

Reincarnated With Three Unique Skills

- Chapter 161 – 180

Chapter 161: Chapter 161: Climbing The Mountain

Aengus reached the top of the hill and began searching for the cave the girls had mentioned. Before long, he found a small entrance nestled between the rocks.

Entering the dark cave, his advanced vision pierced through the gloom, revealing a few scattered skeletons. However, there were no signs of those Creatures or Soul Cores, much to his disappointment.

Leaving the cave empty-handed, Aengus scoured the surrounding area, hoping to find any further clues.

After some time, his attention was drawn to a massive Rhinoceros, 15-20 meters long, lazily lying on the ground. His eyes narrowed as he noticed a familiar white orb embedded in its stomach. It was unmistakably another Soul Core.

Aengus scanned the area for traps but found none, so he casually approached the massive Rhinoceros, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. The beast's large eye opened, sensing his presence, and it slowly rose to its feet. The Soul Core floated in the air, suspended by some magical force.

"A human, eh? Is it that time already?" the Rhinoceros spoke in a deep, rumbling voice, surprising Aengus slightly.

"Why are you here, human?" it continued. "Is it for this thing?" It gestured to the hovering Soul Core.

Aengus, calm and composed, replied, "Yes. Hand it over, or I'll have to kill you for it." His eyes flashed with killing intent as he released his aura to intimidate the creature.

The Rhinoceros, sensing his overwhelming power, wavered. It doubted it could defeat the human, even with all its magical strength.

"You're truly intriguing," it rumbled. "So strong at such a young age. I bet that person will be expecting you soon."

Aengus' curiosity piqued. "What person are you talking about, Ralph?"

The Rhinoceros froze, its eyes widening in disbelief. "H-How do you know my name?"

Aengus smirked. "Give me the Soul Core, and I'll tell you."

Ralph shook his head in disbelief, but when he saw Aengus drawing his Judgment Blade, panic set in.

“Wait, human! What’s the hurry?” Ralph stammered, sweating inwardly. In a rush, he sent the Soul Core toward Aengus, relieved once it left his possession.

Aengus casually stored the Soul Core in his spatial bracelet.

Curious, Ralph asked, “What’s your name, human? You seem like an anomaly to me. I’ve never encountered anyone like you before.”

Aengus ignored the question and instead asked, “Do you know where I can find more of these orbs?”

Seeing the distrust in Aengus’ eyes, Ralph hesitated but finally answered, “If you’re looking for more of these, you won’t find many here. You’ll need to go to the Trial Ground, I heard. Don’t ask about directions because I also don’t know where it is either.

But I warn you, if you’re from the outside world, it’s not a place you should tread lightly,” he said acting as secretive as possible.

“And why is that? What exactly is this Trial Ground?” Aengus pressed on.

Ralph sighed. “Human, I can’t say much, and it seems I’ve already failed to stop you. Go if you must, but be very careful. Trust no one.”

Aengus nodded, satisfied.

He turned and walked away, heading back to his original path.

As Ralph watched him leave, he muttered to himself, “Will there be another annihilation... or is something about to change?”

—

In just an hour or so, Aengus reached the base of the mountain, feeling the cold atmosphere around him. He used his special eyes to look toward the top of the mountain, which seemed endless, much like Mount Everest.

It would’ve been extremely easy if he could just fly, but the restrictions in this place slowed his progress. He didn’t like it at all.

He considered using his Death Leviathan form, which might have allowed him to make the climb. However, the energy cost was too high, so he dismissed the idea.

He picked up his pace, climbing through the harsh cold that seemed to seep into his bones. Only his high stats and defense allowed him to endure the harsh conditions.

Except him, No one else would be foolish enough to attempt such a climb.

With his agile body and the effects of his passive skills, Aengus maneuvered through slippery slopes, rugged terrain, and avoided wild beasts with ease.

As he climbed higher, the air grew colder, but he pressed on, covered in ice and snow. Occasionally, he used Hellfire to warm himself, turning the snow around him into steaming fog.

He encountered various snow monsters, but he ignored them for the most part. However, when they foolishly sought their own deaths by attempting to hunt him, he gave them a quick end and sent their bodies to his Dimensional Space.

[Monster Breeding]

[Level: 5]

[Dimensional Space: 2.5 km (diameter)]

[Summonable Units: 9,198]

D-Rank: 664

C-Rank: 20

Lesser Demons: 7,200

Greater Demons: 1,314

His Dimensional Space now resembled an independent world, full of greenery and wild landscapes where his legion resided, slowly growing stronger. He had the ability to synthesize his creatures, but for now, it wasn't necessary.

Once everything settled, he planned to further empower his legion by adding more members in large quantities, provided he could gather enough mana to perform the task. If only he had infinite energy, he wouldn't have to worry about it so much.

Thanks to his superhuman strength and enhanced endurance, Aengus swiftly scaled the treacherous mountain, each step propelling him higher into the freezing, hostile environment.

The biting winds howled around him, and the frost clung to his skin and armor, but he pressed forward undeterred.

His breath crystallized in the air as he reached a vantage point high enough to observe the vast expanse below. He hadn't even reached the summit, yet the sheer height gave him an unparalleled view of the world spread out beneath him.

Aengus paused momentarily, his sharp gaze sweeping over the distant terrain. The valleys below appeared as tiny creases, rivers like silver threads weaving through the snowy wilderness.

Off in the distance, almost hidden among the rugged landscape, he spotted what he had been searching for; a massive construct nestled between two jagged peaks.

It was a colossal mausoleum like structure, ancient and formidable, its stone surface cracked and weathered by time. Yet, it pulsed with a strange, radiant energy that rippled outward, almost tangible in its intensity, as if the structure itself was alive and calling everyone to enter inside.

The mausoleum glowed faintly, its energy signatures so vivid that they cut through the sky like a beacon. Pillars of ancient stone stood around it, towering like sentinels, while faint arcs of energy spiraled from the ground, meeting at a central point above the construct. It gave off a sense of foreboding and power, as if whatever lay within was both dangerous and deeply valuable.

Aengus took his time to carefully survey the landscape, noting every detail. The steep cliffs, the narrow mountain paths, and the scattered ruins leading up to the eye-catching mausoleum—likely the Trial Ground he recently heard about.

He mentally marked every possible route and obstacle, creating a detailed map in his mind. The aura around the mausoleum suggested a powerful presence or treasure within, or something incomprehensible hidden.

Satisfied with his observations, Aengus took one last glance at the imposing structure before preparing to descend and make his way towards his new destination.

Chapter 162: Chapter 162: Sudden Hunger

The speed of his descent was fast and efficient as he used gravity to his advantage.

After about an hour, he was back at the base, his face calm as the remaining snow drifted away from his back.

Aengus suddenly felt hungry, which was strange considering he had eaten just last night with Sofia and the others.

He should easily have been able to go a few days without eating, given his capabilities and body control.

Feeling puzzled, Aengus looked for prey to satisfy his hunger.

Amidst the dense canopy and foggy environment that crystallized into water droplets, he spotted a large leopard-like monster, eagerly waiting for its prey to appear.

Swoosh!

Slash!

With extreme agility and silent steps, he flashed forward and slashed the leopard's neck cleanly.

Aengus wasted no time after killing the leopard-like monster, dragging its limp body to a nearby clear area.

The dense canopy above let only slivers of light filter through, casting shadows that danced around him as he walked.

Thud!

Placing the body down, Aengus quickly began preparing the creature, his hands moving with practiced agility. With his blade, he crudely skinned the monster, cutting away the tender meat. Blood spilled onto the snow, steam rising as the warmth of the kill contrasted against the frigid ground.

Aengus' face remained impassive, though a flicker of curiosity crossed his mind.

"What could be the reason for this sudden hunger?"

"Was this place somehow affecting my body?"

"What kind of power is behind all these?"

The questions remained unanswered, but his cautiousness heightened. He was suddenly reminded of Aria, hoping she was safe. Considering Aria's C-Rank power, it shouldn't be too difficult for her unless she faced something beyond his understanding.

With a flick of his wrist, Aengus summoned a small flame using Hellfire, its intense heat instantly igniting the wood he had gathered. The fire crackled to life, radiating warmth into the cold environment. He skewered the meat on long branches and set it over the fire. The aroma soon filled the air as the meat sizzled and cooked.

The sound of the searing meat made his hunger even more apparent, his stomach growling despite the oddity of the situation.

As the meat cooked, Aengus glanced around, his sharp senses on high alert. The fog clung low to the ground, and the dense trees provided plenty of cover. Still, he didn't like being out in the open for too long. His hand rested on the hilt of his Judgement Blade, ready for anything.

When the meat was thoroughly cooked, he ate quickly and efficiently, each bite restoring his lost stamina and sharpening his focus.

"Huh? The smell of meat?"

Suddenly, Aengus heard a surprised voice from a distance.

