

The Nameless 621

Chapter 621: And Then...

Ire's frown deepened, his brows furrowing and his lips pressing into a thin line. He hated how unprepared they were for everything. This should have been a war that they were constantly preparing for, and yet the Ragnors attacked at the most inopportune time.

The truth was that had the Ragnors gone through with their initial plan of waiting in ambush at the Belmont Holy Lands, they would have had far less success than what they had now. There were simply too many things for the Belmonts and their allies to handle now.

The blinding red light only seemed to increase with intensity. Those who were conscious of what was going on began to feel an odd pulling force on their blood. It was more of an irritant, and was easily fought off, but it left many of them with an uneasy feeling...

And then, it happened...

Pillars of red light beamed downward from the formation. A panicked cry came out from the allied forces as they tried to fight these beams off, but they suddenly noticed that they weren't being attacked at all!

Every single one of the thousands of beams that from the sky... Landed directly onto a corpse!

Confusion colored the faces of those around. However, the pointed response by the Ragnors to the situation let everyone know that the situation wasn't as simple as it seemed.

Array plate after array plate was crushed. In an instant, tens of thousands of Ragnors were perfectly coated in a thin sheet of red aura that smelt faintly of blood.

The hairs on Ire's neck stood up as an ill premonition flashed through his mind. "RETREAT!" He roared at the top of his lungs, using his saint energy to project his voice as far as it would go.

However, why would the Ragnors allow such a thing to happen so easily? If the Pakals turned their backs to them, they would simply slaughter them in pursuit!

The Pakals fell into chaos. Half wanted to follow the orders of their young master, but the other half couldn't understand the need for it. They didn't have the senses of Ire, and they let their anger get the best of them when they noticed the Ragnors shamefully attacking their backs with large smirks on their faces.

How could Ire not know that this would happen? Of course, he understood, but he also knew that he had no choice! And the next moments, would prove him exactly right...

There were few more familiar with the Ipsum family will than Dyon, and he had described it as nothing more than a blood sucking leach...

When the Ipsum family crystal will evolved to an intent, it would reach the artificial supreme law levels in power... It was one of the many experimentations of the Ragnor family, and one of the very few that actually succeeded...

However, what few knew or understood was that the red crystals weren't just a will... They weren't an inanimate object left to be manipulated by martial artists... No... They were born of blood sacrifice. They were organisms that could never be satiated... They were always hungry...

This was why the Ipsum family could never afford to master more than a single will. It wasn't that they were less talented. In fact, they were likely among the most talented for having succeeded in mastering this malevolent crystal will to begin with. It was that if they didn't focus their entire being – their absolute everything – into controlling this will... They would be devoured...

The beams of red light increased in intensity as they began to bore into the dead... Grotesque squirms of their skin and boils filled with blood seemed to bubble the corpses to life.

Soon, fallen allies, both Pakal, Ragnor, and Elvin, began to rise up.

There was no intelligence in their eyes... In fact, all anyone saw was an endless abyss of darkness that over-split with crimson waters...

The once dead, and now undead, stood awkwardly to their feet, some falling over in their first attempt before having to try again...

When Ire saw that the Ragnors were using their fallen comrades, his anger boiled as his the pain in his chest threatened to tear in heart from his chest. How long had he hated the Ragnors and their despicable means? How long had he watched them continuously ignore the line was common human decency to step into another level of abyssal hell? And now he was watching it unfold, yet again, before his very eyes...

His anger told him to charge forward. To put everything on the line to kill them all once and for all... But, his rationality told him that this just didn't make sense... He knew that it wasn't smart to attack.

Gritting his teeth, Ire repeated his order. "Retreat!"

However, just how many Pakals would listen? Seeing their friends and family, those they had just mourned the loss of, rise up to be used by a scumbag family... How could they stand for this?

Many lost their heads, charging blindly in a fit of rage.

There was nothing Ire could do. Without his father here, there was no one of absolute authority. Maybe if the martial world was more organized, maybe if they were more prepared, they could have avoided all of this...

The Pakals who lost themselves in rage relentlessly pushed forward, hacking down and punching through every Ragnor they found... But... That only lasted until they finally ran into the first line of undead...

All it took was a simple grip... And then two... And then three...

Screams of horror and agony rang out from Pakals who drowned under the embrace of their undead family members...

The blood leeching will spread, digging into the scream of the screaming Pakals and tunneling its way to their souls....

Just like what happened to Dyon, everything slowed down for them... They couldn't use their wills... they couldn't speak... they couldn't see... Soon... Everything was dark... And then... They were dead...

Chapter 622: Rained

Within the Belmont Holy Land, the battle of the demon generals and the Daiyu was going slowly, but steadily.

River and Ronica continued to defend the cave's mouth with Ri to their back, having tied down both Lionel and Evelyn. All while the demon generals continued to pincer the desperate Daiyu from the other side.

The demon generals were outnumbered almost ten to one, but their talent and coordination was so far superior that the Daiyu could hardly take advantage of their number difference. This was, of course, because of a tactic Dyon had implemented specifically for non-gate battles.

A major problem found in martial world battles had to do with the proper matching of forces. Often times, those of lower cultivation would be forced to charge in first before those with greater contribution and cultivation came in later. However, this was only feasible for the beginning of the battle. By end game, or even sooner in cases of spontaneous battles like this one, the cultivations of the warriors would mix heavily.

Sometimes, those of higher cultivation wouldn't bother with those beneath them, keeping with an unspoken moral code. However, the number of shameless individuals in the martial world was on full display for everyone to see – there was no question that for every noble warrior, there would be three or more scum.

This would obviously be a problem for many armies and would also result in situations where man power would have to be diverted in order to ensure that promising geniuses weren't killed before they had time to develop.

In order to solve this problem, Dyon implemented a simple but effective formation. It allowed essence gathering and saint level experts to seamlessly switch battle positions depending on the concentration of experts. This shift would, of course, be manned by the vice commanders.

