time in his life, Andar Erikson knew pain, but thankfully it was short-lived as millions of volts galloped through his nervous system and ended his life, his last thought was surprisingly calm, and he only wished his mother would take the news of his death well, and she should not overly grieve his passing.

Chapter 344: Remaking The Body

The Mutated Electric eels surrounded the body of Andar Erikson, about to begin their feast when the space above his body parted like a cloth, and Suriel stepped through.

His armor appeared battered, with many parts of it melted off, but with every passing moment they were slowly healing, but it would take weeks at least to repair all the damages. Suriel had pushed himself to the limit and beyond to find a suitable vessel for the Creator.

He had been monitoring Andar Erikson for a week, and he was among the top candidates. He had two potential candidates and Andar edged out his competition by a mile. His death only made that choice easier for him.

Suriel was not responsible for his death, although he did not save him either. He had watched the boy make the mistake that ended up killing him, and he could have helped at any time, even at the edge of Andar's life. But he did nothing and he watched.

Angels only see the world in shades of black and white.

Rowan the Creator was White. Everyone else was Black.

With Suriel's presence chasing away the Mutated Eels, he bent over the body of Andar and critically assessed it, and when he was satisfied with the body he rose into the air and began sealing the entire Alchemy Facility with spells.

When he was done, he manifested the Tome over the body of Andar and let it fall.

Like a stone sinking into a clear lake, the Tome sank into the forehead of Andar and vanished from sight.

His body suddenly convulsed, and as a sigh escaped from his open mouth, his body began making cracking sounds like firecrackers as multiple bones inside his body were crushed to pieces.

Andar's eyes suddenly went wide open, and they began to protrude from his eye sockets until they exploded out of his head with wet slapping sounds, he soon began to bleed from every pore in his body. Staining the floor with his blood.

The Mutated eels retreated faster and congregated at the edge of their tank where they bit each other in a frenzy as they curled into a ball. These eels did not need to be placed into water to survive, and their tank was without any liquid, this was done to reduce their lethality as the electricity they produced could easily travel through water.

When the Tome entered Andar's body, the reflection of Rowan came awake, and the first thing he did was scan the entirety of the mortal body he had just inhabited.

He was used to the powerful Empyrean body of the Ouroboros Serpent, and being inside a mortal's body, no matter how talented, was always disappointing. The frailty of their flesh and the disease and death that lay within their every cell disgusted him.

Rowan knew that this was a flawed way of thinking but he could not help his instinct. It was similar to the revulsion you would feel if you stepped into a pile of shit.

However, the foundation of this body was fantastic and he could build something great out of it.

Rowan had two tools he would be using for the task. The first was the Tome. He melted it into long extremely thin strands of metal that he would be using to rebuild the body.

No matter how strong or durable flesh could become, there was always a limit. In time they would age and decay but the Divine Metal of his Empyrean body would not.

He would be replacing certain neural pathways and covering them back with his normal flesh and blood to disguise them. Over time he would be merging both flesh and metal into something new, not like his Empyrean body but something different.

Certain nerves, and essential organs like the heart, brain, and his entire nervous system would be replaced first by the Divine Metal of his Ouroboros Serpents while coating them with living flesh.

The second tool he would be using was the blueprint of the Emyrean shell that once contained his Mortal Ouroboros body. That shell had a unique feature that Rowan always found interesting but did not have much use to him due to the impossible amounts of Aether he was able to wield.

The shell was the best energy conductor he had ever come across.

Every single bit of energy that passes through the shell can be directed without any wastage. He had copied the pattern of the shell with his Emyrean sense and now he could begin stamping that pattern on the DNA of this body.

Such delicate work was no longer above him, and the experience he gained using Emyrean Sight and Knowledge Well however briefly was of great assistance to him, of course, there was always room for improvement.

The changes he would be making to the body were very drastic, but he could do this without any fear of repercussions because he was going to be awakening this body's Spirit Matrix.

Every Awakening brings about a change in the body of the individual, and this change can be as minor as a slight deviation from the pitch of the voice to a thorough rebuilding of a body, and this all depends on the talent of the individual. It was the reason why Andar was looked on so favorably because his talent was monstrous.

