The Nameless 281

Chapter 281 Tome (4)

Ri watched silently as two Dyon's sat face to face. One was completely emotionless while the other grit his teeth and clenched his jaw in clear pain.

'You idiot...' Ri wanted to practice the Acacia family singularity technique, but she kept looking up to see how Dyon was doing.

The truth was that the Florence family cloning technique wasn't as great as it was made out to be.

At the onset, a large flower bloomed into existence, reminiscent of the family's namesake. After a certain period of time corresponding to the quality of the clone, a time which amounted to about ten minutes for the 75% clone, and next to no time at all for a 10% one, a naked clone would appear.

However, the problem stemmed from the fact that everything the clone experienced, would be weighed unto you as well. Which meant, the pain of the singularity technique was something Dyon was feeling two-fold right now.

There was the grating and cold killing intent of the Mathilde family technique all combined with the corrosion effects of the Tree of Life and Death.

Ri wanted to say something, anything, to stop him. But, she knew it would be useless. Whether Dyon verbally agreed to letting her carry half the burden or not, his actions spoke to something different.

'No. I can't think like that.' Ri shook her head vigorously. Dyon was working hard so that he could live up to promises he made to himself, her and Madeleine. So, if Ri wanted to carry half of Dyon's burden, that meant she had to work hard enough to do so.

With that last thought, Ri steeled her emotions, looking down toward the Acacia family technique.

Cultivation was complicated... Although the singularity techniques were technically classified as body cultivation methods at the peak of the divine level, they manifested themselves as soul technique in the

end. This meant that after suffering through the body cultivation portion of the technique, one had to rely on their soul talent to utilize the technique.

This was exactly the reason why Dyon was so excited about the Acacia family technique and the increase it would have on his energy cultivation talent. He didn't need to worry about whether he was talented enough or not, because he knew his soul cultivation talent was unmatched. And, because his soul cultivation talent was so great, it would boost the effectiveness of the Acacia family manifestation, thus comparatively increasing his energy cultivation talent.

However, Ri's talent didn't lie in soul cultivation. As half a beast, much of her prowess laid in the power of her body and her ability to quickly learn wills. This meant that although she could withstand the body cultivation portions of the techniques much better than Dyon could, she would still struggle with manifesting the technique in a soul form.

Only someone with an innate soul as powerful as Dyon's could even think about using all three techniques at once... To sustain a clone, the Tree of Life and Death, and the Asura's Imperial Eye at the same time would put such a strain on your soul that it would kill any normal person. This was why although Ri was worried about Dyon practicing all three techniques, she allowed it because she knew he was taking a calculated risk.

Thinking back to how much strain Dyon's own manifestations put on his body the first time he learned to use them, anyone would think Dyon was insane to even attempt this. However, something was telling Ri that the very fact Dyon survived his own manifestations, was the very reason these ancient singularity techniques might be well within his talent to master. After all, how could a humanoid manifestation so domineering and a weapon's hall literally able to manifest any weapon be simple? It might really be the case that manifesting these ancient manifestations would be easier on Dyon's soul.

'I guess my future husband is pretty amazing?' Ri smiled bitterly as she watched Dyon's handsome face twist in pain. 'Alright. Let's do this.'

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Many days later, Dyon's facial features had finally calmed from their initial pain. In fact, they had also become decidedly more handsome under the tempering his body underwent with Elvin bloodlines.

Because of the nature of the techniques, their body cultivation portions were split into tiers based on what one's soul could handle. Essentially, you should only practice the body cultivation portions up to the point the manifestation would be within the realms of your soul to handle, while also keeping it within the realms of what your body could handle.

Therefore, although Dyon's soul could sustain an essence gathering level manifestation, because his body was only at the peak of the meridian formation stage, he could only cultivate up until that point.

However, that didn't mean that the techniques themselves would only be effective against those of that level. After all, they could be combined and stacked. In addition, because Dyon's soul was so much more powerful than the manifestations, he could use them nearly without bounds.

For example, the Tree of Life and Death, because it was stifled at the peak of the meridian formation stage, could normally only kill and take the power of those at that level. But, since Dyon's soul strength was way above that, he could use it more efficiently and freely. Imagine Dyon's soul like a cup and the manifestation like the water within it. Then think of the act of drinking the water as the action Dyon would like to take with the manifestation. Isn't it much easier to drink from a cup that partially filled as opposed to one filled to the brim?

So, instead of being able to take maybe one life at a time, Dyon could take tens if not hundreds of lives at once – as long as they were within the meridian formation stage that is.

The Mathilde family technique was different though. Because it opened up a new path of cultivation, essentially meaning more killing meant it became more powerful, it wasn't barred off by Dyon's body cultivation limits. Its technique was more reminiscent of awakening an aurora. In fact, because it was an eye as well, the methods were quite eerily similar.

When awakening an aurora, you would only need to make an initial connection to begin. Afterwards, you would then pile resources into it to awaken it more. The Mathilde manifestation was very much like this. You initially body cultivated to manifest the eye, but then it was sustained by the soul and the murder path.

This meant that the Mathilde family technique could become one of Dyon's best abilities immediately.

Chapter 282 Spar (1)

In typical fashion, the Florence family technique was slightly different as well. In fact, it melded aspects of the Mathilde and Acacia family techniques.

For example, the strength of the clone's body was directly correlated to Dyon's body and limited as such. Therefore, Dyon's 75% clone was only worth about 75% of the strength of a peak meridian formation body. This meant it was only about as strong, body wise, as an upper mid meridian formation expert.

However, the humanoid manifestation Dyon created using his master's essence as a catalyst, were just as powerful as his soul. In fact, they had room to grow along side his soul until he reached the strength of his master. Therefore, he wouldn't have to find a replacement catalyst for his celestial and demonic will until he surpassed his master and her husband. This was perfect!

As a result of this, over the just over a week Dyon spent cultivating diligently, he had had vast improvements in his wills as well.

His Celestial Will, although he still needed to work on control, had finally broken through the 6th layer barrier and enter the 8th level. His demonic will had entered the 9th level, likely because the demon sage essence was also supplementing its progress along side the demon qilin manifestation. And yet, despite the increase of those two, Dyon was likely the happiest about this increase in his crystal will to the 8th level. This would allow him to be more attuned to changes in the gates... it could quite literally be the difference between life and death.

'If I could find a catalyst for my space and time wills... That would be for the best. It's my last weakness as of now.'