The army itself was split into five, ten- and hundred-man teams. However, the ratios of experts were expertly balanced using 3:2 ratios. This allowed for either a saint heavy, or essence gathering heavy unit. Each Vice Commander would be aware of what ratio they were responsible for and would thus coordinate to shift the formation according to needs.

In this way, essence gathering experts would never be left exposed to overwhelming odds, and neither would saints divert their power to opponents who were too weak for them, thereby wasting their potential impact on the battle field.

This was known as the Checkered Formation Variation 4: Efficiency.

Within the cave, Ri turned her attention from Lionel and Evelyn. She was much too tempted to try and make use of Lionel to find Dyon, so she had to distract herself. There was no need for her to personally watch Lionel considering he was being monitored by a demon general.

Ri's eyes flashed with a dense black as she slowly formed the most basic weapon's hell arrays. Sitting cross legged and focusing her senses, they began to manifest at the top of the cave entrance.

Although it would be foolish for her to enter the battle personally, what she could do was cause chaos within the ranks of the Daiyu. Right now they were pinched between the demon general army and the cave entrance, so, Ri had many targets to play with.

The arrays began to slowly spin. As an array that required a lower Foundation stage soul, it was tough for Ri to form them. In fact, she could only sustain two at a time. But, that was enough because Ri had her void will!

River and Ronica smiled as they noticed the arrays appear above them in support and their grins only got wider when the spears of darkness were finally unleashed.

They seemed to teleport through the air at blinding speeds, jumping into and out of the void as it crashed into a large cluster of Daiyu.

Cries of pain and agitation rang outward, but Ri paid them no mind as she slowly geared up another.

Loud booms resounded through the Daiyu army. By the time they noticed what was causing it all and tried to destroy the arrays, they also noticed that River and Ronica wouldn't allow such a thing to happen so easily.

However, a good thing couldn't never last forever. With Ri's poor soul talent and strength, after she launched her tenth spear, she was already beginning to feel great fatigue...

But, that was when she felt a delicate hand touch her shoulder, infusing her with the added strength she needed. When Ri noticed it was the shy Kaeda that was helping her, she couldn't help but smile. Dyon had told her that had it not been for Kaeda's soul talent, he might have missed the World Tournament entirely.

Just when Ri was about to turn her attention back to the battle, her ring shimmered and Madeleine suddenly appeared by her side.

"Madeleine?" Ri's brows furrowed, "You're still fatigued. You've done enough, go rest." Ri said sternly.

Although few knew, Ri was right there when it happened. Had it not been for Madeleine's celestial intent, Dyon's struggle might have been for nothing. It was no wonder she was tired, she had literally brought their husband back from the brink of death.

Madeleine looked around and sighed when she noticed Lionel being tied up. She shook her head and sat right next to Ri, grasping onto her hand. She was tired, but she couldn't rest knowing everyone was fighting on without her...

Light purple flames began to dance along her skin, melding together with Ri's.

Ri felt Madeleine's soul intertwine with her own, and she felt her shiver when she realized the amount of pain Dyon was in right now. There was nothing Ri could do at that point. After Madeleine realized how hard their husband was struggling, she would never be able to rest easy.

Madeleine's flames blazed with more fervor, but they weren't hot like the fire phoenix's domineering flames, nor were they cold like the elegance of the ice phoenix flames... They were just comfortable, and filled Ri with an endless warmth.

There was no questioning Madeleine's soul talent. As one of the very few capable of mastering music will, there was no doubt that she had an advantage in this category. But, when Ri felt the effect she had on her, her eyes couldn't help but widen.

The weapon's hell arrays in the sky multiplied...

Two became four... Then four became eight... Then eight became sixteen...

In the end, almost 50 furiously rotating arrays appeared in the skies coated with gentle purple flames and dark void will.

And together, they rained chaos down upon the Daiyu.

Chapter 623: Quickest Speed

Within the coldest reaches of the Ice Belt – in the very same solar system that housed Patia-Neva's former home – King Acacia watched silently as his wife slowly healed.

Much to his sadness, her nine tails didn't grow back entirely. In fact, she only had a single tail now.

He couldn't help but absentmindedly stroke her soft fur, unable to forgive himself. He should have stayed instead, but he was too weak! He had been forced to let his own wife protect him, and look at the result? How could he be happy with this?

He was grateful that Kawa would be able to remain by his side, and with their soul bond, they could communicate just fine... But, to delude himself into thinking everything was okay when it wasn't... He just couldn't do it...

"Edrym..." A faint voice entered King Acacia's mind. It was weak, but it was there. "You have to go back, only you can deal with him... No one else can... If you don't hurry, everyone will die!"

"What do you mean? I don't understand anything you're saying. You said he was a Saint, but why does that mean it's only me who can defeat him?"

King Acacia was a True Empath, and he could tell that his wife wasn't lying nor exaggerating, but that didn't mean he could read her mind to the finest detail. He truly was confused!

"Do you want to know why I lost so quickly? Why Patriarch Ragnor didn't dare to attack when the both of us were there? Why he only made a move after you left?" Kawa tried to explain things as quickly as possible.

"It's because if he attacked with you there, you would have seen through it immediately! He isn't a celestial, nor does he have the combat power of a celestial. He injured me by using Patriarch Cavositas, not himself! He only made it look like he was the one to injure me so that you all would hand him Dyon willingly!" At this point, Kawa's small body was shivering.

She had been screaming and struggling the whole time, trying to tell everyone that it was nothing but a trick, but she had been forced to watch as her son in law traded his life away for hers.

At this point, King Acacia was starting to piece some things together...

The Ragnor would never send a celestial of theirs here, they were much too valuable to them...

Patriarch Ragnor was never a celestial, he had been relying on Patriarch Cavositas' battle prowess all this time as a puppet to make it seem like he had that level of power. At most, he was a peak level saint!

He didn't attack while King Acacia was present because King Acacia's True Empathy would have seen through it completely. His tricks would have been laid bare and King and Queen Acacia would no longer have to attack with reservation, wondering when he would act!