He saw a girl approaching with a sharp sword in her hand. She had slight tan skin and a valiant aura, much like Alisha. But while Alisha exuded mischief and boldness, this girl was calm and collected.

Aengus continued eating without concern. It had been a while since he had seen any other participants, reassuring him that others might be nearby.

The girl approached and saw Aengus eating, paying her no mind. It made her doubt whether he had any vigilance at all.

"Hey, what's your name? Can you give me some meat to eat? I'm extremely hungry," she asked.

Aengus, already full, replied, "My name isn't important. You want food, right? Give me something equivalent in exchange. Some treasures you might have. Nothing comes free, right?"

"Treasures?" The girl immediately became wary, her grip tightening on the sword, suspecting his intentions. But seeing him remain nonchalant and noticing the meat nearby, she swallowed her saliva as her stomach growled, her face reddening with embarrassment.

Reluctantly, she took out a glowing red orb.

"Here, take this. It can help you level up faster. I've tried it myself," she said confidently.

[Appraisal]

[Essence Core]

[Grade: D]

[Description: Slightly increases user's experience for leveling up. Works best for users of the same rank (D = D).]

Seeing the appraisal, Aengus realized it wouldn't be much use to him due to its low grade. However, noticing the girl's hungry look, he decided not to be too demanding.

"Give me three, and you can eat," he said, raising the number, not appearing soft or easy to negotiate with.

"What! Three?" The girl widened her eyes as if he'd demanded something outrageous.

"Do you know how hard I worked to gather these? It took me forever just to collect a few!"

"I can give you two at most. If not, I'd rather die than give you the third. I need them to raise my rank to C-Rank." The girl stood her ground, defiant.

"Fine." Aengus shrugged and accepted the two Essence Cores from her, appearing before her like a ghost, causing her to jump back in surprise.

"You—You're a C-Rank?" she asked, eyes scanning him more thoroughly now, trying to gauge his strength.

"You can think so," Aengus replied, remaining seated, his curiosity piqued about the Essence Cores.

"Where did you find these?"

The girl, now stuffing her mouth with food, answered in a muffled voice, "I found them in a monster lair. At first, I distracted the monsters, then when I saw the chance, I took them. Smart, right?"

"So, there's none left there?" he asked.

"No. I haven't seen any more," she replied, shaking her head.

"Okay, then that's that," Aengus said as he suddenly stood up, surprising the girl.

"Wait, where are you going? Let's team up. I know I'm weaker than you, but two is better than one, right?" she quickly said, shoving more food into her mouth and choking on it in her hurry. She fumbled for a water bag from her spatial ring and drank from it.

She looked over to where Aengus had been standing, but he was gone, vanished like a ghost. Only a faint, lingering sentence echoed in the air.

“You’d only be a burden.”

The girl clenched her fists in anger. “What a heartless fellow!”

No data found.

Reincarnated With Three Unique Skills - Chapter 163 - Chapter 163: Chapter 163: Valen, Hero Class (Light)

Chapter 163: Chapter 163: Valen, Hero Class (Light)

A few hours had passed since the gate had opened.

Aengus occasionally used his All-Seeing Eyes, scanning the surroundings for any sign of Aria, all the while moving steadily toward the Trial Ground.

Along the way, he encountered various monsters and groups of humans, but he paid them no attention. His time was precious, and distractions would only slow him down.

The landscape stretched on endlessly, with nothing but rocky terrain and clusters of trees breaking the monotony. Each step felt like a crawl against the vastness of the distance, making it seem as if the Trial Ground was constantly shifting farther away.

He hadn’t seen any trace of Sofia or her group either. He could only hope they were surviving well enough on their own. If he encountered them, he would help as much as possible, but not to the extent of risking his life.

Crash!

Boom!

Aengus saw only a sudden white flash before someone ambushed him from above.

By reflex, he tried to dodge, but the other party’s speed was faster, taking him by surprise.

He barely had time to raise his blade, clashing with the force head-on.

Their clash emitted bright, sparking light, turning the gloomy surroundings bright, as if a white sun showered them with intense radiance.

Aengus and the figure both crashed into the ground, which sank into a small crater.

“Bam!”

Aengus kicked the person with explosive force, sending him flying out of the pit, giving Aengus a moment to catch his breath.

The figure, however, landed nimbly on the ground, moving like a feather.

Aengus jumped up and looked at the figure—a young man in white clothing, holding a gleaming Holy Sword. The sword radiated holy light, as if it were made to vanquish the darkness.

The young man was handsome, with a valiant aura surrounding him, but the frown on his forehead and the killing intent in his eyes made Aengus realize he was dealing with no ordinary foe.

He quickly used his Appraisal skill, and what he found left him a little surprised.

[Name: Valen Aurelius]

[Age: 20]

[Class: Hero (Light)]

[Level: 47]

[Affiliation: Holy Cathedral of Gods]

Skills:

- Radiant Strike (C)
- Blessing of Light (C)
- Divine Fury (C)
- Heart Of Light (B)
- Light Speed Dash (C)
- Domain Of Purification (C)

- Light Of Judgment (C)

“A Hero class?”

Aengus hadn't expected to clash with one of them so soon, especially given the difference in their party factions.

The young hero, Valen, looked at Aengus with surprise, disbelief in his eyes. His expression shifted when he realized that Aengus was standing completely unharmed after what should have been a sure-kill strike.

Aengus couldn't quite understand why Valen had attacked him so suddenly, especially considering how well he was suppressing his demonic power.

"Could it be his Heart of Light sensing my darkness?" he mused internally, his eyes narrowing.

"What's the matter? Why attack me without warning?" Aengus asked, his tone probing but calm, masking the rising tension.

Valen sneered, his eyes ablaze with righteous fury.

"Shut up, you demon! You might fool others, but not me. My heart can sense the hidden darkness within you. You need to be erased from existence before you can wreak havoc."

His voice was filled with conviction, as though he were acting for the greater good of humanity.

But Aengus could see through the facade. The so-called "Heart of Light" was likely unable to bear the presence of his Heart of Darkness, driving Valen's hostility beyond reason. This wasn't about justice—it was about an inherent clash of opposite elements.

Aengus' grip on his blade tightened, his calm demeanor betraying nothing of the conflict boiling beneath the surface.

"Swoosh!"

Valen's eyes flashed with fervor as he lunged at Aengus, his Holy Sword shining brightly. The radiance of the weapon seemed to cut through the air like a white-hot blade, leaving a trail of light in its path.

Aengus, using his higher stats to his advantage block each strike with Judgement Blade, but Valen didn't stoo—he activated Light Speed Dash (C), his body blurring as he made distance and closed the distance instantly, thrusting his sword toward Aengus with deadly precision.

"Your heart tells you to kill, so does mine. Let the victor be decided by strength alone," Aengus said, his gaze piercing into Valen's. For a moment, Valen's face faltered.

Aengus had no desire to waste any time. He activated both Dragonification and his Darkness Power simultaneously.

Instantly, his skin grew tough scales, his hands transformed into claws, a tail sprouted from his back, and horns emerged from his head.

Valen's eyes widened in shock, but his courage held strong, bolstered by the influence of his Heart of Light.

Without hesitation, Valen raised his sword high, summoning the power of his next skill.

"Radiant Strike (C)!"

The sword exploded with blinding light as Valen swung it down, unleashing a beam of radiant energy aimed to obliterate Aengus.

"Too slow," Aengus muttered. His form vanished, leaving only a faint shadow behind. He reappeared a few meters away, out of Valen's reach. The hero's Radiant Strike hit nothing but empty air.

Boom!

The ground cracked beneath the sheer force of the attack, leveling several towering trees on impact.

Valen's skills were formidable, his resolve unwavering. But it was unfortunate that he had crossed paths with Aengus.

Sensing the danger, Valen quickly activated Blessing of Light (C). A radiant shield enveloped him, boosting his stats further.

Aengus raised his blade, sending thousands of spectral swords hurtling toward Valen. Simultaneously, dark chains snaked toward him, trying to immobilize him.

Valen's speed was a problem, as he seemed to slip through space itself. But with his enhanced vision, Aengus quickly located him and bound him within a few seconds.

"Divine Fury!"

Valen roared, bathing himself in holy light that amplified his strength. The light began evaporating the dark chains, freeing him from Aengus's grasp. His face was full of killing intent.

Bathed in darkness, Aengus clashed fiercely with Valen, who radiated pure light.

They exchanged blow after blow, their powers shaking the earth. But in the end, a victor was finally decided.

Chapter 164: Chapter 164: Heart Of Light

Aengus stood victorious, his breath slightly labored from the intense clash. His body bore a few minor wounds, but he knew they would heal in time.

In oposite, Valen knelt on the ground, defeated. His once-pristine appearance was marred by numerous cuts from blades infused with Hellfire, his flesh sizzling and leaving blackened, searing marks across his skin. The pain was etched deeply into his strained, contorted face.