If he ever awakened he would thoroughly remake his body, yet this Awakening process had not yet happened and the changes already made to the body were so extensive. Andar had already been remade into something else.

For Rowan, the talent of Andar was not enough, and his body was not adequate. The awakening process took into account the foundation of the individual and built upon it. Rowan intended to push the foundation and talent of Andar to the limits before awakening his Spirit Matrix.

Although describing his actions and thoughts took a while, it all occurred in a fraction of a second, and Andar's body began to break apart, his eyes exploding due to the changes in his brain and all the blood being forced away from his body due to the changes to his organs and central nervous system.

Chapter 345: Ikaron

A golden pulse spread along his body, and Rowan began to capture the bits of information left behind in the mind of Andar.

He did not have the Soul Collecting capability of his main body, which was disappointing, but when he felt the departing soul of the boy pass through him to his Main body countless trillions of miles away in an instant, he understood that he was now a sort of conduit for souls.

With his body still sleeping there was no way to tell if he would be able to power himself up from a distance, but Rowan bet it was possible because he had easily sent Andar Soul down to his main body, there was no reason to believe that the transfer was only one way.

Nevertheless, if his plans went along the way he intended them to, he would hardly need Soul Points to become strong in a short period. He was depending on his awakening to push him to the peak of the mortal world.

Rowan was able to snatch the entire memories of Andar without missing a single bit. Compared to the information a single Angel could gather in a year, Andar's entire life experience was less than a fraction of a percent of those memories.

Rowan had effortlessly read through dozens of Angel's memories in a few moments, Andar's entire life was revealed to him in a single glance.

He understood everything about the boy, and he was very pleased with the selected choice.

Andar was the only child of a single mother. His mother was the Vice President of the Federation and was a busy woman and a powerful Mage, she left him in the care of his Grandfather, who gleefully handed Andar to Johnathan Melbrooks the Alchemist.

His Grandfather soon vanished, most likely gone on one of his famous adventures, and had never returned ever since. Andar did not think about the man much or even missed him, for he hardly knew him.

The Alchemist Jonathan Melbrooks favored Andar, but like all Mages with great powers, they were usually distant and aloof from mortal concerns Andar grew up not knowing much social affairs or cues, but he was smart enough to easily copy and adapt if the situation called for it.

Andar's disposition and talent meant he had no friends and because he was focused on awakening above all else, he did not cultivate a social life. Rowan plans to change that.

He needed power and influence. He could obtain power on his own, but influence requires a certain amount of connections. Andar was a blank slate, and Rowan took up his pen, he would be rewriting the destiny of this body.

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The Federation was not just a single planet, but seven. The planets were all massive, each of them was a hundredth the size of Trion. Which made them a thousand times larger than Jarkarr.

These seven planets circled an Aether Geyser that resembled an enormous black hole. This Aether Geyser was created by the powerful 9th Star Archmage, Erick Black.

This powerful Archmage was singularly responsible for uplifting the Black Tower to the heights it currently enjoyed.

He used many methods to accomplish his goals and one of the most important tools he used was the Aether Geyser. Millions of years ago, 9th Star Archmage Erick Black converted a Black Hole into a fountain of Aether.

He conquered and dragged seven Major Worlds and placed them around it, creating a foundation for his Black Tower. The rich Aether that suffused the planets led to the creation of countless geniuses, and every year, hundreds of thousands of talented acolytes were led to the selection for the candidacy to become a Mage of the Black Tower.

The planets had only a single name, the differentiation between them was with a suffix at the end of their names.

The central planet called Ikaron I, was closest to the Aether Geyser, and the second closest was called Ikaron II down to the last, Ikaron VII. All these planets in their totality were termed the Black Federation.

The arrangements of the Planets were set in such a manner to bolster a sense of competition between the Mages because the title for the planets was always changing and Ikaron I could be dragged down to Ikaron III, and their many privileges revoked.

The more powerful mages that Originated from a particular world determined their place around the Aether Geyser. The massive planets could be effortlessly moved by the mighty powers of the Archmage.

The Black Tower itself resided inside the Aether Geyser and the environment of the Tower could not be described with mortal mind. The sheer amount of power contained in each speck of dust inside the Black Tower would be a magnificent treasure in any Minor World.