"But... That still doesn't explain why I'm the only one... We still have some hope in Amell and Nora returning." King Acacia responded.

"Edrym, think about it. Do you think a person who can fool celestials into thinking he was a celestial is a normal person? Do you think someone capable of toying with planets and clans behind our back like this is a normal person?" Kawa struggled to get up, weakly balancing on her small and delicate paws as she looked at her husband. "If it wasn't for that man, the Kitsune wouldn't have found us so quickly. We could have watched Ri grow and fall in love together... Instead, it was ripped away from us all so that he could chase away the biggest threat to his plan – you."

Crystal like tears fell from Kawa's blue eyes. "If it wasn't for his manipulation, Patia-Neva would have never thought he had to watch the slaughter of his family to improve his dao, nor would the Patia-Neva clan have been used to fuel Patriarch Cavositas' cultivation..."

"He never planned to kill me. Because if he did, you would automatically go after him. He tricked us all, knowing that you would take me here to be cured..."

"That man... He took so much from us..."

"You mean he's..." A sudden realization hit Patia-Neva. There was only one Ragnor capable of throwing an entire universe into chaos... Only one capable of fooling even the strongest of experts...

"He has the second strongest faith seed in the whole of Ragnor clan history," Kawa said softly, "He completely fooled me with his illusions, allowing Patriarch Cavositas to land near fatal blows on me. I was able to kill Patriarch Cavositas in the end but...."

"He's Loki, Edrym..."

King Acacia suddenly realized that everything his wife had said was truly no exaggeration. If he wasn't there, Loki would simply run wild through their forces. While other Ragnor clan faith seeds celebrated power, Loki's faith seed was the only one among their rankings that celebrated cunning...

Loki's abilities were truly outstanding. They focused on a branch of cultivation very few had ever explored, something one might call magic in the mortal realm. Much like array alchemy, it manipulated the laws of universe, however, instead of using the soul as a proxy, it was much more efficient and used energy cultivation as its basis...

The use of magic was so rare in the martial world, that very few knew of how to counter it and even fewer could, even if they knew... This made Loki near unmatched as long as he stayed hidden... His ability to manipulate the situation and use illusions could not be matched.

This was how Loki made it seem as though he could manipulate celestial energy... In reality, he couldn't do such a thing at all, he just had to make it seem like he could...

Kawa was right, maybe the only person in this universe capable of stopping Loki... Was King Acacia...

But now he was hours away from the conflict. Even if he rushed back at his quickest speed, would he even be there in time?

Chapter 624: Crater

Dyon's eyes seemed quite dead as he silently stared at Loki's bowing figure. He didn't have the normal despair one would expect, nor did they bear any resignation. He simply watched.

From the name Patriarch Ragnor used alone, Dyon had already guessed many things. He had wondered why his breakthrough into sainthood was capable of dispelling a wound caused by a supposed celestial so easily, but the answer was now laying bare before him.

Even with his will to survive still burning as furiously as it had been before he realized Loki had lived, Dyon couldn't help but laugh at himself.

The person everyone had been so worried about. The very same mighty Patriarch Ragnor that King Belmont spent centuries preparing and cultivating for. Was a mere trickster... A man who in terms of just combat power, probably lost out to his demon generals.

That said, something was telling Dyon that defeating this Loki might very well be more difficult than defeating a celestial. A man who could hide himself so well in the face of even celestial level beings as a mere saint was someone who could probably toy with a warrior on his level to death.

"Oh?" Loki chuckled lightly as he tilted his head up from his bow, "Your eyes don't seem to have given up yet."

There was a savage light in Loki's eyes. No matter how at ease he pretended to be, Dyon had seen through him as a petty man long ago. He wouldn't allow Dyon's disrespect of him to slide so easily, not when he had been forced to his knees to the point of having no choice but to reveal his identity.

Seeing that Dyon had no change of expression, Loki casually clasped his hands behind his back, looking down with curiosity flashing in his snake-like eyes.

"Aiyah, I made such a big reveal to you and you don't even have the decency to look impressed or surprised. Sheesh, at least give me the chance to explain my glorious master plan to you before you die."

Dyon could feel his consciousness slipping away. Maybe most of the reason he had no reaction was simply because he didn't have the energy to.

His heart felt like it wanted to be ripped out of his ribcage, his muscles were torn in just as places as his bones were broken, and none of that was to mention the fact his soul wanted to dissipate into nothingness. If it wasn't for the fact his soul grade was so abnormally pure, to the point where describing it as a first-grade soul simply didn't do it justice, maybe he would have long since collapsed.

Dyon's scythe morphed into a sword in his hand before he gripped it with both as tightly as his remaining strength would allow. There was no way he could make use of death qi anymore, so what was the use in sustaining his airs as a reaper? He had to focus his remaining strength in the most efficient way possible.

His brain ran through the possibilities. He tossed away any avenues that led in defeat and only searched out victory. His master wanted him to live. He knew his parents would want him to live. He couldn't leave Clara behind, alone in a world she didn't know or understand. He didn't want his wives to shed any more tears for him. He had a little brother and little sister who were both still relying on him... He had the legacy of billions of people riding on his shoulders!

Loki sighed, "This hurts you know. I can't decide what pains me more. The fact you don't care about the plans I so painstakingly laid out." The temperature suddenly dropped as Loki's playful demeanor disappeared. "Or the fact you have the audacity to still think you can win."

Dyon had no time to react. His soul was too fatigued to help him sense Loki's movement, and even if it could, his body was in no shape to act on that information.

Blood spilled from Dyon's mouth as a heavy kick connected with his arm, cracking it the instant it made contact and sending him flying tens of meters.

Regardless of his tricks, Loki was still a true peak saint. Even in Dyon's healthiest state, it would be nearly impossible to beat him unless he brought out all of his trump cards. And that was assuming Loki didn't use any of his illusion techniques!

Soil, grass and crippled flowers flew into the air. Dyon's body skidded against the ground with no sign of him resisting. At this point, relaxing his entire body seemed to be the only thing that relieved the pain.