Dyon jumped off the bed silently, looking at his clone's back. 'I'll leave 0.1% of the demon sage's blood in you for you to integrate slowly for me.'

Since there was no point in the clone trying to continue cultivating the Mathilde family technique with no one to kill, Dyon thought of giving him another task.

After grunting through pulling the blood out of himself, Dyon snuck up to the meditating Ri.

"Don't even think about it, pervert." Ri kept her eyes closed, trying to hide the smile creeping up on her lips.

"I can't ask my little feu glace to spar with me?" Dyon asked deviously, lightly kissing Ri's lips.

"Mm." Ri savored Dyon's touch for a bit before opening her eyes. "You're giving me free reign to beat you up?"

Dyon shivered, not liking the light in Ri's eyes. "Beat me up? How could I let my woman beat me? Do you have any idea how many of my friends from the mortal realm would laugh at me for something like that?"

Ri pouted. "I didn't know I was going to marry such a misogynist. Maybe when I meet these friends of yours I should beat some sense into them after I do you first."

Dyon blinked. "Do me?"

"You're hopeless." Ri jumped up eagerly, grabbing Dyon's arm and dragging him out of the tent.

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"You're much too happy about this." Dyon looked around. They stood in a field quite a distance away from the tents. It was fairly late at night now and a moon hung in the sky of the spatial world. Dyon didn't really know how that worked, but, he assumed that the spatial world was literally exactly that: another world. It just happened to be held in another space.

Ri grinned. "I began energy cultivating after you awakened my faith seed. But, because you passed out before you could tell me about celestial will, I had to practically restart from the beginning of meridian formation stage. So, you're lucky. I'll only beat you up a little bit."

Dyon cringed when he realized how right Ri was. She had probably realized her meridians matured with the awakening of her god constitution and faith seed, but her meridians were still quite impure without

celestial will. If Dyon hadn't passed out before he could pass on celestial will to her, she wouldn't have had to start tempering her meridians again from the beginning.

"Because I'm nice," Ri said with a sweet smile. "Only hand to hand combat. If I use my sword, I'm afraid you'll lose something I quite like."

"Eh –" Dyon didn't know whether to laugh or cry, he could only look down between his legs to find something he quite liked too.

'Oh God, what did I get myself into.' Dyon wasn't even really all that familiar with hand to hand combat in the martial world, he only had some self-defence training from the human world. However, those techniques were tailored toward fighting against an opponent that was more powerful... Little did Dyon know he'd have to use it against a girl, let alone his own fiancée who was at least a head and half shorter than him.

Amidst Dyon's thoughts, Ri's faith seed bloomed, her blue-silver tails ripping out and into the world through the spatial transference array Dyon had equipped to the back of her sweat pants.

Dyon smiled, crouching into a ready stance. His shirtless torso flexed, his muscles twitching, knowing fully well he had to be on his A-game. Dyon was well aware that he couldn't have beaten Bas as easily as Ri did. So, if he trained with Ri like this, it would only prove to make him better. There was only so much he could do with this fiancée of his, and clearly by that cheeky look in her eye, she was very much aware of this as well.

Dyon's smile couldn't help but spread out into a grin. It seemed he would have to show this fire cracker just who wore the pants.

"First act, First stage demon emperor's will: perfection." Dyon's body reddened, the wiggling of his muscles becoming more pronounced. 'Time to see how effective the Mathilde family manifestation is.'

"Let's go, little feu glace."

Ri smiled with her adorable canines, not needing any more words before she lunged toward Dyon, full tilt.

Chapter 283 Spar (2)

Dyon's eyes flashed with red as he watched Ri's small fist rage toward him. And yet, from the outside, it looked very different. It was as though Dyon's eyes became to bottomless pits of endless black.

Dyon sent the back of his palm toward Ri's approaching fist, letting it flow by him as he sent his elbow toward her. He wasn't thinking about who Ri was to him right now, all he saw was an enemy.

Ri smiled to herself, impressed with Dyon's reaction, but, her tails weren't sitting idly. Two immediately collided with Dyon's incoming elbow, sending him flying backwards.

Wings burst from Dyon's back as he stabilized himself in the air, 'Her tails have almost the same effect as Celestial will... They purify attacks?'

Dyon had coated his fist with wind will, but it seemed like it was completely thwarted by Ri's tails, 'Maybe this is why my demonic will never worked on her...'

"I'm not going to let you just hover in the air." Ri's smile was just as sweet, but there was something sinister in her voice.

'Oh, come on...'

Ri's tails began violently whipping in the air sending blades of wind and shards of ice toward Dyon in and never-ending rain.

Dyon swerved in the air, narrowly dodging many of them and seeing through opening in Ri's attacks using the asura imperial eye. 'I have to get closer. Ri still doesn't have full grasp of her kitsune abilities, I'll probably have to take advantage of that.'

Massive flowers began blooming around Dyon. Some of them were immediately destroyed by Ri's onslaught, forcing Dyon to wince in pain as he felt the deaths of each one of the 10% clones.

'Alright Ri, let's play.'

Dyon's hands slammed together, dozens of golden arrays manifesting in the air to protect the blooming flowers.

Dyon dove downwards, rushing toward Ri to prevent her from killing off any more of his clones. "You're quite beautiful when you fight." Dyon said with a wide grin on his face.

Ri froze for a second, getting lost in Dyon's eyes. It was as though the black holes were pulling her in. "Y-you! Cheater!"

Dyon grinned. "All's fair in love and war, no?" Dyon immediately took advantage of Ri getting lost in his soul attack, he didn't want to use the full brunt of it, so, he had no choice but to make her slip up.

Dyon disappeared, his celestial movement technique leaving spatial ripples in the air as he appeared before Ri.

"Hmph." Ri wasn't resigned to her fate. In fact, she had yet to use her energy cultivation.

A barrier of essence energy coated RI's palms as she struck out toward Dyon's chest.

'Celestial will won't work against that,' Dyon quickly deduced, instead opting to use his demonic will to strengthen his body further.

"Devour!"

Ri's palm slammed against Dyon's chest with a satisfying thud, sending him flying away. 'Wait, what?' Ri looked confused before her eyes widened.

'That wasn't his chest!'

Shimmers of a broken array twinkled in the air as Dyon flipped in the air, stunting Ri's blow.