Andar's mother was a powerful mage, who disregarded formal relationships and promptly sent her son to Ikaron V, when she saw his condition, and knew the only solution to his plight lay with his resolve.

She was on the verge of becoming an Archmage and she had no plans for her ambitions to be delayed by taking care of a child with a problematic talent.

Mages were analytical thinkers and most pursued self-interest above all. There was no way Andar's mother would delay her elevation over a child, even if he was her flesh and blood.

She would be able to make her ascension in a century or so. If she made it or she failed, then she would have the time to check up on her son. As part of the direction she was taking as a Mage, she had renounced her name.

She was only referred to by titles such as Councillor or Warden. Andar's master had been shielding him from the truth about his mother all these while, creating false letters and videos amongst other things, because he noticed that Andar drew inspiration and strength from his mother.

He planned to tell him the truth when he succeeded in his awakening. However, if he failed to awaken and died a mortal, at least he would have believed he was loved.

Chapter 346: Spirit Matrix Orb

Beside the Mayor's residence was the council hall that also served as the location for the town's yearly selection of Acolytes for the Black Tower.

This year was expected to be no different from any other, and the expansive hall of 1,000 feet (0.3 km) was filled with tens of thousands of people, all here to support the six dozen young children both male and female who were chosen for this year's candidacy.

The oldest here was eighteen, a lanky girl with ponytails, and the youngest was seven, a child still sucking on his thumb in nervousness.

There were both tears of joy and loss on the faces of their parents as they watched the proud faces of their children. For the children, this was the chance of a lifetime, they would become heroes and command powers to shake the heavens and the earth.

The parents knew, however, that when they left, only the successful returned years later as Mages or not at all.

Death was one of the greatest possibilities during the Trials for the Black Tower, and the life of an Acolyte and a Mage was far from peaceful, their experiments and battles would be enough to kill most of them along their journey.

Ascending each rank as an Acolyte or a Mage came with risk, and no Mage would be willing to remain at the same level for the rest of their lives, they all chased the elusive hope of becoming an Archmage and living forever.

The hall was spherical and the sittings where the crowd stayed were arrayed around the periphery leaving the center free for whatever activities were to be performed.

A raised platform that was hovering twenty feet in the air held two seated figures, and three standing beside them.

The most recognizable standing figure was the Mayor, Tim Bolfrey, a Rank 2 Mage, and his daughter Livia Bolfrey Rank 2 Acolyte, who was fifteen. She had red hair with a charming girl-next-door look. Her dimples and bright green eyes were inquisitive attesting to her Magus heritage.

The true motivation for a Mage was to seek answers and enter the unknown.

Tim Bolfrey, although a Mayor of the town and also a powerful Mage, was standing, and with a beaming smile on his face, it was apparent he was very satisfied with this position, due to the caliber of people who were beside him.

The Third standing individual was a handsome young man of fifteen with piercing black eyes and hair and he was a peak Acolyte at Rank 3 on the verge of becoming a Rank 1 mage. His name was Daniel Redcliff, a talented Acolyte who was escorting his elder disciple, who was the second of the seated figures on the platform.

This was a Rank 3 Mage, Silas Wisley, a talented Mage, and he was only 400 years old. This exercise was carried out by him on the order of his Master, a glorious Archmage.

However, he was not seated in the Central position; that honor went to Andar's master, Jonathan Melbrook, the Rank 4 Mage and Mithril Rank Alchemist. With such a pedigree, even if Silas was here under the order of an Archmage he still needed to be respectful.

Jonathan Melbrook had a long white beard that reached his stomach and he was still abnormally fit for a Mage of 2,400 years, but he had wrinkles on his face to show his great age.

He rose and all the minor noises in the crowd went silent. His commanding voice rang through the hall as he addressed the people gathered here, yet his pitch was controlled with unerring accuracy so did not hurt any mortals present here.

A Rank 4 mage was a rare sight, and although he resided in the town, the chance to see him by the common folks was slim to none, and they treasured every opportunity to hear such a great Mage speak.

"We are gathered here to commemorate the passing of these children of glory and wisdom onto the most important journey in their lives. They stand here the seeds of Archmages, and once again we are all reminded about our purpose. The tradition that we partake in has endured..."