In an instant, Loki was over looking Dyon's sorry state. But, seeing the fire in his eyes still there, Loki couldn't help but want to do everything he could to extinguish it.

"You have a lot of nerve." Loki kicked at Dyon's rib cage, shattered a large section before grinding his feet downward.

Dyon grunted in pain. He wanted to roar out, but his remaining energy simply wouldn't allow it. He had given too much to survive to this point.

"Ha," Dyon's muffled laughter came of as an aggrieved sigh. He rotated Devour as furiously as his soul would allow, using the contact Loki provided as a set point.

However, when Loki felt the tug on his soul, his anger only increased.

"You..." Loki's jaw set. "Okay then."

Dyon didn't know what Loki meant and he almost sighed a breath of relief when he felt Loki's foot leave his chest. But, when he felt the next attacks, he almost regretted his actions.

Loki backed away, no longer giving Dyon the opportunity to take more of his soul strength before raining down bolts of lightning on Dyon's decrepit figure.

The truth was that Dyon hadn't even taken much of Loki's soul strength. Without much strength of his own, how could he? But, that didn't stop Loki from retaliating in the cruelest way possible...

Dyon's body lay in a crater, ravaged by shock waves of lightning, endlessly bombarding into him...

His life was hanging on by a string so thin that even a slight breath could snap it in half.

Chapter 625:

King Acacia rushed through the skies. He had been forced to leave his wife before, mostly because of her insistence. If he had to divert his own power away to protect her from the harsh conditions, he would slow down drastically. As such, this really was the only choice.

It would take him hours to reach Earth and he didn't know how much of an impact he could have after being gone so long, but he had to try it!

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Arena City had fallen into complete chaos. The red crystal organisms latched onto any lifeforms that dared to get close, and it seemed as though the Ragnors were the only ones with counters to this.

The original Ipsum formation had targeted the dead because they knew that those without will couldn't resist the pull of the red crystals. As such, it would take next to no energy at all to implant them.

However, as soon as that initial implant occurred, the red crystals would automatically have something to feed off of and grow stronger, which would allow them to gain enough power to start effecting living beings. This was why the Ipsums had waited until enough people had died from battle first. If too few had, and the Pakal managed to quarantine them or directly kill them off, none of this would have worked!

The ten Ipsum elders who had stirred all of this chaos were nowhere to be found. After activating such a savage formation, they were completely drained. If they used any more power, their own red crystal will would begin to devour even them. This let all one needed to know about how savage this artificial will was.

The Pakals were completely helpless. As body cultivators, they honed their battle prowess. Hardly any of them had counters to such a thing.

Unsurprisingly, the Ipsums were created as a unit perfectly tailored to countering the Pakals in war. Because of their robust bloodlines, they were the perfect targets for such a hungry will and were obviously the preferred targets.

It was a losing battle. The more powerful one's bloodline, the more fuel the red crystals would have to devour you. You would need exponential increases in will mastery and power in order to hold it off. And even then, it would be for but a moment!

However, in this war, the Pakals were not alone. Although the Belmonts were incapacitated because a large majority of them had remained in the Belmont Holy Land as a precaution, the Pakals still had the Elves. The only problem was that due to the alliances that Loki had formed, many of the elves were occupied and couldn't be organized quickly. Nor did the armies have the same communication measures Dyon's armies did.

Because of this, it took much too long for the Elves to see the spreading epidemic, leaving time for the red crystals to grow stronger and stronger. They even showed signs of wanting to combine into larger and larger entities! The sea of red on the battle field was growing larger and larger, and yet it wasn't blood at all!

Grand elder Cormyth's voice boomed over the battle field, "Aedre, Sigebryht, Ingram!"

The elves of those three families immediately realized that something big was happening. It was very rare for Grand elders to give out battle instructions and calling out three families at once was even rarer, but it was clear that this was needed.

There were very few capable of ordering the Elves in mass, but luckily the Elves had three grand elders who were capable of holding such authority. Their King and Queen were gone, and their eldest stateman, Grand elder Deryth was fighting with the other celestials, this left military decisions up to Grand Elder Cormyth and Kroak.

Grand Elder Cormyth had been the first to notice the problem among the Elvin highest officials and he automatically commanded for the most apt responders.

The Aedre were water will specialists. The Ingrams were light will specialists. And the Sigebryht were Seal specialists. Although Grand elder Cormyth had no way of knowing if this would be effective against the plague he was witnessing, he knew that the healing and control abilities of these main families far surpassed that of any other family and had to be relied upon.

As a poison master, how could he not tell just how potent this red crystal will was? In fact, describing it as a poison was probably the most appropriate comparison.

The three main families made their move, breaking away from their battle as best as they could.

Swarms of sub family members rushed in to take their place. There was no question that the elves were undermanned. They were already a race with a low birth rate, so this was to be expected. Despite the fact they had the most families under their rule as a God Clan, they were still among the smallest in number. But, that didn't stop them from still being among the most powerful.

Endless red seals appeared in the air as numerous grey skinned Sigebryhts flew into the air above the chaos.

Their eyes flashed as beads of sweat poured from them, attempting to configure their seals to properly stop the flow of this odd will. However... Their manifestations were completely incapable of doing so!

In order to seal something away, unless you had access to The Seal itself, you needed a level of understanding just what you were sealing. This hurdle can be jumped over by having more sealers active to share the burden, or by having a stronger seal legacy that could make up for your deficiencies. But, this will was something they had simply never seen before!

Unlike the instance at the gate where the essence gathering Sigebryhts sealed away the death qi, this red crystal will wasn't tempered to a level that was capable of being withstood. The death qi at Lotus Tower was meant to be part of a game for mere essence gathering experts. As such, it was comparatively easier to seal as compared to true death qi. But this situation wasn't so friendly...

The red crystals wanted to devour everything...

Chapter 626: Hope

Grand Elder Cormyth grit his teeth when he saw the failure of the Sigebryht. Maybe if Head Sigebryht was here, their coordination would be much better, but how could they call him back now? He was also in the midst of fighting all out with those celestials above!