Aengus felt no sympathy. Valen had been the one to attack first, intent on killing him. And in a battle between men, there was no right or wrong—only the victor was justified.

“You know,” Aengus began, shaking his head as he approached the broken hero, “I really didn’t want to kill you, Valen. But you’ve left me no choice.” His voice was calm, though cold, as he neared Valen, who now lay extremely vulnerable.

Valen’s eyes flickered, a mixture of fury and helplessness. Even though his heart still throbbed with the light, his body had reached its limit.

“Kill me, demon! I won’t beg for my life like a coward. The day I swore to be a hero and protect humanity, I lost my fear of death!” Valen roared, his voice echoing throughout the forest.

Aengus regarded him calmly, though deep down, he was conflicted. Killing Valen might feel justifiable—after all, the hero had been the one to strike first—but Aengus couldn’t ignore the fact that Valen could still serve humanity in a meaningful way. His offense was grave, but was it worth ending his life? And a force from humanity?

As he pondered this, Manas’ voice echoed in his mind, urgent and unwavering.

“Master, you will need his Heart of Light if you want to return to your normal self once again,” she reminded him, sensing his hesitation.

“Do I really need it?” Aengus asked in doubt. His Heart of Darkness instinctively recoiled at the idea, but his rational mind urged him to consider it seriously.

Manas remained firm. “Of course, Master. Have you forgotten your first goal when you arrived in this world?”

“My first goal?” Aengus repeated, his thoughts drifting. Then it hit him. “Building a family of my own?”

“Yes, Master. Now that two women are asking for your love, you must offer it in return if you wish to be accepted properly.”

Aengus chuckled softly, his expression softening as he thought of Aria and Bella. “You sound like an expert in these matters, Manas.”

Flashes of Aria’s face, her gentle smile, and Bella’s eager waiting in the demon lands filled his mind.

And a new dilemma arose in him. How would Bella react if she knew he was involved with Aria again? The thought troubled him.

Sensing his hesitation, Manas reassured him, “Master, you don’t need to choose between them. You have the power to love both at the same time. I am certain they will come to understand eventually.” Her voice was calm, confident.

“Besides, emperors in this world have thousands of wives. Compared to them, your case is hardly matter.”

Aengus, still focused on Valen, nodded internally. “But can they truly provide love to all of them?” he asked. “I doubt it’s all driven by lust alone.”

Manas hesitated, unable to answer that question. But seeing the shift in Aengus’ expression, she was relieved that he seemed to understand her reasoning.

With a decision in mind, Aengus leaned over Valen’s body, placing his hand on the hero’s chest.

Manas was pleased seeing this—finally, a long-standing issue was about to be resolved.

“For your intent to kill me and in acknowledgment of your contributions, I shall give you a light punishment, Valen. I hope this doesn’t cripple you,” Aengus said, looking into Valen’s eyes, which were filled with confusion and pain.

“What are you—”

His question was cut short as excruciating pain tore through his very being.

“Ahhh!” he screamed, his voice echoing far and wide, as if he were being skinned alive.

“Relax, this won’t kill you. You should be grateful, because I am freeing you from this shackle of responsibility. You are now free,” Aengus said nonchalantly as he continued the process.

Soon, he received the notification, feeling satisfied.

[You have acquired a Passive Skill: Heart of Light (B)]

[Description: The Heart of Light grants the user an inner reservoir of radiant power, which can be channeled in various ways to heal, protect, or attack. When activated, the user's body is enveloped in a soft, glowing aura, and their heart shines with a brilliant light visible even through their chest, symbolizing their connection to the divine.

It has a passive effect of calming the mind and makes the user compassionate, honest, valiant, and a savior of the weak.]

"The same brainwashing?" Aengus muttered, furrowing his brows as he felt a slight strain on his soul intensifying.

"Shua!"

Aengus's thoughts were abruptly disrupted as he saw Valen vanish in an instant, leaving behind a malicious threat that echoed through the air.

"Evil creature, I will show you what true retribution means—just come out!" the voice boomed.

Aengus furrowed his brows, feeling the weight of the threat.

"Who was that?"

He had only seen a brief flash of light, cutting through space and taking Valen along.

"Was that fool's relative? A bigger hero, perhaps?"

Aengus became more vigilant, sensing the strength of this new presence. The restrictions of this place were so strong that even his own teleportation abilities were blocked, which made him wonder what kind of power could penetrate such barriers.

However, he reassured himself for the moment, knowing that the entity couldn't reach him here—at least not yet.

"Master, how are you feeling now? Is it working?" Manas asked, shifting the conversation back to Aengus's heart.

Aengus paused, trying to feel something—maybe anger? Hate? Or... love?

"Yes, I can feel something, but it also burdens me with this responsibility of being a savior of humanity and all that. How do I solve this, Manas?"

“Should I merge the Heart of Darkness and Heart of Light together?”

Chapter 165: Chapter 165: Heart Of Light's Influence

“No, Master. You can't merge them yet. You need to merge Mana and Nether first before attempting to merge these two forces. They're opposites, and you must be cautious,” Manas warned.

“Mm... I understand. But I'll have to deal with it after I fix the problem with my soul,” Aengus replied, gazing into the distance.

He could feel the Heart of Light pulsing within him, keeping its distance from the Heart of Darkness. Now, he had two hearts, two opposite forces. The Heart of Light granted him basic control over light elements—healing, speed amplification, attack boosts, and purification—exactly the opposite of the Heart of Darkness, which was more destructive.

It made him feel an inner conflict. The Heart of Light urged him toward benevolence and protection, while the Heart of Darkness tempted him toward darker, more self-serving actions.

Suddenly, a notification appeared before him.

[You have received a chance to equip a new class: Hero]

[Do you want to equip it?]

[Yes / No]

A Hero class?

It seemed interesting and fitting, especially with the Heart of Light. But his Heart of Darkness resisted the idea, rejecting the heroic path with disdain.

Aengus felt his annoyance grow. “Just wait, you two. You'll both be gone once I fix myself,” he muttered to his hearts.

He dismissed the notification for now, knowing he could choose the class whenever he wanted.

Besides, classes had begun to feel meaningless to him—he already had what most classes offered: stats boosts, special skills, and powers far beyond what a typical class could provide.

That didn't mean he didn't want a class, but the current one wasn't appealing to him.

Aengus glanced one last time at the spot where Valen had been, then turned away and continued his journey. The closer he got to the Trial Ground, the more his hunger grew, gnawing at him with each step.

He stopped at a few places along the way, refilling his supplies and energy when necessary. The beasts and monsters he encountered grew stronger, more formidable than those he had faced earlier, but he dispatched them efficiently, storing their remains in his Dimensional Space.

With his enhanced speed and vast energy reserves, Aengus pressed on for several hours until the sun began to set over the horizon, casting a golden glow over the land.

As the sky darkened, he decided it was time to rest. He found a secluded spot on a tree branch, settled down, and allowed himself a moment of quiet. He needed to recover his mana and calm his chaotic soul.

He began a meditation session, focusing on the turbulence within, trying to regain control over the conflicting forces that raged inside him.

Aengus closed his eyes, inhaling deeply as he immersed himself in the flow of mana and nether around him. The quiet hum of nature soothed his mind, yet the discord between the Heart of Light and Heart of Darkness was ever-present, each pulling him in opposite directions.

Suppressing them, he reached deeper into his enigmatic soul, which was an anomaly beyond comprehension for his tiny mind.

He wanted to understand the mystery behind its destruction and uncover his true identity.

As he delved deeper, he had a vision where he saw endless void-like dimensions spreading in all directions, and a clash between two powerful beings, opposing forces beyond his understanding.

One was purely destructive, while the other was the epitome of holiness. Their clash shook all dimensions apart, scattering them from their invisible bindings.

The two beings were gone, leaving nothing but an empty void.

“Shua!”

After who knows how long, his meditation session was interrupted by the sudden presence of a powerful force nearby.

When Aengus opened his eyes, it was already morning. The sounds of birds chirping and the growls of monsters reached his ears.

Looking below, he spotted a dinosaur-like monster moving toward him, its gigantic head about to clash with the tree he sat in.

Aengus noticed the creature's eyes were red and unfocused, as if someone was controlling it from afar.

Using his Appraisal eyes, Aengus confirmed that the monster was under mind control.

Quickly gathering purification light, Aengus formed a large, glowing ball and enveloped the monster in a cocoon, attempting to free it from the mind control. At that time, he didn't even know why was he doing this.

As expected, the creature's eyes soon returned to normal. It let out a roar and, sensing Aengus's intimidating aura, turned away and fled in a different direction.

Aengus watched the monster retreat from the treetop, a puzzled expression on his face.

"Why did I help it? Was it because of the Heart of Light?" he muttered.

But, oddly, he didn't feel bad about it. He had started to feel emotions again, emotions that relaxed the heaviness within him.