"Ugh," Ri stumbled, feeling a slight drain on her soul stamina. 'Devour...' She instantly connected her fatigue to Dyon's technique. Taking advantage of Ri's soul cultivation weakness, Dyon was able to sneak in a devour attack. It wouldn't effect her too much because he wasn't willing to hurt her, but, the small distraction was all he needed. Dyon's feet flashed forward as a smile creeped up on his face. "You're getting too cocky." Ri's eyes narrowed into slits, a golden hue coating her tail as her manifestations appeared behind her. Dyon's fist raged toward Ri, coated in sword and wind will. 'I'll just stop him with my tails aga -" Ri froze. 'Hmm?' Dyon smiled. "Can't seem to move your tails, hmm?" A tempest of wind stormed toward Ri's face as Dyon grinned. "I guess I win this round, little feu glace." BOOM! Dyon fist stopped inches from Ri's face.

Ri stared at Dyon's hand, her hair blowing back viciously before the wind finally settled down. She could

"Simple really, you forgot about my clones. The defensive arrays I drew were only distractions from the

only sigh. "Just go ahead and tell me how you did it."

concealment arrays I also drew. I didn't want you to be alert to it, so I hid it.

"Then they just snuck up behind you and held your tails just as I attacked. They're not strong enough to hold your tails for long, but, just a small delay is all I needed.

"As an added buffer, to ensure you were distracted, I used Devour on you." Dyon lowered his fist, standing before Ri proudly.

Ri grinned, making Dyon quite uncomfortable. "Well, handsome genius boy, don't you know how to count past nine?"

"Count past nine?" Dyon's eyes widened with a sudden realization, looking up he found Ri's tenth tail hovering above him. "That's just not fair..."

Ri smiled. "My sixth sense picked something up at the last minute so I tried to dodge it. Because you timed it so well, only one of my tails escaped. So, I pretended to be caught so you wouldn't notice. This is a draw, don't you think?"

Dyon sighed. "Draw it is..."

Dyon relaxed as he finally undid his Demon Emperor's Will transformation and asura imperial eyes.

"Aww, don't look so sad. We can battle another way, I'll even let you win." Ri blinked her eyes innocently.

Dyon grinned at Ri's words, suddenly making her feel like she fell into a trap. 'You weren't sad at all, you pervert.'

"Ah!" Dyon swept Ri off her feet, holding her legs to either side of his torso as his hands relished in the feeling of her ass.

Ri smiled lowering her lips to Dyon's, cupping his face.

Everything was perfect in that moment. Despite their fatigue from the days of endless training, they still felt like for that instant, it was just the two of them. No worries, no tomorrow to think of, and no wars to fight in.

Well... That was until the spatial world started shaking violently...

Chapter 284 Behold

Feeling the trembling Dyon sighed. He was already at half mast, but it seemed he wouldn't get the chance to do anything this time. Planting a soft kiss on Ri's lips, he set her down.

"I don't think we have time to change, they definitely need us now."

Ri nodded at Dyon's words, a serious expression coloring her face as they flashed out of the world.

They immediately appeared inside a shaking vessel. It was meant to be a luxurious cabin pulled along by Grimbold family beasts, but right now, it couldn't have been further from that.

The roof was completely torn off, revealing a dark and still darkening sky. Endless cyclones whipped about, kicking up the dust of the grey roads and drowning out the roars of the white tigers.

Dyon's lips twitched as he listened to Akash yell out orders from her position in the middle of the pack. 'She's quite ruthless...'

Hundreds of beasts were pulling vessels were crossing what looked like plains, except for the fact there was no tall grass to be seen. Endless grey flatlands stretched out and in the far distance, you could see what looked like a massive lotus.

'That must be Lotus Tower.' Although Dyon had been prepared for the landscape, he was still a bit off put by the fact a lotus wasn't surrounded by lush greenery, but instead what smelt and looked like death.

Ri raised her eyebrows, looking up in the sky. "Even with the Tree of Life and Death manifestation, I can't sense any normal energies..."

Nodding, Dyon leapt up to stand on the edge of the torn roof. "Nothing but Death qi..."

This wasn't Dyon's first run-in with death qi. Back at Focus Academy, the pools of energy they sacrificed their students to form was laced with it. If Dyon was forced to absorb this energy, he'd end up in an even worse situation than he was back then, even with his aurora being much stronger.

"It must be Lotus Tower," said Ri from the floor of the vessel. She looked off to the distance tower, shaken by how similar it was to Ice Petal's Dance and even the present Dyon had given her for her birthday.

"It's either Lotus Tower absorbed all the energy but death qi, or it's quite literally turning all of the energy it absorbed into death qi."

Although Dyon rarely referred to his wills as qi, that was what they were. When wills manifested themselves as a sword blade, or a wind cyclone, or Dyon's dripping demonic will, as some examples, they took the form of energies of their own that you could call qi.

The fact the ground was so filled to the brim with such qi meant that. 'This place might have a perfect catalyst for death will...'

Dyon shook his head, now wasn't the time to be thinking of gaining catalysts for the Florence family technique. He had to help make sure the casualties were kept to a minimum, especially when it came to his army.

Snapping his head to get a good look around, it seemed they weren't doing too badly. Members of the Nodin major family were being directed by Akash, their main specialty? Wind will.

Much like Dyon's humanoid manifestation, their souls manifested themselves as wings. Although, theirs looked much different from Dyon's.

Almost illusory in make, the Nodin family manifestation was actually wings made of wind. The only sign that they actually appeared was the swirling air behind them and the vicious fluttering of their long light green hair.

Much like every other major family, their tier of talent decided the power their manifestation would hold. Therefore, the weakest among them had one pair of wings, whereas the strongest had three.

Dyon watched with interest as the major family worked in tandem to deviate the path of the cyclones.

'This isn't how you should do it...' Dyon's brows scrunched together. The Nodin family was trying to, for lack of a better explanation, 'untwirl' the cyclones... but that was borderline idiotic. Dyon felt like he was watching a circus act, for lack of a better descriptor. He wasn't the type of person to cast aspersions on those who simply didn't know better, but this was connected to the lives and deaths of all those here. It made his skin crawl.

Trying to spin the wind in the opposite direction would just waste unnecessary energy. A fact that was being proven because it took hundreds of Nodin family members to tackle a single cyclone before they moved on to the next.

'Fuck. Don't these people read books?'

"I can't let this continue." Not wanting to overstep his bounds, Dyon began to secretly send messages to Akash. This way should could maintain her air as a commander.