They could only rely on the Aedre and Ingram to try their hand. Maybe, just maybe, they'd have a possibility for success. If either were able to weaken the creatures, the Sigebryht might then be able to step in again to fully seal them.

The Aedre family formed raging rivers in the air. The Sigebryht were forced to protect them from the onslaught of Ragnors who sought to stop their attempts. This caused the battle field to split into two, the chaotic mess occurring on the arena floor, and the battle for the skies.

The Ingram family sprung into action all at once. Their golden hair shone brightly as their halo manifestations bloomed into existence.

Blinding lights threatened to overtake the pillars of red light, causing them to shy away.

A flash of hope crossed the eyes of Ire Pakal and grand elder Cormyth. If the red crystals were afraid of purity, this would be helpful. The only problem was the light will wasn't the greatest source of purity, it was easily several steps below that of Celestial Will and Dyon's white flames... However, given the circumstances, it was all they could rely upon, it was all they had!

The blinding golden lights began to slowly merge with the raging rivers formed by the Aedre family, working together seamlessly to create waters of gold that washed over the battlefield.

The red crystals shrunk away, almost shrieking in agitation at the new feeling of pain. They were continuously beat away from the waves, allowing the Pakals to hack them apart, dismembering their fellow dead clansmen to immobilize them.

Seeing this, the Sigebryht tried to seal the weakened will, but it seemed nearly impossible and they could only struggle in vein.

However, there was a ray of hope now. With the combined efforts of the Aedre and Ingram families, the battlefield seemed to shift its momentum once again.

This sudden change couldn't help but be felt by the Ragnor clan higher ups. They had hoped that this war would end easily with the use of this tactic, but the control of the Elves exceeded their expectations.

That said... The red crystals were an artificial will. In fact, one might even go so far as to call it a living parasitic organism... There were very few things in the world that could adapt as quickly as it, and even fewer things that had the strength to.

It only took a moment for the effectiveness of the golden water to drastically diminish, and the truth of the matter was that this was just as bad for the Ragnors as it was for their enemies.

All this time, the Ragnors had made counter measures designed for the strand of will they were most familiar with. But, what if it evolved?...

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Within the Belmont Holy Land, lightning continued to rain down on Dyon's body.

Loki seemed to purposefully weaken his attacks, laughing to himself lightly as though he was watching what amused him most.

"Aiyah. All you have to do is give up and I can stop torturing you. Think about it, dying peacefully. Sounds nice, doesn't it?"

"I get it, you must be worried about your wives? I assure you I'm not interested in little girls – ah, who am I kidding, they're two little beauties. But, I can promise to treat them well. I learn from my past experiences. I once had a couple of cultivation incubators commit suicide on me. That's no good."

Every time a bolt of lightning hit Dyon, his body would lurch, charring his skin and nearly stopping his heart entirely. In fact, sometimes his heart really did stop...

Loki would watch as his body turned blue, choking and begging for air before he sent another bolt to restart Dyon's heart...

It was a vicious cycle of torture that made even Dyon wish he was really dead... But every time he nearly closed his eyes, his master's last words to him would ring in his ears, causing the fire in his eyes that was slowly dimming, to weakly flicker to life...

The flames of his life were akin to a small bonfire left out in a blizzard, and the only thing protecting it from the harsh winds was his body.

But even he didn't know how much longer he could last...

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Near a dormant and forgotten gate, wild spatial fluctuations were oscillating. The air whined and groaned as it distorted and bent to the whims of two people much more powerful than it.

An instant later, a man and woman that could only be described as divine stepped out.

The man had sleek black hair that was combed back along with a well-kept and trimmed beard. His eyes shone a bright gold, and his handsome features were chiseled and gave off a stoic atmosphere.

The woman was a delicate beauty beyond words. There would be no doubt that had Dyon been there, he wouldn't have hesitated to acknowledge that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen...

Her skin was flawless and her legs were long and silky. Her curves were nothing short of perfection and her loose white robes could hardly hide her ample breasts and wide hips. Even her golden eyes gave off a sense of endless attraction and seduction very few could match.

These two were quite literally a match made in heaven and only the most powerful of experts through the cosmos could attain this level of perfection...

"Amell..." The woman spoke softly, with a voice so melodic that the air around her seemed to sing with pleasure.

A serious expression appeared on the face of the man as his brows furrowed. "Let's hope we're not too late."

Chapter 627: An Instant

King Belmont's opponents knelt in the skies, bleeding profusely. Under the might of the king's violet flames, the Horus, Geb and Kami God Clan leaders stood no chance. They had attempted to use their number to overwhelm King Belmont, but in the end, they had failed.

However, this victory wasn't without a price. Although King Belmont's three opponents were likely too injured to continue fighting, King Belmont's stamina was just about gone as well. The problem with that was that there was a man he had yet to defeat... The King of the Aumen Royal God Clan: King Aumen.

"I must say, your flames are quite impressive." King Aumen's fiery golden hair stood in sharp contrast to the Elvin Ingram family. Whereas their hair glowed and gave off a comfortable feeling, the hair of Aumen's was more like the mane of a lion – domineering and oppressive.

King Belmont's rudimentary domain cracked before falling apart. He stood with his hands trembling by his side, hardly able to stop his eyes from flickering between purple, red and blue.

He was very aware of the side effect brought about by forcibly combining his flames, but he had no choice. If he hadn't, victory would have been a pipe dream... Unfortunately, now even his red and blue flames would be nearly impossible to control.

King Aumen could sense this very clearly. Before, he hadn't dared to approach King Belmont to pit their fires against each other, but now that he was fatigued, he had all the confidence in the world.

He wasn't stupid. No matter how overly arrogant he was, he would never think that his flames could truly match up to phoenix flames... The kinds of flames that could would be as rare as finding a phoenix itself, and they were an extinct race.

The golden flames of the Aumen's had a proud origin, but if King Aumen was honest with himself, even he as King did not know the truth from the falsehoods. All he knew for sure was that through the universes, golden flames were special, and should anyone ever find their true source, they would also find with it the sovereign path of flames... the doubtlessly most domineering path possible for the will.