His speech continued for the next two minutes, to utter silence and when he was done, there was a minor cheer that was soon taken up by the majority. After living more than a thousand years a Mage was a fountain of endless skills, oratory was one of the minor ones.

He turned and gestured to the Mage responsible for the selection to take up the stand and returned to his seat.

Silas acknowledged him with a cupped fist and he rose, from his Spatial Ring he brought out a black Bead as big as a watermelon. The bead seemed to contain a lightning storm because now and then it would glow a bit as blue lightning danced inside of it.

Silas cleared his throat before speaking, "This is the Spirit Matrix Orb, and it is here to judge your worth. Just because you are all awakened does not mean you would be able to take the Trial to become an Acolyte of the Black Tower, with low talents you would never make it as a Mage even if given all the resources you can handle. This is a detecting device used to measure the Degree of your Spirit Matrix Root."

He stopped and looked at the crowds checking their responses to his words and nodded silently to himself, these parents had prepared their children well.

Silas focused again on the children who were listening to his words with bated breath. Their fists were clenched hard as they prayed for their Spirit Matrix to reach an acceptable grade.

Silas continued speaking, "There are seven grades to every Awakened Spirit Matrix, and grade one is the lowest, while grade seven is the highest. To be accepted, your Spirit Matrix must be in grade two and above, any lower and you are doomed to become a Rank one Acolyte for the rest of your life."

Chapter 347: Changing Colors

Silas made a gesture and the Spirit Matrix Orb floated down the platform until it was fifty feet ahead of the prospects. He focused on the hopeful below, "From the lowest rank, this Bead would glow red to signify a grade one talent, then yellow for grade two, green for grade three, Orange for grade four, purple for grade five, white for grade six and black for the highest grade seven."

Silas knew there were other colors apart from these seven for those monstrous individuals, but it was not common to see such an occurrence in tens of thousands of years, so he did not bother trying to declare it. Why should he relay information that had no bearing on anyone here?

"Now, the youngest of you, step forward and..."

Silas went mute in surprise when the Black Bead began to glow red. He paused and looked around in confusion, there was nobody close to the Spirit Matrix Orb and the test had not yet begun, why was it reacting?

He was about to retrieve the Bead before the glow it was letting out increased and it turned yellow.

This time he became curious and he looked to his side to the Alchemist, who was touching his Beard with a growing interest in his eyes.

There was no way the detecting device was damaged. This item was created by an Archmage, a planet would be shattered first before it could be damaged.

"Silas try moving it around, it seems to be detecting an Awakening Spirit Matrix," Jonathan said to Silas as he craned his neck forward to observe the Orb.

"Daniel blanched, the young Acolyte turning to his fellow disciple, "Should that be possible, Senior? Is physical contact not the only way to detect a Spirit Matrix, even if it is currently awakening?"

"Well, that should normally be the case," Silas replied, "But in specific circumstances, it is different."

The Mayor and his daughter were listening intently. This was new information they had never known about the Spirit Matrix Detecting Artifact.

The exuberant Livia Bolfrey eagerly asked, "What cases would lead to such a change, Sir Mage?"

"I don't know if I should dare to hope, but if my guess is correct..." Silas swallowed as he considered his next words, "It would be a Spirit Body," Silas whispered. His words sounded unbelievable even to his ears.

The light in the eyes of Jonathan Melbrooks the Alchemist shone and he said, "Move it through the crowd and the children below, let us see where the reaction is coming from."

Silas eagerly agreed to the task. If he could acquire a Spirit Body in this round of Talent Hunting, then it was possible to bring that talent under his wings and to his Master.

A Spirit body was worth a thousand Mages, and each was a valuable asset to every planet that hoped to reach a higher ranking in the Federation.

Of course, all Spirit bodies had grades the same way as a normal mage, but even a Rank One Spirit Body that had a Red grade evaluation on the Spirit Matrix Orb was still as valuable as an ordinary Rank Six Spirit Matrix.

At this time the Orb was glowing yellow, which meant this was at least a Rank 2 Spirit Body.

Yet a Spirit Body was so rare that only Silas and Jonathan here understood the true ramifications of such a find.