However, an excess of benevolence still remained—the urge to sacrifice for humanity, to serve the gods, to kill demons, and obliterate the Demon Land. Such thoughts lingered.

"I need to find balance between these two forces, and quickly," Aengus thought, before leaping gracefully from the tree to another, as agile as a monkey.

The rugged terrain below shifted as Aengus leaped from tree to tree, cold winds slicing against his skin like sharp blades.

Ahead, he noticed several towering monsters moving in the same direction he was heading. Their eyes were glazed over, similar to the dinosaur-like creature from earlier—controlled by some distant force.

Suddenly, a cry pierced the air.

"Ah, help!"

Aengus glanced over and saw a boy being swallowed whole by a massive beast, its jaws closing with a sickening gulp.

For a moment, his gaze lingered, and the restlessness inside him flared. But he turned his head away, suppressing the urge to act.

As he continued further, he spotted more humans—hunters—fighting desperately against the monsters, forming small, struggling groups to defend themselves.

Aengus landed on the ground with a graceful leap, a flash of light following his descent. The path ahead seemed clearer, with only some scattered hills and rocks.

The sight of him immediately caught the attention of a few hunters, their expressions a mix of desperation and hope. They eyed him warily at first, but as they saw the soft glow of sacred light around him, their fear turned into something else—reverence.

“Hero, please help us!” one of them cried out, his voice filled with pleading urgency.

The group had mistaken Aengus for a Hero, dazzled by the light power radiating from him.

Aengus paused, feeling the weight of their expectation. For a moment, he considered walking away, but something in him—perhaps the Heart of Light—urged him to stay.

Chapter 166: Chapter 166: The Mysterious Alter

Aengus felt the tug-of-war between his two hearts; the Heart of Darkness pushed him to think rationally, suppressing emotions and acting with cold precision, while the Heart of Light whispered of compassion.

These constant shifts in his mindset annoyed him to no end. He wanted to erase both influences from his life but knew, in his current state, it wasn’t possible.

He looked at the group of 10-12 hunters surrounded by nearly a hundred monsters. Many were injured, barely holding on as the adrenaline kept them alive.

With his All-Seeing Eyes, Aengus quickly judged their characters. Some were ingrates, the type who wouldn’t hesitate to betray him, while others seemed honest.

Without a word, he lifted his Judgement Blade, deciding to act on his own terms. With a swift motion, he unleashed his Spectral Blade Storm.

Swish, swish, swish!

Invisible blades slashed through the air, cutting through the raging monsters. Their roars of demise filled the battlefield, and their possessed state ended as they crumbled to the ground.

Aengus remained calm, his confidence unwavering. The group's awe quickly turned into admiration, their eyes lighting up with a near fanatical reverence.

"Thank you, Hero! Thank you!" one of them shouted, their voice trembling with gratitude.

"What's your name, Hero?" another asked eagerly, their tone filled with hope.

Aengus noticed some of them had felt a brief surge of malice, but his raw power and hostility quickly snuffed out those thoughts. Fear replaced any ill will they might have had.

"I am not a Hero. Goodbye," Aengus said flatly, his voice carrying no warmth. Before they could respond, he vanished in a flash of light.

"Did you see that? He was a real hero, he didn't even accepted anyone's gratitude in return," one girl said, her eyes wide with admiration.

"Aiya, I know. He was so manly!" another girl chimed in, gazing in the direction where Aengus disappeared with affection.

"Tch... He is nothing but an arrogant bastard!" A couple of boys sneered in jealousy, unable to hide their irritation.

—

Aengus, now far from the group, felt a small relief from their burdensome expectations, but the chaos within still gnawed at him.

He decided to follow the monsters, curious to see where they were heading. His destination coincidentally lay in the same direction, so it didn't feel like a waste of time.

Plus, there was a chance he could uncover more about Dwarvania, the land he sought answers in.

Keeping a safe distance, he noticed the number of monsters steadily growing into the hundreds of thousands.

It surprised him slightly; Such a large gathering wasn't normal. After several minutes of running, he reached the top of a narrow cliff, where he witnessed something strange. The monsters were jumping off the edge, seemingly in a frenzy, falling into a dense fog below.

To any ordinary person, it would appear that the creatures were plunging to their deaths, but Aengus, using his special All-Seeing Eyes, saw something else. Beneath the fog was an invisible barrier, one that allowed the monsters to pass through to another dimension.

Aengus stood still for a moment, contemplating what he had just seen. Then, without hesitation, he took a deep breath and leaped off the cliff. The air rushed past him as gravity pulled him down with a spiraling force. His expression remained calm, unaffected by the height or the pull of the earth below.

As he descended, Aengus had a hunch that something was waiting for him below; something familiar.

The connection felt almost instinctive, pulling him toward the unknown.

“Plop!”

Aengus crossed the invisible barrier and landed smoothly on the barren ground, unharmed. He stood in awe, his eyes scanning the vast desert stretching endlessly before him. In the middle of the desolate expanse, an altar stood out, its divine glow cutting through space and time, almost overwhelming in its brilliance.

His gaze locked onto the altar, feeling an inexplicable connection to it, a pull that resonated deep within him.

“What is this thing?” Aengus muttered, his voice barely a whisper as he slowly approached the altar.

Monsters of all shapes and sizes, ranging from small to colossal, were drawn to the altar as well, their numbers now in the hundreds of thousands. They poured in from every direction, their ranks surpassing C-level and higher.

Aengus couldn't help but feel both intrigued and unnerved by the sight of the mysterious gathering. The monsters moved as though they were summoned, called to serve something unknown, something powerful.

He drew closer, his senses heightened, wondering what force could command such a vast and terrifying assembly.

Was it the altar itself? Or something even greater lurking beyond?

As Aengus drew closer, he witnessed an astonishing sight.

Atop the altar was a massive pool of swirling, annihilative black energy. The monsters were falling into it one by one, dissolving into energy particles and making the pool even more potent.

The sight was both mesmerizing and terrifying, as the pool seemed endless, deep, and destructive. Aengus instinctively knew that falling into it would mean certain death, even for someone as powerful as him.

In the center of this dark energy pool stood a statue, radiating with glowing energy patterns. The statue appeared to be gathering the pool's energy into its outstretched hand, controlling the immense power. As Aengus examined it more closely, a strange sense of familiarity washed over him.

The statue's features resembled his own, but more mature, with a profound aura that seemed like an endless void, full of untold mysteries.

It stirred something deep within his soul, a connection to the primal force of destruction, a force far beyond ordinary comprehension.

The energy emanating from the statue was so intense, yet Aengus felt his soul relaxed.

But, it was soul-stirring and dangerous to others.

He knew that even approaching too close could disintegrate others into nothing but ash.

It was the raw essence of destruction, primal and absolute. Something told Aengus that this force was connected to the truth of his identity, and possibly, to the very core of his soul's mystery.

Thud, thud, thud

Suddenly loud sounds of footsteps echoed, turning his gaze to the new arrivals.

Chapter 167: Chapter 167: Mystery Of Origin

The new arrivals resembled dwarves but were three times their usual height, towering over the landscape with sturdy, muscular builds. Their beards were thick and messy, and their large eyes gleamed with a sharp, intelligent glint.

They wore heavy leather clothing adorned with glowing gemstones that seemed to pulsate with latent power. Their complexions ranged from pale to tanned, suggesting a variety of backgrounds within their group.

There were about 12-15 of them, males and females, some older and others younger, all forming an imposing group of giants.

Curious, Aengus used his Appraisal ability and confirmed what he had suspected; they were Ancient Dwarves, a race long believed to have been erased from existence.

Yet here they were, in this secret realm, defying history.

He couldn't help but feel impressed by their craftsmanship. The gemstones embedded in their clothing and gear radiated with intricate energy signatures, clearly indicating advanced and ancient technology, beyond what was common in the outside world.

"The Ancient Dwarves," Aengus muttered under his breath, astonished.

These were the same legendary craftsmen who had once been responsible for creating artifacts of immense power, their skills unmatched. Now, after being thought extinct, they stood before him, shrouded in mystery.

As Aengus appraised their equipment, he realized the precision and artistry that went into their creations. Each item they carried seemed alive with magic, brimming with energy from long-lost methods.

This was far beyond what the outside world could replicate, and it made him even more curious about the secrets this realm held.

"#@&&#%#@&#!"

Suddenly, one of the female dwarves noticed Aengus's presence, who had seemed invisible until now.

At her scream, all of them were pulled back from their concentrated work near the pool with ancient technologies.

Aengus needed to find out the truth, which is why he revealed himself. He didn't feel any threat, considering their ranks and specialised crafting skills. That didn't mean they were weak—they were more powerful than most people outside.

They quickly towered over him, his frame tiny compared to them.

"#&@&#&%#@&!"

"#@&%##&@%!"

Aengus furrowed his brows, not understanding their language. It was completely different from human language.