King Aumen walked forward. Such a blazing heat and light wafted from him that he was almost like a second sun. The sharp contrast between him and the depleted King Belmont was striking...

Suddenly he paused, "You must be worried about many things, no? As a king myself, I can understand the weight on your shoulders.

"Your subjects, your family's legacy, your wife, your sons, all of that must be causing a heavy toll on your mind." King Aumen mused as though he was silently thinking all of this to himself.

King Belmont's breathing continuously deepened as he tried to quickly gain his bearings. However, his most potent problem was lack of stamina, and there just wasn't enough time to correct that.

"I don't say this to belittle you, of course." King Aumen continued, "I even feel a bit shameful sneak attacking a single planet with so many allies. I only say this so you can rest at ease in death. Although you won't be able to carry out your family's legacy, someone else will." A knowing smile spread across the King's lips.

Up until this point, King Belmont hadn't been truly listening. In fact, he was hoping the King Aumen would continue to talk so that he could refine more celestial energy for himself in that time. But, those last words caused him to pause and look up.

Seeing that he had finally caught King Belmont's attention, King Aumen's smile widened, "Haven't you wondered why you haven't gotten any reports from your Holy Land? Haven't you wondered why your ancestors haven't come to support you in your time of need? Haven't you wondered just what our goal is in all this time?"

Each question was like a thunder bolt crashing through King Belmont's mind.

He had lost communication with the Belmont Holy Land. His ancestors hadn't awoken even in this time of strife. And the very thing he thought his enemies were working toward this entire time – the Epistemic Tower – isn't a goal that this attack would help them with at all!

With the intelligence of a celestial being, and their ability to quickly process things, King Belmont immediately understood that the goal of this pointed attack wasn't to find a reasonable excuse to gather all of their allies. No. The more logical goal was that there was something this tournament provided that nothing else could...

When you coupled that with the lack of communication with the Belmont Holy Land... The fact he couldn't awaken his ancestors... The way it seemed like from the very beginning, he was the most unprepared and foolhardy King in history... It all pointed toward a betrayal that his heart couldn't handle the thought of...

King Aumen's laughter boomed through the dark space, vibrating to the twinkling of the stars that played their backdrop.

"I have to say, your son is quite intelligent. He still has cards to play that very few of us know about. After all, the reason you couldn't call on your ancestors, is because they're under his control. How could we dare to treat him so lightly when he holds the key to the tombs of a family as ancient as yours?"

King Belmont's visage darkened. He couldn't believe that thoughts swimming through his head, but the facts were laid bare to him... How could he not accept them?

His son... His very own son... Had betrayed their family...

He couldn't help but chuckle bitterly to himself. This was the very son he had once arrogantly proclaimed Dyon would have to prove himself better than... The very son he had placed so much of his pride in... The very son whose sole actions were about to lead to the ruin of his own father...

An instant later, King Belmont's vision was blinded by a ball of golden flames bearing down upon him...

Chapter 628: Too Deeply

On Earth, the situation was continuously getting worse.

Just as feared, the red crystals will's adaptative capabilities weren't to be under estimated. In mere moments, the combined attack of the Ingram and Aedre family were rendered useless, immediately plunging the attacking forces into despair.

The Ragnor family continued to take advantage of the situation, attacking without sympathy and making full use of the red crystals – some even began to coat their weapons in the material, leading to the further spread of it.

At this point, Thor had ceased attacking. He stood amidst 'protectors', staring at the situation with a deadpan expression, but within his eyes, the flicker of disgust was clearly evident.

In the martial world, there were few things looked down on more than using poison. Ironically, the same was true even in the weak mortal world Dyon used to call home. And yet, a supposed Emperor God Clan was making use of exactly that to take care of a universe so decrepit and useless that even its adjacent

universe hardly tried to conquer it? This was nothing more than a shameful act dressed up as something it wasn't.

However, how had Thor not become accustomed to these things from the Ragnor family?

He watched from the sidelines as Vidar's 20-meter-tall frame laughed uproariously, not hesitating to use the corpses of fallen comrades to push forward. He pretended as though it was his own merit keeping him alive on the battle field, when the truth was that he had already lost half of his original protectors to death, it was just that they were replaced as soon as they fell... An endless cycle of Ragnor clan puppetry.

In this same way, he had watched the personalities of his supposed Storm family twist. He had willingly left with his father and their faction upon realizing he had Thor's faith seed because he thought things might change for the better, but the very same culture permeated through their culture as well...

Those siblings of his were now dead, long since having succumb to Loki's experimentation. The fact that he was alive was only a testament to the fact that even Loki himself was much too scared to do anything involving a faith seed as powerful as his.

Thor couldn't help but chuckle bitterly and silently. He remembered when the Ragnor family claimed that they would only punish the older generation, promising to protect the younger since they couldn't control the actions of their parents and elders. He had remembered feeling surprised. Maybe, just maybe, the Ragnors would finally do something sensible...

But, that hope didn't last for long. The moment the former Storm family stepped foot into Ragnor clan territory, all but Tammy and Thor were shipped off to be slaves. Thor could still remember the endless screams he would hear whenever Loki purposefully took him for a walk outside his experimental labs. Ironically, Baal might have gotten the swiftest and more humane death, despite the atrocities that he committed.

In the end, Loki even turned on Thor's little sister... The very same little sister than put her life on the line to get the information the Ragnors needed... The very same little sister that continuously put her needs aside for the good of her useless elder brother... The very same little sister Thor still couldn't protect with his own hands...

The red in Thor's eyes seemed to reflect the sea of crystals and the screams of agony that filled the battle field. At this point, everyone wanted to do whatever they could to escape the situation. It was getting out of hand.

Ire's retreat order continuously sounded through everyone's ears, but the shamelessness of the Ragnors was on full display as the ruthlessly attacked the retreating backs of their enemies.