He sent the Bead up in the air and began moving it through the crowd. The entire hall had gone quiet as they all sensed the change in the entire structure of this yearly event.

A subtle tension gripped the crowd for such abrupt changes in affairs were unexpected and a sign that this year would be different. They could detect the excitement of those on the platform and they were beginning to develop speculations about what might be the cause.

The shining Bead also drew their attention, it was blazing yellow and it was so bright it could be easily seen in all corners of the hall, and then before their eyes, it switched to green. Yet before the crowd could settle, the color changed again, and now it was Orange.

The crowd was becoming restless, the crowd did not understand why the Bead was changing colors with no physical contact with any of the candidates but they understood the different colors and what it signified.

In their small town, the greatest talent they had ever seen was an Orange-grade Talent, that individual was now a respectable Rank 4 Mage. Murmurs began to rip through the crowd as speculations and inquiries about what was going on passed through the crowd.

The entire crowd went silent when the Bead went Purple, and a weird feeling began growing inside the chest of the spectators, everyone began looking around for whoever was the mysterious person who was triggering this change.

The parents of this year's candidate for Acolyte positions were especially nervous, each of them hoping their child below was the one responsible for the change.

The Mayor sprang to his feet, shaking with excitement, if nothing else a Purple Ranked talent emerging from his town was enough to place them on the map, he turned to the young black-haired Acolyte beside him, "If I recall correctly, you should also have a Purple Rank Spirit Matrix?"

"Yes, I do." Replied Daniel Redcliff, and then he sneered, "It is a great talent, only found in one among millions, yet it is nothing before my Master favorite disciple, she has a White Rank Spirit Matrix, in comparison to her, this my talent is nothing."

Although he was speaking self-deprecatingly, the pride in his talent could be easily gleaned from his voice, the Mayor understood this and smiled secretly. Even if this was a genius, for now, he was still a youth, how much experience about the world does he have?

"Don't say that." The Mayor affectionately teased Daniel, "After all, this talent of yours is near the peak of the entire planet, and your limit cannot be quantified. Here, please accept this Spirit wine. It is from my stock and I will be honored if you could taste it."

"Of course, the honor is all mine." Daniel coughed, adjusting his position so he could stand a bit more comfortably, he opened the Spirit Wine and began sipping it. He grinned at the taste and the rush of soothing Aether that flooded his spirit Matrix and he turned to the Mayor, "Funny you should say that because I pufftt..."

He spat out the wine in shock spraying the face of the startled Mayor, as the Bead above them turned blinding white.

Chapter 348: Who Is Andar?

This color was the white of a moon, and it seemed to carry a cold air that was shaking the surroundings.

Everyone here inside the Hall knew the meaning of that color and an uproar was generated inside the crowd. Rumor of the event transpiring inside the Hall was beginning to spread throughout the Town, and people from all over were starting to flock over to understand what was causing the fuss.

The buzz of an earth-shaking genius born inside their town was spreading like wildfire, and all gazes were beginning to turn to the Town Hall.

The people on the platform were not much better. Livia Bolfrey held the edges of her father's robe with a death grip, her eyes wide open in excitement and joy, for such a talent to be born from their small town meant great news for all of them. Who could it be? Was it anybody she knew?

In her mind, she could not shake the thought of one solitary figure. If there was anyone who could awaken a White Rank talent, it would be him.

Nevertheless, she had checked, and Andar was not here, she would have easily noticed his startling presence, like a silver crane standing amid chickens.

Daniel was chewing his lips with consternation at the ongoing events, even when it began to bleed he did not notice. Could someone with the talent of his Elder Disciple be found here? No that's impossible, no one could have such a talent in such a place, there must be a mistake.

It was a good thing then, that he did not know about Spirit Bodies. He was infatuated with the talents shown by his elder disciple sister, if someone of equal talent to her was to be found in this backwater, it would be unfair.

Silas who was beside him began to shake, his mouth went dry and he started to furiously examine the hall, with magical techniques. A Rank six Spirit Matrix at the White Grade was enough to draw out the old monsters inside their mountain.

Yet what if they knew that it was not just a Rank Six Spirit Matrix, but a Rank Six Spirit Body also?