"Manas, you know their language, right? Translate for me," he transmitted.

"Yes, Master. You can communicate with them now," Manas responded.

"Thud!"

Suddenly, the ancient dwarves knelt down on the hard platform, their voices full of respect and submission.

“Oh God, you’ve finally arrived. We have received your decree and have been waiting for you.”

They spoke in unison, confusing Aengus for a moment.

“So, they think I’m their god or something?” he pondered.

“Stand up!” he commanded.

“Yes, your eminence,” they complied, but even as they rose, they kept their postures as low as possible, still trembling in awe.

Their fanatical expressions, with eyes glowing red, unnerved him. He could see in their eyes a hope that had been rekindled, a belief that whatever they had been waiting for was now standing before them in person.

They looked at Aengus with fanatical belief, their eyes glowing red, as if their long-awaited hope had finally arrived and their wishes were about to be fulfilled.

Aengus decided to be blunt. “Answer me, what’s happening here? And why are you calling me a god? I am not a god,” he reminded them sternly.

In Return, the dwarves shook their heads vehemently.

“No, no, your eminence, you are the true god!” one of them declared fervently. “Those others, the ones they call gods. Compared to your vast powers, they are but dolls.

Aengus frowned, trying to understand. He had never considered himself divine, not in the way they seemed to believe. But he couldn’t ignore the primal connection he felt with the statue and the strange energy surrounding this place.

“What decree did you receive? Why were you waiting for me?” he asked, hoping to gather more insight into their belief.

The leader of the ancient dwarves, Sirgrid, spoke, his eyes glowing brighter with conviction.

“Your eminence, this is a long story,” he sighed but continued, “In the ancient past, when demons first revealed themselves, we dwarves of Dwarvania lived in harmony, marveling at our craftsmanship. Our population was in the millions, and we were connected to the outside world through trade, providing them with exceptional artifacts.

Everything was going well until the unthinkable happened.” His voice wavered with grief.

“On an unfortunate day, a being appeared, shattering the sky, and he sealed Dwarvania, cutting us off from the outside world. He looked beaten and severely injured, yet he accomplished the impossible with ease.”

Aengus nodded, raising his estimation of the threat as Sirgrid continued.

“We didn’t have the strength to fight back. He had some incredible space-related ability, capable of wiping out our people effortlessly—or so we heard. The threat didn’t end there. Over time, he slowly slaughtered our kind, absorbing their energy for an unknown purpose.

By then, only hundreds of us remained. We tried to escape this cage by building a device that could free us, but luck wasn’t on our side. That being caught up to us and slaughtered until only dozens of us survived.

Exactly at that time, we were saved by a shard of otherworldly origin, sealing us on this cliff from that monster. That shard, I mean you gave us a decree to guard it and feed it energy. And one day you would be back to get it by showing off your mighty presence to us.”

Sirgrid looked at Aengus with reverence as the others listened intently.

“We did as we were told. Over time, we fed the shard with the treasures left from our heritage to repair it. Because, In return, you told us you would one day return to grant us revenge and continue our lineage by killing that monster.”

Aengus absorbed the information, his mind racing with questions. He didn’t remember anything about arriving here, let alone saving them from the being outside. Could this truly be linked to him?

“Did I have another reincarnation before this?”

“Was this from my past life? Or could it be from my future self?”

“Could it mean someone else was involved? Or worse, would my body be taken over by this being in the future?”

Chapter 168: Chapter 168: Soul Devour

Aengus shook his head, realizing there was no point in dwelling on the questions for now. He shifted his attention to the dwarves and the outstretched hand of the statue where raw energy was being gathered.

“By the Shard, are you talking about this?” he asked, pointing at the statue’s hand.

The ancient dwarves nodded, a hint of fear flickering in their eyes.

“Yes, my lord, it is,” Sirgrid replied cautiously. “It belongs to you. We created the runic formation to gather the energy. But It’s your might that the monsters are attracted here for sacrifice and ensure our safety from that person by making us invisible and untraceable.”

“It belongs to me?” Aengus muttered, his suspicions rising. Something about the situation didn’t feel right.

“Or perhaps it belongs to ZERO... his enigmatic soul?” he realised.

Curious and wary, Aengus cast Appraisal. The moment he did, everything became clear.

[Appraisal]

[Soul Shard]

[A fragment of the great being’s soul who was once known as the Ruination Extremity]

[Grade: Unknown]

[Effects: Unknown]

“Ruination Extremity?” Aengus muttered in realisation. “It does seem connected to my soul, somehow.”

From the description, he understood that he could either be from the future or the past, possibly both timelines.

“So, will there be any problem if I remove it? The barrier, I mean.”

Aengus was concerned that if he removed the shard, the barrier would disappear, leaving them exposed to the dangers outside.

Sirgrid hesitated, “I don’t know, your eminence. Forgive me, but I cannot answer that.”

“It’s fine... Just let me touch it, and you can pray that nothing too bad happens,” Aengus joked.

Sirgrid chuckled nervously. “Please, give it a try, your eminence. I’m sure it holds a meaningful purpose for you. Why else would it be placed here?”

Noticing their tension, Aengus spoke to calm them down. "Relax. If anything happens to the barrier, I'll do everything in my power to protect you," he said resolutely.

The dwarves gave a curt nod, trusting him, and they quickly turned off the mechanism that was converting energy from the monsters.

The remaining monsters immediately regained their senses and fled in all directions.

Aengus stepped in front of the statue with a determined leap, feeling a connection with the soul fragment. The shard seemed alive, filled with a potent essence that shimmered with energy.

Whoosh!

As soon as he touched it, the soul shard swiftly disappeared, burrowing into his body without causing him any harm.

He sat down, focusing on observing what the shard was doing to his soul.

The dwarves, watching him silently, let out a collective sigh of relief as the barrier remained intact.

Aengus quickly delved into his consciousness and saw the small soul shard being absorbed into his chaotic, near-destroyed soul.

Even though the shard was tiny in comparison, as soon as it was absorbed, the spider-like cracks in his soul began to heal significantly.

The shard healed up only one of million of his soul's original size, but that was still an immense number considering his soul was once the size of an stretching universe.

Aengus opened his eyes, feeling a newfound lightness throughout his entire body, as if a heavy burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

"To think this tiny shard could fix so much damage," he mused.

Though satisfied, the thought of how powerful his soul had once been filled him with both awe and unease. What exactly was the Ruination Extremity?

[Your soul has recovered by a significant margin.]

[You have gained a special skill: Soul Devour.]

[Soul Devour: A special ability originated from a being, once who spread horrors everywhere. With this skill, you can absorb others' soul powers, increasing your own. It can heal the user's soul until fully recovered. Until then, the user's soul power won't increase.]

Aengus's lips curved into a pleased smile at the sudden notifications.

"So, this shard was placed here to repair my soul?" he wondered aloud, though the realization unsettled him. It felt as though his fate had been orchestrated long before by a powerful being, which didn't sit well with him.

But being powerless was never his intention. He was going to change everything. He would reshape his destiny with his own hands.

Sirgrid and the other dwarves cautiously approached.

"Your eminence, is everything alright?" Sirgrid asked, his big eyes full of concern.

"Yes, I'm alright, Sirgrid. This has helped me greatly. And I'll make sure you all get what you deserve," Aengus responded, his gaze softening as he regarded them.

He appreciated the dwarves' efforts for keeping the shard safe and feeding it energy for ages. It had been an exhausting and dangerous task. They could have abandoned the agreement and tried to escape, but they hadn't. Instead, they remained, fulfilling their end of the deal diligently.

Now, it was his turn to hold up his end of the bargain, even if he couldn't remember the original pact. It was now his responsibility.

He would have to confront and destroy whoever was behind all this, the one orchestrating the deception for ages.

The dwarves smiled joyfully at his words.

"Your eminence is the supreme, and we are certain that under your might, that person will be vanquished, and our sacred homeland will be restored to the former glory," they said in unison as they bowed, their faith unwavering.

After their excitement subsided, Aengus asked, "Do you want to go outside now. I can make this barrier disappear with my command."

The dwarves exchanged uneasy glances, recalling the horrors of ages past caused by the person outside.

“Yes, Your Eminence, we would love to leave, but—” Sirgrid began hesitantly, “but you shouldn’t leave with us. That person can track us from miles away through his mysterious means. We would stay here for now, until you are ready to face him.

With no disrespect, you’re not strong enough to defeat him yet.”

They paused, casting doubtful looks at Aengus, as if questioning whether he was hiding some hidden power. His confident demeanor made them wonder.

Aengus smirked.

“How can I say? I haven’t met him yet. But I’ll figure things out. First, I’m going to observe their plan.

He lured so many humans from the outside; it’s clear there’s a malicious trap waiting for them.” He shrugged, remaining calm despite the ominous situation.

Sirgrid looked at Aengus with a mix of worry and admiration.