The plan was simple. Cyclones, and formations of the like, were usually the most powerful above warm water. In addition, they were formed by low pressure systems. However, it was obvious that there was no water here, and yet the cyclone was still raging, therefore what was driving it was either death qi or the low pressure. In the end, Dyon decided that it was likely both.

Hearing Dyon's advice, Akash looked over to him and nodded in appreciation. "Hear my command!"

Akash immediately began repeating Dyon's words.

The first to move was the Aedre family. They specialized in water will, and as such, the souls manifested as rivers – which, of course, meant that the length of the river denoted their talent.

Those that specialized in ice type wills as a branch of their techniques stepped forward, joining hands to create a gush of ice water that coated the ground. Beads of sweat poured down their faces as they pushed themselves to limit. Although they didn't lower the temperature nearly as much as Dyon had against the scaled elephants, they did their job.

Then came the Sigebryht family. Dyon had long since studied their manifestation, but this was the first time he was seeing it in action. And it was truly a sight to behold.

Chapter 285 Not So...

Akash and Zaltarish leapt to the grey ground along with their family members, spreading out their arms in unison as they began to flow a deep red.

'The Sigebryht family manifestation... An ultimate defense.' Thought Dyon.

Blood red seals appeared above the head of each and every Sigebryht, tainting the dark the sky with an eerie glow.

Their manifestation was special – they were experts in a martial path Dyon knew little about: Sealing.

Depending on talent, the Sigebryht could form these blood red seals over their life time and slowly learn to control more. They looked almost like complex arrays, blotting out the skies domineeringly.

And then, they did something that made the very earth shake. "SEAL!"

Almost immediately, the grey ground changed to a healthier brown – if you looked closely, you could even see the faint hints of green as well. The Sigebryht family had sealed the death qi!

'I don't know if they can keep this up for long... The next phase needs to be executed quickly.' Dyon stood tall, his brows creased in concentration, ready to step in should it not work out.

Luckily, there didn't end up being a need. The Nodin family played their parts perfectly.

Instead of trying to change the direction of the winds, they instead flew high into the sky to begin sending compact bursts of air into the eye of the storm.

As Dyon had thought, low pressure was a massive problem with storms like these. So, how would you fix them? Simple. Increase the pressure.

And that was that. With the stifling of the death qi, the storm had little else to sustain itself when the cold ground and high pressure bursts of wind were taken into account. The plan and execution were quite simply perfect.

Soon, the storm was completely and cleanly eliminated. Aside from a few injured beasts and bruised foot soldiers, the problems were miniscule.

Dyon sighed in relief, settling back down into the vessel. They'd be at Lotus Tower soon, so it was unlikely to matter that he and Ri had lost their roof.

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Hours later, the Elvin troops had made it to the base of Lotus Tower.

Unlike the Earth Tower, the surroundings of this area were completely barren except for defensive structures that took the form of ditches, walls, and spikes. This of course made sense, although there were a few lookout stations in the distance, the idea of keeping large amounts of people outside when there was no battle was much too dangerous.

In fact, the death qi was a lot of what dealt with the defense of the tower. The only reason the Elvin Troops made it here safely was because of the laws of the tower, or, more specifically, the laws the tower allowed you to control when you gained ownership of it.

When he had read about this, Dyon couldn't help but shake his head. This really was too much like a game. It made him feel more uncomfortable than anything else. With this sort of design, it made him feel as though someone was pulling at him like a puppet on a string.

The possessors of the Lotus Tower, although they were subject to the same dangerous storms as everyone else, also had the ability to ignore the death qi and the troubles brought along with it. Which meant that although the territory was flat, ownership of the tower itself was like an ultimate defense in and of itself.

In the end, attackers would have to spend undo energy constantly purging themselves of death qi while they attacked. All while the defenders only had to hold out for longer. The only real problem for the defenders were the storms. But, they had learned a new method of dealing with that thanks to Dyon.

Entering the ground floor of the Lotus Tower, they were greeted with a completely different scene than what they had seen outside.

Lush gardens filled the space as green grasses coated the entirety of the floor. It was more like entering a new world as opposed to entering a building.

Dyon walked in beside Ri, Delia, Akash and Zaltarish. The two siblings were in high spirits after so easily dealing with the storm.

"Tell me, Dyon. Is there a human world profession that specializes in storms?" Akash asked eagerly, hoping to pick Dyon's brain about a few things.

Dyon smiled. "There is now that I think about it. A lot of their job is about predicting storms and the weather based on patterns and data. You could say that a lot of what I know about storms is because their profession exists, yes."

Akash nodded enthusiastically, listening as Dyon spoke about the human world. But then she froze, suddenly thinking of something.

"We all need to be aware that the Elves aren't the only ones who defend this tower," she said seriously.

Dyon nodded. It made sense. After all, there were so many clans and sects yet only three towers worth defending. It was a truly rare case that the earth tower was ever attacked, and much the same went for the Guatama Tower.

Why? Because you could see attacks toward them coming from a mile away. If you didn't have all of your forces trained on the attack, it simply didn't make sense to attack at all. This was a large part of the reason the Phantus clan's attack was so surprising. Not only did they bring their beasts across the unpredictable lands of the gates, they had also decided to attack with such a small group!

As a result, the defense of Lotus Tower was shared.

The Royal God Clan and Sicarius family usually remained posted at Earth Tower unless they leveraged an attack. The Ragnor Clan took hold of Rod Tower along with the Cavositas clan. The Pakal clan held onto the Looming Tower along with the Sapientia clan. And the Elves had Lotus Tower along with the Niveus sect...

And unfortunately, almost as soon as Dyon thought of this, the familiar sound of a not so friendly person entered his ears.

Chapter 286 You Idiot

Soon, the elves sat across from the Niveus sect members in an uncomfortable silence. Oddly enough, some miscellaneous sects were also in attendance, after all, it wasn't just the god clans who participated in the campaigns.

But, maybe not so fortunately, those miscellaneous sect members were part of the big sects Dyon despised so much. Although Hashim and Lehabim didn't dare look Dyon in the eyes anymore, much to Orbis' amusement, their presence was still a stain on an already annoying situation.

Dyon had tried to see if Eli's older sister, Venus, was here. But, it seemed like she decided to forego the experience. Also, Dyon hadn't even bothered to search for Eli because he was very clear on the fact that he was much too weak to join the campaigns just yet. He was probably focused on his gardening right about now – the thought of which brought a smile to Dyon's face, much to Evelyn's irritation.