He had never heard of a Spirit Body of such a grade before, it did not seem possible for one individual to be so blessed!

The only reason Silas was not going outwardly mad with excitement was because of the cold disposition of Mages of the Black Tower and the Spirit Formula he practiced, yet he was at the edge.

The Alchemist beside him did not show any outward sign, but Silas could hear the rapid tapping of a foot within his voluminous robe. A White Rank talent was guaranteed to become an Archmage in the future, a Spirit Body at that rank could go even higher and reach heights that could not be imagined.

This talent was closer to the peak of this world.

In the entire Black Tower, it would be strange if there were more than a hundred thousand such individuals. This number becomes more ridiculous when you understand that this was calculated based on a span of ten million years. I.e. there had only been one hundred thousand White Ranked talents ever in the Black Tower, in the last ten million years.

None of those if he recalled were Spirit Bodies. This could most likely be the first time something of this nature had ever happened.

"I have to... have to contact my Master right away, this is too much... it has gone beyond my level, only an Archmage can handle this matter," Silas muttered as his shaking hand retrieved a communication amulet, he wanted to trigger it but he kept failing.

"Eh, Senior.... Senior." Daniel poked him in the side.

"What?" Silas cried out, "Don't you see that I'm making contact with our master before the news escapes this place."

Daniel dumbly pointed to the Bead, his eyes were manic and Silas paused as he saw the raw shock on the boy's face, and it calmed him a little bit.

I am a Mage. He thought to himself. I should keep my emotions in check.

Yet, the sound of the Alchemist standing up in shock prompted Silas to look up, his eyes automatically falling towards the Orb, and he only saw black.

At first, he thought that the Spirit Matrix Orb had returned to its basic black color and that whatever happened was just a fluke, but then he realized the blackness emanating from the bead was different. It was expanding.

The blackness was sucking in every light in its surrounding and it resembled a black sun. The communication amulet fell from Silas' nerveless fingers. His carefully constructed Spirit Matrix nearly cracked into pieces, if that happened, except for the Alchemist, everyone here would perish.

"This is absurd! How can this... how can someone like this be around this tiny town on Ikaron IV? This should not..."

He turned to the Mayor and screamed, "These are the signs of a recent awakening! Such a talent must not be unknown, you have the records of every birth and death in your head, so think fast. Who among your people is this talented? Why do I not have any knowledge of it?"

The flustered mayor stammered, "I can't say, I'm confused as well, are you certain this is not a malfunction of your Spirit Matrix Orb? Most of the talented youth in the past three decades have already been documented." Then as if he realized something he turned towards the Alchemist, "Except..."

The mayor trailed off in shock as he collapsed on his knees, the glowing Black Bead had turned Silver. Was there a color that exceeded the Supreme grade?

Jonathan Melbrooks gasped as he came to a realization, "Andar!"

He was suddenly covered in lightning and he vanished, the crowd above parted as he pierced through with speeds many times faster than sound.

Silas looked at the spot that had been vacated by the Alchemist, his face went white and he turned to the kneeling Mayor, and seized him by his robes, screaming in his face, his spittle liberally coating the poor man's face "Who is Andar?"

Chapter 349: Power System

[A FEW MOMENT BEFORE THE AWAKENING OF ANDAR ERIKSON]

Rowan had learned a lot about Mages from the information his Angels gathered in the Empire and those now on the battlefield. If his main body was not slumbering then he would have gathered more detailed information from Covenant, but what he had now was enough.

Especially information about their passage to power which all began from their Spirit Matrix.

Every child born under the influence of the Supreme World of Mages had the potential to awaken their Spirit Matrix. This was not related to any bloodline they may have but it was an intrinsic quality that was a part of the people who were conquered or wished to stay under the umbrella of a Supreme World.

All these reminded Rowan about his World Seeds, and its ability to change the inhabitants into a form closer to himself. It would appear that such powers were granted also to the great powers of the Supreme World.

Perhaps the bloodline system of Dominators was created by mimicking the abilities of Mages and Demons or maybe something else. Now that he knew that the roots of the Empire were controlled in secret by his father, who knew how the Pathway of Dominion came to be. If it could stand toe to toe with the same power system from two Supreme Worlds, then it meant it was not simple.