"Should we not pursue them?" One of Thor's protectors asked. In truth, he was anxious, as they all were. Although Thor could get away with doing next to nothing, they couldn't, even if they tried to use the excuse of being his protectors. Such was the harsh reality that each Ragnor faced...

While a universe only tracked their citizens during gate campaigns in hopes of rewarding them, Ragnors were branded from birth. Their every move was monitored and calculated, and the more valuable you were, the sturdier the chains that bound you were.

The Storm family was only able to escape because their chains were fairly loose to begin with. They were able to use treasures left behind by the celestial deer sect to remove their brands, which was exactly why they joined Focus Academy. This was why it took the Ragnors so long to find them...

Had Loki known that Thor had awakened in the Storm family previously, they wouldn't have lasted even a day. The reason why was something etched in the history of the Ragnors... A perfect match for their malevolent history...

Every faith seed was bound by karma to the clan it originates from. This was how clans knew when faith seeds were reincarnated, and it was also how they knew when faith seeds left their stream of control. This was why stealing faith seeds was taboo, because the victim's clan would immediately know what had happened. Losing something as important as a faith seed would not be tolerated and would almost always lead to all out wars even more severe than gate campaigns.

However, the Ragnors took this even further... They touched upon absolute taboo and sowed the seeds of karma so deeply with every faith seed formed that the tie to the Ragnor clan became so strong that even the life and death of the seed's wielder could be decided on a whim by a clan...

Their methods were sickening to an extreme, a clan without morals or boundaries...

In order to sow karma this deeply, the Ragnors had required the purest and cleanest karma possible...

Every Ragnor faith seed in existence was nothing more than a representation of millions of slaughtered newborns, countless slaughtered innocent children with no other sin than being born too pure.

Thor would never escape, nor could Dyon help him to... The seeds of Karma were sown too deeply...

Chapter 629: Disappeared

Outside the Belmont Holy Land, the battle of the demon generals and the Daiyu was reaching a climax.

Under the teamwork of Madeleine and Ri, the Daiyu were thrown into complete chaos.

The truth was that the weapon's hell formations they used could hardly damage most of the Daiyu, but the simple disruption it provided was more than enough to be useful. And, in some rare instances, would also heavily injure some of the weaker Daiyu, allowing for a much easier time for the demon generals.

River and Ronica seemed to never tire. It was to the point where the demon generals who were waiting to switch in with them pouted, accusing them of stealing away all of the fun. However, with River's domineering personality, she simply harrumphed and ignored them, causing Ronica to giggle as she usually did.

On the same hand, the fusion of Ri and Madeleine's souls seemed to have a stacking effect on their stamina, allowing them both to last much longer than usual. This was also, of course, in part to Kaeda's added support.

It all seemed like it would only be a matter of time before the Demon Generals overwhelmed their enemies and won.

In the back, Evelyn had long since lost her calm and collected smirk. She had thought that with her reveal, the situation would be too unexpected for anyone to recover from. And yet, that was exactly what Ri and Madeleine were doing now!

She had given up too much for this plan to work. Her dignity as a first in line genius. The woman she looked up to like a grandmother. And even her own chastity. All so that she could forge a brighter future for herself, a future where this universe's ceiling wasn't her own.

But, it felt like everything was crumbling down now.

"Do something." Evelyn looked at Lionel who had barely a flicker of emotion on his face. If it wasn't for her self-control, she would have shrieked this at the top of her lungs. It was taking everything in her not to lash out at Lionel.

The truth was that Lionel was in this hot water just as much as she was, which was why Evelyn couldn't blame him too much – if she was being rational, that is. It was no secret anymore that if Lionel lost, it was quite possible that even his own father would want him dead.

As much as Lionel wanted to ignore Evelyn, he knew that she wasn't stupid. She didn't trust him with something as important as her virginity for an empty promise. If she had, Lionel would have long since ignored her after she outlived her usefulness.

No. Unfortunately, Lionel had signed a soul contract with Evelyn, much like the one Jade used to coerce the Daiyu clan. Except this one, tied their lives to one another. Lionel had to always keep Evelyn's best interest in mind, or he would die. He simply couldn't afford to ignore her.

Their 'marriage' was a thinly veiled cover for the truth of their relationship.

In reality, a contract that only asked for Lionel to treat Evelyn well was a small price to pay for the reward Lionel received. But, in retrospect, it would become troublesome.

The Demon General watching the two of them was a calm and stoic man named Thatch. He could hear their conversation clearly, but he couldn't bother to care. As long as he was here, he doubted that there was anything the two of them could do to escape.

Lionel could instantly tell that their 'guard' wasn't someone who they could easily trick. He seemed to have no emotions, and his eyes were constantly trained on them despite the vast disparity in cultivation.

'Using that could backfire...' Lionel's mind raced as he thought of possibilities. But, as minutes turned to hours, and the Daiyu forces just seemed to continuously get whittled down, he realized that he no longer had much of a choice.

Thatch's eyes narrowed as he noticed the slight shift in Lionel's features. His nerves stood on end. With his years of battle experience, sensing danger was something very few did better than him. But, never did he think he would be sensing such a thing from an essence gathering expert.

Something was telling Thatch that even if he alerted the allies to his back, there would hardly be a difference made. Even worse, it would distract them from the task at hand.

Much to Lionel's surprise, Thatch didn't hesitate to pull out a saber. But, he quickly relaxed himself, looking up at the Demon General.

"Since you know the danger, you also know there's nothing you can do to stop it." Lionel said calmly.

His eyes flashed, causing the Belmont Holy Land to begin to rumble and resonate, humming along with his blood line.

Many didn't know the purpose behind the spatial energy that coated the Belmont Holy Land. And those who claimed to, often thought that it was simply a safety measure for protecting the treasures within.

The truth of the matter is that the spatial fluctuations are simply a result of the copious amounts of legacy worlds that were attracted to this location by the flow of Gama energy.

However, it served a secondary purpose in a system cleverly employed by the Belmonts...