'Mocking me? We'll see how you mock me when you learn who my future husband is.' Evelyn snorted in her heart. She was a cold and calculating individual despite the warm outer appearance she displayed most of the time. To her, her virginity was only a card to play to gain power. What she lost initially would be given back to her many fold. All she needed to do was be patient. 'When he comes back, you're dead. Enjoy walking around with that hypocritical smile for now.'

Despite Evelyn's silent warning, Dyon didn't seem aware of any changes. In fact, he was quite busy quietly chatting away with Ri, letting Akash take the reigns.

"We should speak about what our tactics will be for this campaign. Who will defend. Who will attack. And when we'll do each." Akash, finally finished gathering her thoughts, began to speak.

And yet, Evelyn's gaze seemed transfixed on a Delia that didn't seem too intent to look back.

But suddenly, a voice snapped her out of any ill-intentions she had.

"I thought I told you to tread lightly when it came to my little sister? Did you not take enough notes? Do you need a repeat lesson?" Dyon looked up from his conversation with Ri, staring daggers at a now flustered Evelyn.

And yet, just as Evelyn was about to respond, the loud booming sounds of a commotion filled the senses of everyone in attendance.

Akash stood up. "There shouldn't be anything going on right now. We haven't gotten any reports!"

Dyon's brows furrowed before a thought crossed his mind, causing his eyes to narrow. 'The Saeclum clan.'

It was no secret that the Saeclum clan, due to their soul cultivation speciality and their unique techniques, were the prime scouters for not just Rod Tower, but every tower. The fact there were no reports, and yet something was clearly happening now could only mean one thing: they hadn't reported it on purpose.

Evelyn turned an angry gaze toward Dyon. After her interaction with him, she had done her due diligence in delving into his background. As such, his run-ins with the Saeclum and Ragnor clans weren't secrets to her now.

"How fantastic. Now we can't trust our intelligence because you think you can go around being arrogant wherever you want. Didn't you think of your actions ever having consequences?" Evelyn said angrily.

Although she hated Dyon to the core, her reasons for being angry, at least right now, seemed valid to her and the Niveus sect members.

Dyon ignored Evelyn. After all, if he hadn't killed Saeclum he would have died. Was he supposed to just allow that?

"Let's go." Dyon flashed out of the room. What he needed was speed now, every second counted.

Ri ran right along with Dyon as they flashed to the absolute peak of Lotus Tower to look out at the situation.

"This..."

Dyon's brow furrowed in agitation. There were too many!

Hundreds of thousands of soldiers raged toward Lotus Tower. But, it shouldn't be possible to move such large amounts of troops all together. Even without the Saeclum clan they should have detected this. And aside from that, there was no explanation for how all of them survived!

"This is the same method they used with the scaled elephants... I knew this was a possibility... But I was really hoping... Dammit!"

Dyon took a deep breath feeling Ri's hand slip into his. This Alidor had been planning this for a long time, Dyon had only just stepped into the mix. Although he had thwarted the first part of Alidor's plan, a true genius wouldn't crumble after one setback. It seemed a great battle was about to begin.

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In the distance, the army of hundreds of thousands continued to charge forward, getting closer with every passing second.

The rumbling of their footsteps, the clouds of grey and black dust, even the raging noise of their war drums and bestial cries were like a cacophonic prelude to a bloody battle.

Soon, they were close enough for Dyon to see two familiar figures floating above them in the skies.

'Bas and Liska...' Does that mean he's here? Why would he be here? 'No. That's not it.'

Dyon's mind was working on overdrive. The Elvin and Niveus armies were still scrambling within the tower to get ready, and even Dyon's army was caught unaware. 'What a nice game you've played Saeclum clan. I'll remember this.'

"Ri, I'm about to test out something really dangerous. I need you to remember that as long as you feel my celestial will in you, I'm alive. Alright?"

Ri furrowed her brows while looking at Dyon's determined profile. "You idiot. What happened to my half?"

Dyon looked over to Ri. Right now, it was just the two of them in front of an army of almost a million. And yet, on their side, they may have amounted to twenty thousand. Twenty thousand who weren't even properly prepared.

"This is just something I have to do alone. It's too dangerous."

Ri looked up at Dyon's gentle smile, feeling her heart break.

Chapter 287 Respect

The armies inside the Lotus Tower were starting to rush out, but could twenty thousand really fight against this many? Even with the advantage of the death qi?

Bas and Liska stood proudly in the air, looking down at Dyon and Ri with disdain. It was finally time for their revenge. Few in their lives had ever disrespected them as much as Dyon and Ri had, so, it was about time they died.

Dyon sighed, patting Ri's head and leaning forward to plant a kiss on her forehead.

"Remember what I said, little feu glace. Your man won't die so easily. The demon generals will protect you. Command them well. I'll be back before you know it."

Before Ri could reach out to stop Dyon, he had already flashed away from her, his footsteps carrying him to a position right between the approaching army and the scrambling Lotus alliance.

'Alright. Apparently, you think it's cool to play games with people's lives... So, let me break in your game for you.'

Dyon's aurora blazed around him, a raging tempest of golden flames erupting into life.

Slowly, the flames turned a purple gold as Dyon pushed it harder toward its peak.

The aurora flames grew larger and larger. Fifty meters. One hundred meters. Two hundred meters.

BOOM!

Dyon's humanoid manifestation burst into being, looming over the approaching army with malice as Dyon's soul stage raged into the peak of the Essence stage.

'Since you're an ancient game, you're built on an array, aren't you?'

BOOM!

A massive tree made of obsidian appeared behind Dyon's humanoid manifestation, spreading out its roots hundreds of meters outward before digging into the ground.

Dyon was in a world of his own. The approaching army continued to charge forward, their bestial natures not in the least afraid of Dyon's display of power.

Behind him, Ri watched with tears in her eyes as more and more of the Lotus alliance armies rushed out of the tower an into awkward formations. The only relatively organized army was Dyon and Ri's, and that was only because the demon generals had instinctively followed Dyon's orders and were already thinking of Ri as their commander.

Dyon grit his teeth as he spread the roots of the tree to the max. "You're supposed to be good at finding energy sources, right? WELL FIND ME A WEAK POINT! NOW!"

Blood spilled from Dyon as wounds began to open up on his body. The strain of pushing his manifestations so far was getting to him. The roots had already passed the kilometer mark!