Rowan focused on this new type of ability he had never come in contact with before, his eagerness was apparent.

The Spirit Matrix was a unique power that had its advantages and disadvantages, and he did not know which he preferred more, the bloodline system of the gods or the Spirit Matrix of Mages.

Nevertheless, Rowan felt he needed to understand the Spirit Matrix System more deeply to conclude which was better, in that light if his main body awoken he would begin studying the Demon power system.

Rowan just realized that he was using the power system of Dominators as an Emphyrean, but would it be possible to also cultivate the Mages and Demons' power system? That thought almost made him frightened. If his main body could gain access to a Spirit Matrix, what sort of horror would he become?

These were all pointless speculations anyway, it was also one of his long-term goals. Rowan filed it away and entered into his body.

In the region of the Spirit where Dominators develop a Mental Space, a Mage could awaken their Spirit Matrix. For the former, they would need to be at the Rift State to unlock their Mental Space but Mages took this path as their first step.

It did not make a Mage superior to a Dominator at the start, they were far weaker because, unlike gifted Dominators with deep bloodlines that could be born at the Incarnation State or even above, every Mage would have to start from scratch, no matter how gifted they were.

A greater foundation and body may lead to easier cultivation for a Mage, but that was not important, not as much as the Spirit Matrix.

At this moment Andar lay on his back, he had short black hair that formed a saggy mop on his head which had become caked with blood, his body was also covered with blood, and his chest was still.

Andar took his first breath, and Suriel knelt and bowed to him, and then the Angel vanished in a burst of flame, his mission completed.

Andar's eyes were still closed as if he were sleeping, and underneath his closed eyelids, there were movements as new eyes were remade.

With every breath, the thick blood from all over his body began to break apart and dissipate. Andar's body began to slowly heat up as if he was a great machine that in every passing moment was beginning to hum and warm up, expelling the rust and the clogs in its many joints.

Rowan began to explore the nature of Andar's Spirit after he finished remaking the body.

He had made a complete overhaul of Andar's entire body and he was pleased with his effort. It was the most he could do without fundamentally changing Andar into something else.

At this time Andar's weight did not increase even though he was now taller; his weight was reduced to less than 40 kg and he was 5 '6'. At fourteen years old, he still had a ways to go in his height department, but he did not sacrifice his strength as the current Andar could rip apart an elephant with his bare hand, and bend metal like rubber.

This body now had a metallic spine and the brain still retained the shape of a brain but now it was metal, even the heart and other living organs like the liver and lungs, but all these changes were coated in living flesh that seamlessly melded with the metal.

This was not an ordinary metal but the entire Essence of an Ouroboros Serpent that was molded into a Tome.

A normal Ouroboros Serpent would devour its shell after every ascension, primarily to regain back essence infused inside its shell throughout its growth and evolution.

Rowan did not need to do this because of his Soul Points, he instantly created the best matching essence for his present level anytime he ascended, leaving his shell with all the accumulated essence of his previous level. Essentially his Serpents were reborn and entirely different after each level up.

If Vraegar was a bit wiser, he could have gone to Eva for the discarded shell of Rowan, although there was a slim chance Eva would not have given him the Ouroboros Shell, it was still possible that she might have if she thought Vraegar might be of use, and this would have greatly enhanced his bloodline far more than the essence he stole from him.

His metallic internals were just one part of the changes the other part was Andar's cell. When Rowan decided to use the copy of his Empyrean shell as a blueprint to rewrite the DNA of Andar, with the calculation ability of his consciousness he could tell a great deal about the effect that he could expect, but he could not predict all the changes that could happen, however, it was a risk he was willing to take.

Chapter 350: Spirit Matrix Gate

Rowan began to explore his body and the changes that were constantly happening to it, this was all in readiness before he began awakening. His perception was wielded like a scalpel and he began cutting through his flesh to see what lies beneath.

Andar's body was far tougher than before because it carried the traits of his shell, and that trait made his physique equal to a Dominator at the Rift State, which was astonishing. He almost resembled an Empyrean.