“Your Eminence, we trust your judgment, but... please be careful. That being’s has schemes and power beyond anything we’ve seen. He had set up this kind of trap for the humans using their greedy nature many times before.”

“I will.”

Chapter 169: Chapter 169: Trial Ground

Aengus emerged from the barrier of Ruination, having learned how to control it after merging with the shard. Though he hadn’t gained the power to create one, he could now make the barrier disappear at will.

Standing at the base of the cliff, Aengus took a deep breath, feeling a sense of freedom. His immediate thoughts turned to Aria. Now that his problem had been solved, his priority was to find her and make sure she was safe.

With his soul partially healed, A warm smile spread across his face, a genuine one, perhaps the first in a long while. The emotions of longing and happiness surged within him, bringing a rare moment of peace.

But then, memories of his friends’ deaths flashed in his mind. The faces of those he’d lost, the pain of their absence, weighed heavily on his heart. The longing for peace was tempered by the sorrow of the past.

But, He wouldn’t forget his goal of growing stronger, seeking revenge, and ensuring the safety of his loved ones.

With renewed resolve, he was about to set off when several unfamiliar memories began to piece themselves together in his mind. After some reflection, he realized these were fragments of his current reincarnation's memories.

He saw glimpses of a scene—Aengus being brutally beaten, suspended in the air by ropes. He saw a woman, her snowy white hair flowing, pleading and crying for Aengus. Though her face remained blurred, it was clear she was a beautiful woman, filled with love and sorrow that pierced his heart.

It meant Ethan and Aengus was the same person.

Aengus could remember only this much before coming back to reality, weighed down by the heavy emotions.

“So, I have a mother... and perhaps a family, but I've forgotten them since arriving in this world,” he muttered, solving part of the mystery of this reincarnated body.

Yet many questions remained—how had he arrived here, and who were the people who had beaten him?

The answers would come in time, he knew that. But for now, he had to be patient and uncover the mystery of his otherworldly origin one step at a time.

Aengus made his way toward the trial grounds, hoping to find her there. Given her abilities and the fact that most of them had headed in that direction, it seemed like the best chance of finding her. Still, he kept his eyes sharp, scanning the surroundings for any sign of her nearby.

As he glanced up at the sun, reminding himself that there were still a few hours before nightfall. The road ahead was long, but with his speed, he'd be able to make it there well before dark.

As he got closer, the number of people on the road increased noticeably. Armed individuals gave him odd looks, perhaps wondering why he was traveling alone.

Aengus slowed his pace as he spotted someone familiar in the distance. His eyes locked onto a broad, chubby figure. It was Hank. He was walking alone as well.

Aengus hesitated for a moment, then called out, “Hank, over here!”

Hank's footsteps halted as he turned to see Aengus—whom he still referred to as Zero—with a weary smile. His clothes were stained with blood, and his body bore numerous scars like remnants of using low-tier healing potions. His mace looked battered and crusted, clearly damaged beyond repair.

As Aengus approached, Hank embraced him lightly, a mix of relief and exhaustion on his face. "Brother Zero! Thank God, you're here," he said, his voice filled with genuine relief.

Seeing Aengus with powerful presence getting together with Hank, a few who were having ill intentions toward Hank, cast it away from their mind immediately.

Aengus smelled the acrid scent of sweat and blood coming from Hank but said nothing about it. Instead, he gently pulled away from the embrace and asked, "You haven't met the others either? I was caught up with a problem and couldn't find anyone."

Hank shook his head, still looking worn down. "No, I've been fighting nonstop out there. I didn't receive Mara's transmission either. Then I saw the light and hoped to find them here... just like you, brother."

As they continued their walk toward the trial grounds, Hank's face showed disappointment, his hope seeming fragile.

"Don't worry," Aengus reassured him, scanning the groups of people cautiously as they walked. "I'm sure they are fine and will be coming here as well."

His eyes continuously swept the area, on the lookout for Aria and the rest of their party.

The groups of hunters kept a cautious distance from one another, their eyes filled with suspicion and wariness. It was clear they had experienced betrayal or robbery before, and the tension hung heavy in the air as everyone feared the larger groups.

Hank gave a wry smile. "I hope everything goes as you said, Brother Zero."

Aengus glanced at him, deciding it was best to issue a warning. "Hank, I think this place is a trap. You should leave if you value your life. I heard from someone that we could be killed here."

Hank's eyes widened in surprise and fear. "What are you saying, Brother Zero? How could it be a trap? Didn't they tell us that Hero Libros obtained the Divine Demon Slayer sword from here? And what about all the others who gained incredible treasures?" His voice lowered to a hush, not wanting to alarm those around them.

Aengus didn't have all the answers, especially when it came to the mystery surrounding Hero Libros and others who had survived. But considering the strength of the one controlling everything, it wouldn't be impossible for them to allow a few to leave—just enough to lure in more victims. If that were the case, it was a clever and malicious plan.

"Still, we should be careful, Hank. We don't know what's waiting for us inside, right?"

Hank let out a nervous chuckle. “Heh, you’re right about that, brother. We should be careful.”

Aengus could have shared more, but doing so would risk exposing his own secrets. As much as he wanted to protect Hank, there were some things he couldn’t yet reveal.

As the duo, along with the crowd of people, approached the mausoleum-like structure ahead, they were struck by awe at the sight of it. Towering and ancient, its eerie presence seemed to hold a promise of both great power and great danger.

Chapter 170: Chapter 170: Aria VS Sigard

The formidable structure loomed before them like a mountain, radiating an aura of treasures and temptation that stirred excitement in the crowd. The massive iron gate stood sealed, untouched by time, as though no one had dared to open it for ages.

“Let’s break the door, guys!” someone shouted.

Dong! Dong!

Several overenthusiastic individuals rushed forward, displaying their might as they attempted to force the gate open. Despite their efforts, the door remained unmoved, not even a scratch marring its surface.

Aengus and Hank exchanged a glance, shaking their heads at the futile display. Without another word, they turned their attention elsewhere, intent on finding their companions.

“Brother Zero, something’s happening over there!” Hank suddenly exclaimed, pointing off to the distance from the gate.

Aengus turned and was greeted by a strange sight: towering, broad trees—actual living trees—were locked in battle with a fire dragon, flames roaring against the dense foliage. The scene was surreal, as if nature itself had risen to fight the dragon’s fury.

But what truly caught Aengus’s attention was the familiar feeling that stirred within him. He narrowed his eyes in confusion, trying to place the sensation. “Hm... That fire dragon is giving me a familiar vibe, like I’ve met it before,” he muttered, drawing Hank’s curious gaze.

“You’ve met that dragon before? You’re awesome, Brother!” Hank said with awe, looking at Aengus with newfound respect.

Aengus shook his head, still puzzled.

“No, I haven’t. I mean, I haven’t met him personally... Oh, wait. That’s it! He must be that Fire Dragon Prince. I now recognize that aura. The one with the fiery red hair and arrogant attitude,” Aengus recalled, his memory finally coming to place.

Hank stiffened slightly at the mention of the Dragon Prince. “You mean, he’s Helios’ son? That would explain how a dragon appeared out of nowhere,” he said, connecting the dots.

“Yes, but who is he fighting?” Aengus asked, his All-Seeing eyes strangely failing to pierce the chaotic scene. It was a rare occurrence, and his brows furrowed with confusion.

“Maybe he’s fighting some Demi-Human Royalties. They have those strange nature-related skills,” Hank guessed, though uncertainty lingered in his voice.

“Let’s check it out,” Aengus suggested, noticing the growing crowd heading toward the battle. Hank nodded and followed him, both of them weaving through the crowd of spectators.

As they approached the scene, Aengus finally saw clearly who was fighting the Dragon Prince—and he froze.

“Aria?” he whispered, astonished. Aria was at the center of the battle, controlling trees and plants as if they were extensions of herself, her power radiating in waves.

Hank spotted more familiar faces.

“Brother Zero, Sofia and Nate are also there!” he exclaimed, pointing toward Aria’s group.

Indeed, alongside Aria were Drake, Yona, Sofia, Nate, and a few others Aengus didn’t recognize. Opposing them stood the Dragon Prince and a small group of his companions.

Aengus let out an involuntary breath of relief, a genuine smile forming on his lips as he saw that Aria, Yona and Drake were also safe and sound. It was surprise to see Yona and Drake alive too.

But more than that—Aria looked very powerful, far more so than when they had last met.

Her command over nature was astonishing, and she was locked in a fierce stalemate with the Dragon Prince’s fiery onslaught, his firestorms and tornadoes reducing the surrounding landscape to ash.

Amidst the destruction, Aria shone brightly, floating effortlessly with the support of tree vines, her face set with overwhelming determination and killing intent. She was a force to be reckoned with.

Aengus's heart swelled with pride and relief.

Upon closer inspection, he noticed that Aria's hair had turned pure white, and her entire figure radiated a gentle yet formidable energy. It was soothing for her allies but deadly for her enemies.