Suddenly Dyon's eyes flashed. 'There!'

Wings burst from Dyon's back as wind will careened him toward a spot in the ground a few hundred meters from himself.

And then... he aimed his everything toward that point...

BOOM!

Dyon's aurora flames burst into the grey ground, cracking it in a blaze of golden light.

The earth shook violently, even the sky looked like it was falling as booming thunder seemed to want to strike Dyon down for blaspheming the gate.

'Kiss my ass.' Dyon looked at the sky defiantly, not regretting his actions in the least as the ground split apart, raging toward the coming army.

Just as he had expected, the space around towers were special and had added protection. As a result, the cracks didn't even reach within half a kilometer of them, but, that didn't stop the cracks from engulfing portions of the oncoming army.

Death qi erupted from the ground, instantly burning hundreds at a time to ashes.

Screams that seemed to come straight from the depths of hell itself filled the battle field. Skin cracked and blistered, eyes bulged and popped, bones crumbled under their own weight... Death qi was truly menacing.

Dyon watched in the sky, panting heavily. It was impossible for him to escape these death qi surges, a wall of death qi had already surrounded him... he could only vaguely see Ri's worried expression through the endless black. Worst part was, he could tell that the game was already repairing itself, clearly prepared for cases like this – meaning he couldn't take the whole enemy army with him.

'I can't just stand still and wait.' Thought Dyon. 'I need to take advantage of this crack and hide in space...' The only way to deal with a flaw in this game was to use the flaw to his advantage.

Almost as if on que, a raging tempest of death qi stormed toward Dyon, intent on killing him.

Dyon flashed to the side, the twinkling silver and black of his space will coating him as he did something inexplicable.

"NO!" Ri shook violently as she watched Dyon dive down into the crack. She wanted to break down, but she suddenly felt Arios' strong hand squeeze her shoulder.

Ri looked back with tears twinkling in her eyes. A hundred demon generals. Nine hundred Elvin orphans. Each and every one with determined expressions on their faces as they watched Dyon take out half of an army of nearly a million by himself.

"Our commander has done well. Now it's our turn." Arios said stoically, looking out at the slowly closing crack.

Aeson watched from a distance as Ri wiped her tears. He could only clench his fists in anger. Anger at himself being so useless. He felt it should be him sacrificing for Ri. And yet, Dyon did it so easily – without even a second thought.

'You have my respect...' Aeson thought quietly. Steeling himself in preparation for the battle ahead.

In the distance, Bas and Liska could only watch as half of their army disappeared. Once standing at almost a million, they had less than four hundred thousand now. How would they even explain such a loss? Could they blame it on the death qi? Many of those they lost were part of their very own beast clans!

Bas grit his teeth, watching as the crack Dyon dove into slowly closed, 'Stay dead. You absolute eyesore.'

Liska suddenly giggled, causing Bas to look toward her. "Husband, why are you so agitated. Sure, we lost many. But, isn't four hundred thousand still twenty times more than twenty thousand? We'll crush them just the same. And, if we follow Master Guatama's plan, the death qi won't even affect us anymore! What is there to be worried about."

Seeing Bas still had a worried expression, Liska gently stroked his crotch, tippy toeing to coo in his ear. "I'll even let you have me and the fox girl at the same time. Doesn't that sound like something my king would want?"

Bas' eyes snapped toward Ri who was standing in the distance, a terrible grin appearing on his face.

Chapter 288 Forget.

Ri stood silently with the army at her back.

In the distance, the oncoming army was scrambling to reorganize themselves. Dyon had not only halved their numbers, he had also bought the Lotus alliance some time.

Taking a deep breath, Ri's eyes flashed a cold blue, her features steeling as a concealment array manifested around her.

Moments later, Ri's demeanor had completely changed as she stepped out of the array. Her tears had dried and her tails rested calmly on the grey ground.

She was once again wearing her silver armor and her mother's sword had appeared in her hand. "We take vanguard."

Her words were short and poignant. A raging blaze of blue appeared beneath her feet as she leaped into the air, hovering above the army.

"Campaign head Akash and Evelyn. Our tactics are the best chance we have in this battle, but it's impossible to win this with tactics alone. So, Dyon implemented a plan for this specific situation.

"It's best you put aside your grudges now if you want to live. If it makes you feel better, assume my fiancé is dead."

Ri turned a sharp gaze toward Evelyn the rest of the Niveus sect members.

In reality, much of their numbers were made up by the Elves. The Niveus Sect women were maybe about 30% of them. In fact, much of the reason they even chose to defend this tower was because it was the most out of the way of where the perceived 'action' would be. Normally, Rod and Looming Tower were the first to be attacked because they were much closer to Guatama and the other towers of the opposing universe. The fact Lotus Tower was being attacked before word of an attack on Rod and Looming was truly baffling.

Evelyn said nothing to Ri's words because they were true. Evelyn had no way of knowing Dyon was still alive because she didn't have the celestial will in her Ri did, all she knew was that hundreds of thousands had died in a blaze of death qi and Dyon was likely one of them. But, she hadn't even gotten an opportunity to feel happy about it because her life was now in danger.

Ri looked away. Evelyn's attitude wasn't the best, but it would have to do for now. But, an itching feeling was gripping at her heart. Whether she knew Dyon was alive or not was irrelevant... Whether she'd ever see him again was a completely different question. Ri had heard of Arios' story. What if Dyon got lost in time like he did?...

'Wait...'

Ri's eyebrows shot up in a faint shock when she noticed Delia walk standing on the front lines along with the rest of the army. Ri wanted to say something, but when she noticed Delia's trembling hands being clenched so tightly that blood fell to the ground, she held back. Some decisions were left up to the individual. Ri was burying her pain by throwing all of her emotions into this coming battle, what right did she have to say Delia couldn't do the same?

"Defensive Formation Variation 4: Gorilla's Den."

The army led by demon generals burst into action.

In the human world, the power dynamics between people were much more balanced by intelligence than it was in the martial world. As such, wars weren't always decided by who was the bigger country or who had the larger army. In fact, it often wasn't even decided by who had the best technology. Why else would countries as large as America spend years with no clear victories against supposedly third world countries?

Although Dyon didn't study military tactics, he ingrained very specific philosophies within himself. It wasn't that human world tactics were useless or that his felt his thoughts were so far above that of veterans, it was that he knew human world tactics wouldn't take into account the nuanced differences between it and the martial world.