In a land they needed to protect at all costs, it was important to be able to call reinforcements to any location with the Belmont Holy Land in an instant. To do this, they utilized the spatial fluctuations as a fuel to connect to their most sacred place... The Belmont family tombs!

Thatch's grip on his saber tightened as the air between him and Lionel began to distort, coming with it a calm purple-haired man adorned in pristine white robes.

In the face of this man, even Thatch couldn't help but to tremble slightly... Because he was without a doubt...

A celestial.

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Within the depths of the Belmont Holy Land, Loki's laughter still rang through the once lush greenery that was now filled with endless craters and the smell of thick and slightly burnt blood.

The arcs of lightning continued to bombard Dyon ceaselessly, only pausing when Loki went too far and accidentally stopped his plaything's heart.

Dyon had lost count of how long this torture had gone on for. In fact, he was fairly certain that he had shredded his own throat apart to the point where he could hardly whisper a word because of all of the screaming he had done.

All Loki wanted him to do was give up... To wave a white flag... But the arrogance in Dyon's bones seemed to seep further and further in...

The entity had accused Dyon of choosing a path built on something fake... But with each passing moment, that path only became more and more real... There was hope...

Until that road abruptly ended.

Loki stopped, his brow raising. He unexpectedly realized that he could no longer feel Dyon's life force...

"Well, well... I was wondering if your soul could truly withstand being burned like that, but it seems like even yours has its limits." Loki chuckled lightly to himself as he shook his head. To him, it was only a shame that he had lost another toy...

After hours of holding on, Dyon's soul could no longer withstand the strain of being burned away...

That very moment, Dyon's soul had disappeared from the world...

Chapter 630: No Question

The summoned Belmont Ancestor stood silently with a lofty air to him. There was no doubt that suddenly awakening from a near death like state before being teleported to a random location you had no knowledge of was truly jarring, but as an expert of enough note to have mandated his clan spending enough to preserve him for such a situation, how could he have a normal reaction to such a thing?

His eyes scanned the situation, but they immediately turned cold when he noticed the blade pointed in his direction. Considering the fact he could sense the blood of his clan running through the young man behind him, he felt like he understood enough. For a person so young to be able to call upon him under his own power, it was clear that this was an outstanding talent of his Belmont family. How could he allow him to be threatened?

However, he also immediately noticed a few more troubling things. They were obviously in the Belmont Holy Land at the entrance of their catacombs, a place he was all too familiar with, and yet there was an unfamiliar clan attacking? Even more odd, it seemed as though the people he had first labeled as enemies were defending the cave entrance? Were they enemy or foe?

This was the first reason Lionel hadn't immediately summoned his ancestor to aid him. Unlike Dyon's puppets, his ancestors had wills of their own. After all, if they hadn't consented to being used this way after their death, they would have long since reincarnated. It's because they wanted to sow greater seeds of karma that they remained available to be used by future generations.

But, that was the exact problem. Whether their sacrifice was worth it all relied on the whether or not they did good deeds in the name of their clan. This meant that ancestors would be incomparably cautious when taking action because any adverse effect they had on their clan would mean that they would instead sow bad karma, causing ill effects on their reincarnation.

Lionel, though, was immediately ready. He fully understood what it meant to summon his ancestor more than anyone. In fact, he hadn't planned on ever summoning them. He had only needed to use the threat of doing so in order to force the planets he betrayed his clan for to stay in line. But, now that he had, how could he not have a story prepared?

"Ancestor," Lionel quickly sent messages via essence energy, "those who have captured me are defending this cave entrance because they've already sent in their allies toward that place."

The eyes of the Belmont Ancestor narrowed at these words, quietly warding Thatch off. So little time had passed since his appearance, and he had processed things so quickly, that only Thatch seemed to have notice his appearance. After all, everyone else was focused on the battle at hand.

"They have too many experts for you to make a difference alone," Lionel continued, "I only ask that you take me away so that I can alert my father to the situation."

Lionel didn't explain too much, and he kept his words vague. However, there was a reason for this.

In such a complex situation, choosing a side would be exceedingly difficult. So, Lionel didn't ask him to fight at all. He asked his ancestor to take one of the safest routes possible in protecting his karma: saving a member of the Belmont family, and alerting their current King.

Considering there were no other Belmonts present, this was in fact the safest route of action. This ancestor understood he could only be summoned once more after this time before he officially passed on, so he wasn't willing to risk sowing bad karma in the hopes that he was doing the 'right thing'.

Lionel's arm wiggled in his restraints, grabbing onto Evelyn's hand to ensure his ancestor understood they were together. And just like that, the three of them disappeared...

From start to finish, only a little more than a second past. And yet, the tension that released from Thatch's shoulders was so much that he nearly collapsed under his own weight.

The truth was that Lionel was sighing in relief more than anyone, because there were two glaring problems he could have thought of.

The first thing he worried about was Dyon's puppet! He had seen with his own eyes when Ri took it with her before they left, and he had witnessed it kill a mid-level celestial with a single strike. The life force of an ancestor after being awakened was even less than the old Matriarch, and he was likely weaker than her as well.

It was too bad for Lionel that he had too little knowledge about puppets. Had he known that there was no way that puppet could output that much strength without Dyon, he wouldn't have worried about that at all.

However, there was a second glaring reason for his want for a quick escape... Something that was completely irrelevant of the strength of the puppet at all... And that, was Madeleine.

The Belmonts were charged with protecting Amethyst's temple. This was the reason their clan was gifted their bloodline in the first place, and the only reason their clan was even so powerful to begin with. Before Amethyst's blessing, the Belmonts were nothing...

This might have begun to mean less and less with each successive generation, but this would still mean the world to Belmont ancestors, especially because their only goal in this after life of theirs was to sow good karma. How could they sow good karma if they spit in the face of their benefactor?

If the Belmont Ancestor learned that Lionel was being held captive by the wielder of Amethyst's Faith Seed, there is no question what side he would choose! There were deep responsibilities tied to their family that went far beyond regular blood and family. There was no doubt. Even if he had to kill Lionel, he wouldn't hesitate.