It was completely different version of Aria that he knew off.

Regardless, he couldn't help but feel happiness seeing her so strong. Perhaps she had found an unshakable resolve of her own, one that made her grow into this powerful force.

Aengus overheard the excited chatter from a group of young onlookers.

"Hey, who is that white-haired beauty? She looks just like a goddess!" one of them exclaimed, clearly mesmerized by Aria's appearance.

"I don't know who she is," another chimed in, "But her fighting skills are incredible. Controlling nature like that? And she's holding her own against the Fire Dragon Prince? Unbelievable!"

"Man, I wish she was my girlfriend. I'd give my life for that," a third boy said, his eyes distant with a dreamy expression.

His friend laughed and clapped him on the back. "Hahaha, good luck with that, mate! You wouldn't even know how you died if you tried, given your rank and lack of background. I'm sure she's got some kind of royal lineage."

They all laughed heartily, but Aengus's eyes remained fixed on Aria, a mixture of pride and protectiveness swelling in his chest.

"Heh, look at Sigard, Melina. He can't even defeat a girl. I'm better than him. You should consider me as your mating partner instead of him."

Suddenly, Aengus and the others heard a disdainful snort from one of the spectators.

The crowd quickly dispersed from that area, sensing the newcomers' powerful auras.

A group of five was revealed—three girls and two boys. They were all stunningly beautiful and handsome, dressed in royal attire, their bodies adorned with expensive and powerful treasures.

“Oh, that’s the Water Dragon Prince Kaelith!”

“The Ice Dragon Princess Frost Aurora is here too!”

“Dragon Princess Frost Melina as well. Looks like things are about to get interesting.”

Frost Aurora stood beside Frost Melina, both of them wearing expressions of clear annoyance. They appeared to be twins, with their frosty white hair giving it away. They were tall, with striking features that attracted more than a few impure glances from the crowd.

Dragon Prince Kaelith was one of them.

Aengus glanced at them warily, ready to act if they interfered with the fight. Even though Aria was holding her own, he wouldn’t let her suffer any longer than necessary.

Frost Aurora spoke on behalf of her sister, “Kael, who my sister chooses as a life partner is none of your business. She’s already rejected you, so shoo, shoo. Otherwise—” Aurora’s face turned icy with a hint of killing intent.

Chapter 171: Chapter 171: Reunite

Kaelith’s smug grin faltered slightly at Frost Aurora’s cold retort, but he quickly regained his composure, brushing off her words with a haughty wave.

“Rejected or not, I can still prove I’m better than Sigard,” Kaelith sneered, eyeing the ongoing battle between the Fire Dragon Prince and Aria. “I mean, look at him, struggling against a girl. It’s embarrassing.”

“Then, why don’t you try for yourself?”

Aurora’s icy blue eyes narrowed, and her frosty aura intensified. “Kael, you’re a weakling yourself. So, don’t push your luck. My sister’s decisions are final, and you have no say in the matter.” Her tone was sharp, cold enough to make the air around them chill.

The crowd murmured in awe at the confrontation.

Frost Melina, irritated, replied, “Forget it, Aurora. There’s no point wasting words on a fool.” Her eyes were equally cold as she fixed her gaze on Kael.

“Your boasting about your power is nothing but mindless rambling, Kael. I bet your father is ashamed to call you his son. Why don’t you fix that attitude of yours?”

“Melina... you too,” Kael’s voice trembled, but he forced a grin. “But I love you so much!” His clenched fists were turning white from the pressure.

Melina scoffed and turned to Aurora. “Let’s go. We need to help Sigard win. I’ll kill anyone who stands in his way,” she said with unwavering determination, her eyes filled with fierce loyalty.

“Oh, okay, Sister,” Aurora replied, returning to her usual self.

Both sisters moved to intervene, their frosty footsteps leaving trails in their path. Their elegant strides caught the admiration of the crowd.

Kaelith shamelessly followed close behind, accompanied by two of his companions.

“Brother Zero, we should—” Hank began, but stopped when he saw Aengus already dashing off like a flash.

His mouth fell open in surprise, but he quickly recovered and began running towards Sofia and Nate, intending to help them.

Hank knew he couldn’t contend with the Dragonborn, so he chose easier targets.

Aurora and Melina were already poised to strike Aria, their eyes fixed on their target.

“Swoosh!”

[Venomous Flash Strike]

Aurora and Melina barely had time to react, conjuring their ice weapons just in time to meet the attack.

Their ice swords collided with Aengus’ Judgement Blade, and the sisters’ eyes locked onto the newcomer—a high-human with handsome features and a cold, determined look.

His strength surprised them, considering that their physical abilities were far superior to most humans.

“Crack, crack!”

Their ice swords crumbled under the force of the strike, leaving Aurora and Melina momentarily stunned.

“Who are you?” Melina spat, her voice laced with both frustration and curiosity. She had never expected someone to match their combined strength so easily.

Aurora’s eyes fixated on Aengus, her dragon bloodline stirring with desire as she found him irresistibly attractive.

Aengus, still holding his Judgement Blade firmly, stood tall, his cold, unwavering gaze locked onto the two Dragon Princesses.

His voice was calm but carried the weight of his conviction. “I’m the one who won’t let you harm Aria.”

Aurora’s lips curled slightly, her voice dripping with cold jealousy. “Oh? Is she your mating partner or something?”

“Yes,” Aengus replied without hesitation. “And if you want to interfere, be prepared for death. I don’t care if you’re Dragon Princesses or anyone else.”

His words were sharp, and the lethal intent behind them was unmistakable, causing Aurora’s jealousy to flare even hotter.

Melina, undeterred by the dangerous aura surrounding Aengus, stared him down fiercely. “I know you’re a high-human, but can you really take on both of us?”

“You can try,” Aengus responded casually, as though the challenge meant little to him.

—

The crowd of onlookers murmured in surprise at the sudden confrontation.

“Who is this guy? He’s holding his own against the two Dragon Princesses. That’s insane!”

“Nah, he is just getting ahead of himself,” another man chuckled darkly. “The Ice Dragon Princesses haven’t even used their Dragon Forms yet. That guy’s just courting death by getting in their way.”

—

The confrontation between Aengus and the Dragon Princesses quickly drew everyone’s attention, including Aria and the bruised Dragon Prince Sigard, who was in his Dragon form.

Despite Sigard’s immense power, Aria had held her own, though blood stained her lips.

“Ethan?”

But, when she spotted Ethan below, a momentary distraction crossed her face.

Sigard, seizing the opportunity, lunged at her with his massive dragon claws, which crackled with explosive fire energy.

Aengus, catching the attack from the corner of his eye, felt rage surge through him, his face flushing red.

[Elemental Graviton]

With a swift turn, Aengus raised his hand, summoning a massive rock same size as Sigard’s dragon body—near 50m long. The earth trembled as he hurled the boulder upward, intensifying the gravity around it by tenfold—the most he could muster—transforming the rock into a devastating force akin to a meteorite.

The air pressure created by the rock’s velocity was overwhelming, leaving Aurora and Melina aghast.

“Sigard!” Melina screamed, quickly conjuring a multi-layered ice shield in a desperate attempt to protect Sigard.

“Boom!”

“Roar!”

The impact shook the battlefield, Sigard’s roar of pain echoing across the area. The ice shield cracked under the pressure, and the rock slammed into Sigard with tremendous force, sending him crashing to the ground.

Despite his powerful dragon body, the strike left Sigard injured and dazed, though his life was spared.

The sheer ferocity of the attack left the onlookers stunned, wide-eyed at the sight of a prince brought low by a single blow.

The battlefield became silent all of sudden, the weight of Aengus’ power was undeniable.

Melina rushed to Sigard’s side, her face etched with concern as she inspected his injuries, while Aurora remained rooted in place, her eyes gleaming with a mix of awe and curiosity at the power Aengus had just unleashed.

Little did she know, Aengus had still held back, otherwise who knew how her reaction would be.

“Hey, what’s your name?” Aurora called out, her voice carrying an odd mixture of interest and irritation as she glanced over at Aengus.

Aengus, however, remained silent, his focus shifting entirely to Aria as she approached him slowly.

When their eyes met, their gazes were full of complexity and affection.

Aurora’s expression tightened, her face growing colder, her irritation evident as she watched the two reunite.

The frost in her heart deepened, jealousy flickering across her features as Aengus and Aria stood together, seemingly untouchable in that moment.

Chapter 172: Chapter 172: In His Embrace.

Aria’s hair slowly returned to its silvery color as her nature powers calm down, leaving the towering trees and vines motionless once again.

Aria’s heart raced the moment she saw Ethan standing before her, alive and unscathed. It had been over a month since they’d last met, but the weight of that time felt immeasurable, as if they had been separated for an eternity.

Though Ethan looked slightly mature, Aria recognized him instantly.