Dyon knew that trying to win solely based on tactics was impossible. Why else would he evenly spread his demon generals as he did? He was fully aware that without enough power, everything would crumble.

Why did his formations work so well? Because of power. Why did he crush the scaled elephants? Because of power. What was going to get the Lotus alliance out of this situation? Power.

Weeks earlier Dyon had said something to the army that made their eyes flow with passion.

"If you follow me, you'll never lose.

"I don't claim to want to overhaul the philosophies of the martial world, but I want you to know, here and now, that it's not enough.

"If you want to protect your families. If you want to leave this universe and go home. If you want to move on to better and brighter things. I'm telling you that the way you think isn't enough.

"Forget everything you know. Forget everything you think you know. Listen to my words and I'll show you the path.

"The human and martial world have always been together, yet separate. Close, yet so far apart.

"But. Under me? They'll be one in the same.

"There is no victory without intelligence. There is no victory with power. There is only death in defeat. And there is no glory in death."

The nine hundred Elvin Orphans rushed forward. Endless streaks of gold colored the dark skies as endless defensive formations appeared.

Hundreds of thousands of array plates crumbled to dust as layers of peak manifestation layer formations appeared in a maze of concealment formations. Dyon's army moved in odd patterns, and yet were also symbiotic as they weaved a labyrinth of endless complexities.

In an instant, Lotus Tower, the Lotus Alliance, and even the sounds of their existences were completely wiped.

In front of the beast army now stood an endless grey field. Everything had disappeared but the landscape and the relentless death qi.

The beast army froze amidst their reorganization. What was going on? Why had everyone disappeared? Concealment arrays?

Bas and Liska stood in the skies. They had been directing their reorganization and were just about to charge, but this change of events was really too shocking.

Suddenly, the seemingly normal space rippled, and out stepped just over a hundred warriors.

Delia. Aeson. Akash. Evelyn. Erea. Zaltarish. The demon generals.

One hundred stood against four hundred thousand.

Ri slowly stood out herself, prepared to battle. The face of a handsome and fearless young man flashed in her mind as she took a deep breath, gripping her sword. 'Let me carry half.'

And went that last thought, Ri and her allies charged.

Chapter 289 Too Late

Dyon's plan was simple. In a situation where the numbers had them at the severe disadvantage, that was also the situation where their most powerful members would have the greatest effect.

However, at the same time, it was also when weaker members could completely destroy the morale of their allies, something that was already a scarcity in a situation like this.

Therefore, the answer was to maximise the use of your most powerful members while also minimizing the casualties suffered among your weakest members. And with that idea, the idea for this formation was conceived.

Using a combination of defensive and concealment arrays, the much smaller Lotus alliance could hide within them.

The arrays formed a complex maze with their defensive formations. This maze was then immediately covered up with concealment arrays, increasing the difficulty of breaching the formation.

However, the best part of the formation were the pockets of enemies the opposing army would find inside. Even as Ri charged forward with the demon generals, a determined looking steeling her features, the members of the Elvin Kingdom and Niveus sect were organizing themselves within the mazed formation, completely prepared for any enemy breaches.

And that was exactly the point. The most powerful members of the Lotus Alliance would fight freely, sowing discord and anarchy within the armies of the opponents, not allowing them time to form a cohesive plan for approaching the formation. Or, better yet, not allowing them too much time to analyze the formation at all.

However, maybe the most important part of this formation was the teleportation arrays Dyon drew for the vanguard. It was impossible to expect the demon generals to fight without fatigue or injury. Thus, at the center of the maze was a teleportation array connected to the hundreds of array plates Dyon spread among the demon generals and Ri.

The idea of drawing enough teleportation arrays with only a week was an impossible feat. Therefore, Dyon came up with a short cut. He drew two master level teleportation stations, then connected much simpler teleportation arrays to it. That way, the simpler teleportation arrays could use the much more robust teleportation station to support their instant teleportation to it. Therefore, whenever the vanguard tired, they could instantly retreat to the center of the maze to recover by crushing the array plate.

And thus, the Gorilla's Den formation was born. The epitome of guerrilla warfare matched with the fierceness of a gorilla. It was the perfect combination of tactics and power. One that was only meant to be used when their backs were truly against the wall...

Would they win? Ri had no idea. But, she also knew that she would give it her all. Dyon had for all intents and purposes sacrificed himself for the sake of them. She would be damned if she couldn't do at least that much.

With that last thought, Ri burst into the disarrayed beast army. Their bestial cries sounding off as her tails whipped them away and sliced through their scales.

Ri knew her soul couldn't sustain the Tree of Life and Death for long because she hadn't learned devour like Dyon. In fact, even if Dyon gave her the technique, Ri had no idea how long it would take her to learn because her soul wasn't as talented as Dyon's. It would most likely take at least half a year for her to grasp the first stage of the first act of the technique. Therefore, there was no time now. She could only reserve the Acacia family technique as a final resort. As a final burst of power to help their survival.

But, Ri put thoughts of such a situation to the back of her mind, instead focusing on hacking apart her enemies as her essence energy flowed to replenish her depleting strength.

The beast army itself seemed to be mostly made of meridian formation warriors. This made sense, after all, the most powerful members of Earth were at Rod and Looming tower, why would they invest their essence gathering experts at a seemingly weak tower? They had planned for three faith seeds. Caedlum's, Vidar's and Thor's. Ri was a complete anomaly, who would think that another faith seed was hiding within the Elvin Kingdom?

However, despite having witnessed Ri's faith seed manifest itself at Earth Tower, Alidor still followed through with this plan.

For one, Ri wasn't anywhere near as proficient with her faith seed. If she was, how would Bas ever think his bloodline could compare? In fact, how could the scaled elephants even think of attacking her? The bloodline suppression they'd experience would be akin to an ant facing the queen of all beasts. Secondly, Ri was much younger and had weaker cultivation than the other three. Although Caedlum was around her and Dyon's age, he had also been aware of his faith seed for much longer. So, Alidor decided to use numbers against Ri, focusing his essence gathering experts elsewhere.

All of these thoughts ran through Ri's head as she forged deeper and deeper into the beast army. 'I'll have to thank you for underestimating me. Just this once.'