Rowan was very eager to see the changes that would happen to such a body when he awakened

Rowan discovered that, unlike a Dominator, a Mage had a very clear understanding of their Spirit. It was not the blurry awareness that Dominators were aware of, but their Spirit was almost like a phantom limb, it could be utilized far more effectively than a Dominator could ever accomplish.

With this new control of his Spirit, he instantly understood the reason why Andar could not awaken, the amount of Aether in his body was immense, it would be a blessing for a Mage, but for a Mortal that had not unlocked his Spirit Matrix, it was a stumbling block.

Although Andar Spirit was nourished by his massive Aether pool, it was still too weak to control the immense amount of Aether flowing throughout his body.

There was a limit to the amount of Spirit a Mortal body could contain else they would run mad or their heads would explode. So with a Mortal-level Spirit, even if it was at the peak, Andar couldn't control the Aether in his body that was equal to those of a Mage.

His Talent also effectively increased his Spiritual Capacity at every single moment with no cap in sight, this made his Mortal body no longer able to hold it, and it appeared like a silver cloud around his body.

His Aether capacity was similar to a full-fledged Mage and it was increasing every year, and a Mortal couldn't have the same Spirit as a Mage even though the Alchemist had tried every method he knew to give Andar the means to control his Aether. This has become something of an obsession for the alchemist over the years.

There were methods to allow Andar to touch the gates of his Spirit Matrix, but that would require the presence of an Archmage, who needed to devote his time and resources to help him, but Andar did not receive that assistance. It was generally acknowledged that Talent alone did not determine how far a Mage could go.

Rowan always wondered how the world would view a freak like him who always went against that rule. With what he had done to this body, even a pig had a high chance of becoming an Archmage.

This was the reason why Rowan did not need an Archmage because he had temporarily solved the problem.

The changes he made to Andar's body granted the boy an elevated Aether capacity, and his body was like an endless well as it drank all the Aether Andar had ever possessed and still he was only halfway full.

This body for the first time since its birth was now free of any obstruction and his Spirit could immediately locate the gates of his Spirit Matrix.

The location of the Spirit Matrix was within him but it could not be defined in physical terms, and the exact spot could not be pointed out even by the owner of the Spirit Matrix until it was found.

Andar's Spirit Matrix was located deep within his consciousness, and Rowan reached that place with his Spirit where he saw an extraordinary gate.

It was massive, thousands of feet tall, the edges of it disappearing into the mist that his perception could not reach.

Rowan paused at this sight. He knew that a normal gate of a Spirit Matrix was barely six feet tall, and the highest recorded was fifty feet, but that came from a Mortal who opened his gate at three hundred years old.

That person was a famous wealthy man, who used various potions and elixirs to keep himself youthful for centuries. He wondered what this world would think of his gate that was this large.

It was said that your gate was formed by all the experiences you had and the lives that had interacted with your own. It was the reason why it was easier for children to open their gates, they were mostly blank slates.

Rowan focused on the obstacle in front of him. The gate was made from white stone and various images were embossed on it. Rowan's perception reached the gates and observed the images, they were numerous, and each of them was about seven inches in size. From below, he began to trace the images.

The first three images were recognizable, they were of the Alchemist Jonathan Melbrook, Andar's Mother Shanar Erickson, and his grandfather Magnar Erikson.

After those three images that showed the people that were closest to Andar. After that, well it became another story entirely.

The next image he saw was of a snarling purple wolf, this was the first creature he killed. The next were three huge rats, and then horses, after that the images that stretched farther than his perception could reach were all people. Then beasts of all shapes and sizes and then people, and they alternated and continued till it felt like infinity.

When did he kill so much? Rowan briefly fell into a daze

The moment he left his prison cell which was the Nexus, the world he appeared into died due to no small part because of his presence. He had killed their god and murdered their people in millions, and now he was carrying what was left of that world with him.

A hopeless gesture to stem his... guilt? Was he even capable of feeling that emotion anymore?

When did he become this cold?

Rowan shook himself and adjusted his emotions, it would seem that the mind was getting weaker as he began merging with a mortal. It had been a while since...

Focus.

Rowan cleared all distracting thoughts and peered closely at the gate. He feared that his gate was larger than he thought possible, and for the reason for its size?

Well, Rowan thought there were no acts more personal in this life than to consume someone's soul.