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Chapter 317: Satcthalle

"Roar!"

A ferocious beast appeared before the two groups, unleashing an ear-piercing roar that sent shockwaves through their hearts.

This was because the monster before them was not a sixth level desolate beast as they had hoped for, but a seventh level desolate beast and one at the peak for that matter.

The monster had the head of a dragon with two horns on its head. But there were also two short horns sticking out from its chin. The neck of the monster was covered by a mane just like a male lion. It had a surprisingly slender yet stocky build which gave off the impression that it was both fast and strong. It had the body of a snake, albeit a bit muscly, and the legs of a horse. Its two front limbs were the same, but the hoofs had strange protrusions from the sides.

"A Satcthalle."

William, his bodyguard, and Canza simultaneously grimaced at the same time. Cassie was almost overcome with fear as she shivered at the sight of the creature.

A Satcthalle was a strange, somewhat mythical creature that was native to Eretre.

This description might not seem like much, but according to historians, over three to four thousand years ago, almost all native species of Eretre were wiped out by a global catastrophe that ended many, including the true owners of the East Brafftford relics, the Sunil civilisation. After that cataclysmic event, it was said that desolate beasts from the neighbouring planet, Jota, had somehow migrated to Eretre; possibly due to spatial cracks left behind by stronger desolate beasts or other means.

The native species that managed to survive the global event and even remain existing in the current age were not to be underestimated. Although luck played an important role in their survival, there was no doubt that their strength and ability to adapt, and survive in an era where the planet's world source was severely affected, was great.

On Earth, such species would be regarded as "endangered", but not in Erete. These true native species were classified as deadly, and even if one was on the same level as they were, it was advised to not take on such monsters unless armed with enough vestiges of an adequate grade. To have lived this long and survived against the invasive desolate beasts from planet Jota, they were definitely not ordinary opponents.

The Satcthalle was one such unique variable. An adult would usually end up as an eighth level desolate beast and in some cases, a ninth level. In some rarer cases, a tenth level Satcthalle could exist. That was the level of a city lord of a city-state or even a great city such as Trundel City.

The one before the group, although not an adult, was very much close to being so, seeing as it was at the peak of the seventh level. In truth, it could very well be described as an adult already.

Apart from the difference in power level, what differentiated an adult desolate beast from an adolescent was the experience and tactics.

As desolate beasts aged, they would obtain more genetic information regarding their bloodline. This information wasn't limited to skills but also techniques and fighting styles.

It was pretty much similar to how animals on Earth would learn to utilise certain tactics and pass on this information down to their offspring. As a result, the body of their offsprings would evolve in a direction to help assist them in assimilating this information and performing the action better. For example, the ancestors of lobsters were fans of shelled-creatures but they had a hard time prying them open and depended largely on their dominant claw. Over time, their offsprings evolved to have their dominant claw become bigger to help them pry open or crush shelled-creatures.

A similar situation occurred with desolate beasts at the Apertures Opening stage, except this evolution wasn't pronounced at the start but as they aged. Using the above example where modern lobsters now have a larger dominant claw, if it were the case in a desolate beast, this difference in claw size won't be obvious until adulthood. As a result, the fighting techniques of a juvenile desolate beast differed from that of an adult desolate beast, with the latter being more capable and dangerous.

"We can't defeat this." William's bodyguard advised the young master.

However, even though he knew this, William wasn't willing to give up right then and there. He had sacrificed so much, especially in finances, just to come this far. What's more, two of his men had died and another two were in a critical situation. If he simply gave up and went home like

this, not only would William be disappointed at himself, but he wouldn't know how to face his men again.

Gritting his teeth, William said,

"We can't give up. Not until we get it into our hands."

The 'it' naturally referred to the focus of all three, actually four, parties; the Aión source.

"...okay, young master." The bodyguard sighed but he couldn't talk his master out of it.

If they wanted to leave sooner, rather than talking, they would have to figure out a plan.

Suddenly, Canza's voice reached over to them.

"We're still cooperating, no?"

"Not like we have a choice. That's an adult Satcthalle." William answered with a wryly expression. However deep down, he could already guess that Canza was cooking up a scheme to steal the Aión source amidst the chaos.

"Good." Canza smiled from ear to ear.

He began to exude a murderous energy from his body as his eyes turned red. It was clear that he was going all out; at least compared to when he faced William, his energy was through the roof.

'Is that bastard really just at the peak of the fifth level?' William couldn't help but question.

But with no machine to measure Canza's strength, he could only depend on his experience and senses, which all pointed out that Canza was still not yet a sixth level stellar practitioner.

"Try your best and keep up with me. I'll take the lead."

Canza grinned before charging right at the monster.