Bas and Liska watched this scene leisurely. Although their auroras weren't powerful enough to see through Dyon's concealment, they still had the numbers on their side. Ri was much too powerful for them to attack head on, so, they'd just wait for her to tire out. Wasn't that the easiest way? Too bad they weren't aware that if Ri ever felt overwhelmed she would pull out...

But, the problem was Ri herself.... Despite her serene and murderously focused aura as she sliced her way through the subordinates of the Basilisks, her heart was shattering. Her every strike held her everything, she had no concept of biding time, she wasn't fighting smartly, and her stamina was being drained much quicker than she was aware...

All she could think of was whether or not she'd ever see Dyon again. Was he stuck hundreds of years in the past? Was he even able to get out of the spatial traps? What if Dyon's death was in the future and thus didn't affect his celestial will in the past? What if he was already dead then?...

Maybe by the time Ri realized her body was too fatigued to continue, it would be too late...

Chapter 290 Heart

Away from the raging war, another sort of battle was happening much further away, and it just happened to involve another fiancée of Dyon's.

On a planet far from Earth, Madeleine had entered a gate along with a Sapientia family main branch and the Belmont prince. But, not everything was going so well right now.

They were attacking a Tower of the opposing universe, a universe that happened to be the exact same one Dyon and Ri were currently dealing with. However, the problem was instead of facing an innate aurora genius, they were facing the geniuses of a King God Clan!

Fatigue was washing over Madeleine. Her beautiful features were coated in a sheen of sweat as her long flowing purple dress fluttered in the wind. Dyon's gift to her hovered in the air, sending onslaught after onslaught of music will at the army of approaching enemies.

Prince Belmont fought in the skies, the true picture of ferocity. His eyes were blue and red much like his younger brother, but, they were oddly much closer to purple than Elwing's had been.

Suddenly, his opponent laughed. "For a mere prince of a backwater Royal God Clan, you're much more powerful than I thought you'd be."

Prince Belmont said nothing as raging ice and fire will combusted around him. He had never faced a King God Clan before, and the mere fact this planet had survived attacks from such a powerful god clan was enough for him to respect them. But, right now was his own time to shine. But... his opponent wasn't simple.

The fourth son of the King God Clan – Mekhi Uidah.

Long golden hair flowed in the wind as he clashed with Prince Belmont again and again. However, probably his most striking feature was the large golden eye on his forehead. He seemed to see through everything, predicting the prince's attack and thwarting them.

Maybe what was most frustrating was the odd energy Mekhi used. It was free flowing, yet enigmatic. In fact, it was an energy that Dyon would have without a doubt recognized as eerily similar to the one Alidor Gautama had attacked him with!

The Prince turned his gaze to Madeleine every so often, content with how fervently the Sapientia family protected her.

"You shouldn't be distracted by a woman in a situation like this. A son of a King God Clan is playing with you and you're worried about what's in your pants? Don't worry, I'll satisfy her just fine after we're done here."

Prince Belmont didn't seem to have a reaction to Mekhi's words. Yet, his response was simple. "King God Clan? You're a mere fourth son. Since when would I be afraid of such a thing..."

BOOM!

Prince Belmont's eyes melded into a perfect purple in that instant, his ice and fire combining into a blinding purple flame. "Kneel."

It was as though a phoenix had manifested itself in the sky, bearing down on Mekhi menacingly.

A serious expression passed through Mekhi's features. 'He's been holding back? Why?'

However, just as Prince Belmont was about to attack, a violent eruption coursed through the earth. And the result, was something completely unexpected... A temple was raising from the ground!

'That's?!' Mekhi's eyes immediately shone. His ring flashed as he pulled out a communication array plate.

Prince Belmont's eyes shone. 'It's time.'

If Mekhi had been paying attention, he would have noticed the complete lack of surprise on the prince's face. If he was even the slightest bit intelligent, he would have also connected that to the fact the prince didn't seem to have been trying at all, even against him, a genius of a King God Clan. And thus, he would have figured out one very important thing... The prince knew this was coming.

On the ground, Madeleine looked up, breathing deeply. Even on the battle field, she was still the picture of perfect.

Her brunette hair had long since fallen out of its usual bun, reaching to her waist.

She had matured a lot since the last time she had seen Dyon. Her curves were more pronounced, and her beauty was all the more exceptional. But, maybe her most drastic change was her power. Without anyone even realizing, the first in line genius they saw for nothing other than her beauty and virginity had already burst into the essence gathering stage!

The only reason she was reaching her limits while fighting such weak opponents was because she was constantly protecting her supposed 'body guards'. She didn't have the heart to let them fend for themselves, so she constantly played revitalizing tunes in the midst of her attacks. She just wasn't the type to allow others to risk their life for her.

But, things were getting bad... The temple had appeared for a few hours now and yet it wasn't allowing anyone in, but this was only making the situation worse for Madeleine and her allies. Because the more time passed... The more members of the King God Clan gathered...

One son? They could deal with. But what about five? Ten? What about a whole army of King God Clan trained soldiers?

The Sapientia God Clan was being severely suppressed. There was no longer a path of retreat, they were completely surrounded.

Prince Belmont had disappeared from sight. Madeleine thought that something had happened to him, causing them to be separated. But, little did she know that this was a calculated move. Prince Belmont had decided that what was in the temple, was far more valuable than gaining Madeleine's favor...

...

Just like that, two fiancées faced armies many times their size and strength with little but themselves to rely on. And maybe the worst part? Right now, trapped in the endless darkness of a space locked area of the ancient game, Dyon watched the both of them... floating with twinkles of grey and black surrounding him.

He watched as they gasped for breath. He watched as their beautiful countenances twisted in pain. He watched as they fought with their everything.

On one side was a spatial jump to Madeleine. She fought the King God Clan, protecting her family with all of her strength. One the other side was a spatial jump to Ri. Her stamina was quickly depleting as she cut down beast after best. All Dyon had to do was choose, and he would eliminate their burden.

Clone? Impossible. How could he use his soul to power a clone literally light years from himself?

Enter one, then enter the other? Impossible. He would be completely sealed off as soon as he chose. He would have to tear a hole in the game again and hope to run into such a one in a million situation again. How could it be repeatable to happen to run into spatial portals to his two fiancées?

Just choose? Impossible. How do you choose between two women you love with your everything?

So, Dyon just sat there, his spatial will pushed to the max as he forced himself to stay isolated from the game's surrounding mechanisms.

His heart tore with each passing second. No matter what he did, he would be leaving behind something dearly important to him. How do you make a decision like this?...