His presence filled her with strange sense of warmth and relief, emotions she had tried to bury but now surged to the surface. Her gaze softened as she looked at him, love shining in her eyes.

Aengus, on the other hand, found himself uncharacteristically nervous, a sensation foreign to him since his transformation into a demon. Her presence stirred something deep within him, something even his darkness heart couldn’t suppress.

“Ethan, you’re alive...I knew..” Her voice trembled, thick with emotion, her eyes glistening with unshed tears. She took a step forward, her breath catching in her throat, as though afraid this was all just a fleeting dream.

Aengus hesitated, his voice faltering. “Y-Yes, Aria, I am. I also thought—”

Before he could finish, Aria closed the distance between them in a heartbeat, throwing herself into his arms with a desperation that expressed month’s of separation.

She clung to him like a kitten seeking warmth, her arms wrapping tightly around his broad chest. Her emotions spilled over, chaotic and overwhelming, and Aengus responded instinctively, embracing her slender form. His arms wrapped around her soft,

trembling body, pulling her close. He breathed deeply, taking in the intoxicating scent of her silvery hair, the sweetness mingled with the essence of nature.

In that moment, time seemed to stand still. The battlefield, the distant cries, the lingering tension—they all faded into the background, leaving only the two of them, reunited after what had felt like an endless wait.

Drake and Yona stood frozen, their eyes wide with disbelief as they watched Ethan being alive and well. He even easily defeat the Fire Dragon Prince.

“That’s Ethan, right? Or are my eyes deceiving me?” Drake asked, his voice barely above a whisper.

Yona, her expression still one of shock, nodded slowly. “Yes, it’s him. I can’t believe it either. He survived... but not the others.” Her voice grew somber as she recalled her old party members: Marcus, Cedric, and Iris. A heavy sigh escaped her lips.

Drake clenched his fists, excitement overcoming his initial shock. “Wow! That’s amazing. Ethan has also gotten so powerful, just like Sister Aria. Let’s see how that arrogant Dragon dares to bully us now.”

Nate, standing beside them, was visibly confused. “Hey, Drake, what are you talking about? Isn’t he Zero? Or is there some kind of misunderstanding?”

Sofia stood equally puzzled, but Drake and Yona exchanged a knowing glance, their confidence unwavering.

“Absolutely not. He is Ethan, our long-lost friend. How could we ever forget him?” Yona said firmly.

“But—” Nate started to object, but Sofia quickly interrupted, her voice low as she leaned closer to him.

“Calm down, Nate. It looks like he lied about his identity. There’s no need to make a scene.”

Nate frowned, feeling a sting of betrayal. “But Sofia, I thought we could trust him. How could he do something like this?” He glanced at Ethan, or “Zero” as they’d known him, feeling conflicted.

Sofia placed a hand on Nate’s arm. “We don’t know the whole story yet. Let’s not jump to conclusions too quickly. For now, let’s just watch and wait.”

Despite her calm words, uncertainty weighing heavily on their minds.

Princess Delilah listened to their words, raised her eyebrows.

“Ohh, so this is Aria’s boyfriend? I never expected him to be so handsome and powerful? And, they certainly look like a perfect couple,” she commented with a slight smile.

Prince Mikail, on the other hand, was far from amused. His entire body was bruised from earlier battles, and his face was twisted with anger. His fists clenched tightly as he watched Aria getting close to another man, his heart burning with jealousy.

“I can’t stand this,” he muttered, intending to make a move to confront them, but Princess Delilah stopped him by grabbing his sleeve.

“Brother, can’t you stop making a fool of yourself for a second? Can’t you see how powerful he is?” she said with a note of irritation, her eyes narrowing.

Prince Mikail knew she was probably right.

Ethan, Aria’s supposed boyfriend had just taken down a Fire Dragon Prince with ease, and it was clear he wasn’t someone easy to be trifled with. But even so, Mikail’s pride and feelings for Aria clouded his judgment.

“But I love Aria,” he whispered fiercely, his eyes still locked on the pair. “I want to marry her. Should I just give up on my wish? Answer me, Delilah.”

Princess Delilah sighed, unsure how to respond to her brother’s stubbornness. “If that’s how you feel, then you’ll have to win her heart—not through force, but by earning her love. Good luck, my foolish brother,” she whispered with indifference.

Mikail barely listened to her advice, his thoughts already spiraling into something sinister.

As his sister’s words drifted away, his face twisted into a cruel smile. He wasn’t about to give up on Aria, not by a long shot. If he couldn’t win her heart with love, he had other means in mind, far more sinister.

Aria and Aengus slowly pulled away from their embrace, both of their faces glowing with warmth and slight smiles. Aengus could feel the depth of Aria’s love for him, far more intense than what she let on, and it stirred something deep within him.

As they stepped apart, their companions began to gather around them, sensing the tension in the air. On the opposite side, the Dragon Royalties and their servants stood united, their postures rigid and expressions determined.

The air between the two groups was thick with unspoken intentions, the atmosphere electric with the anticipation of what was to come.

Yona and Drake exchanged nervous glances, realizing the gravity of the confrontation ahead. The Dragon Princes and Princesses weren't just formidable; they were renowned for their power and pride.

Sofia, Hank and Nate, though still confused about Ethan's true identity, also felt the rising pressure of the situation.

Aurora, Melina, and Sigard, bruised but standing strong, watched Aengus with a newfound wariness. They knew this was no ordinary human.

Sigard's eyes widened as he suddenly recalled who Aengus was. He was the same high-human he had sensed a threat from earlier, just before entering the battlefield. He had launched a preemptive attack back then, aiming to eliminate Aengus swiftly, but to his frustration, the attempt had failed.

Sigard in his human form, still nursing his injuries, let out a low growl of frustration, while Aurora's icy gaze lingered on Aengus, like a smitten cat, but seeing Aria and Aengus together made her jealous.

The battlefield was silent, except for the soft rustle of the wind.

The thousands of crowds could sense that a clash was inevitable, the final showdown between these powerful figures was on the brink of erupting.

Among the spectators, still remained a lot of young powerhouse, their eyes full of interest as they waited for the show, or if they could get some benefit in return.

Chapter 173: Chapter 173: The Trial Ground Opened

Aria gripped her dagger, feeling more confident and secure beside Aengus.

Both parties were ready, weapons drawn, and skills ready to be activated.

Aengus gazed at Sigard with murderous intent, knowing the time to settle scores had finally come. Yet, he was curious about what had transpired to escalate things to this deadly confrontation.

"Ethan, they tried to steal our treasures and endangered our people's lives at a critical time when we were distracted fighting monsters," Aria explained, sensing his faint curiosity.

"Yes, Zero," Nate and Sofia chimed in. "Because of him, we lost Mara and Lark, who died trying to save her. They're gone now."

Their eyes were red, filled with sorrow as they recalled the painful memories.

Hank was stunned by the news. “What! Mara and Lark are dead? That’s impossible!” He was struggling to accept the reality, recent happy memories of their time together flashing in his mind.

“What about Alisha? Is she also—” Hank’s voice trembled with sadness as he asked.

Sofia and Nate shook their heads. “No, she’s not dead. But we haven’t found her yet,” they replied, offering Hank a small breath of relief, though the uncertainty of her survival still loomed.

Aengus’s eyes flickered with intensity as he heard the news. The couple had seemed so happy before arriving here, and now they were gone. It was all because of Sigard. His killing intent sharpened, locking onto the Dragon Prince.

Sigard grinned at their pitiful display, dismissing Aengus’ glare. In his mind, he hadn’t truly been defeated. He believed he had merely been caught off guard by the high-human’s earlier attack—something he was certain he could have dodged under normal circumstances. Still, he remained cautious, aware of the other party’s mysterious abilities.

“Don’t worry, Everyone,” Aengus said coldly. “He’ll get what he deserves. I’ll make sure of it. He’ll pay for trying to hurt you and killing our comrades.”

He was already analyzing everyone around him, reading their intentions, their skills, and their stats. He was waiting for the mastermind behind the scenes to reveal themselves. Otherwise, he would have already unleashed his full strength and ended Sigard swiftly. Aengus had no intention of giving away his true power until the time was right.

Aria was slightly confused by the name Zero, but she knew it was not the right time.

“Hahaha... Don’t be cocky, you inferior humans,” Sigard sneered, his laughter dark and condescending. “You think you can defeat us, the Dragon Blood, with your pitiful power? That’s nothing but a fool’s dream. Those who died in your group were weak, and the weak have no right to live in this world.”

His arrogance was palpable as he glared down at them, clearly unbothered by the lives lost.

Sigard stood tall, his Dragon aura rippling through the air, while Melina, Aurora, and dozens of other Dragonborne gathered beside him. Kaelith, who had been hovering nearby, also joined them, seemingly drawn to the group because of his infatuation with Melina.

The sight of them standing together wasn’t entirely unexpected, after all they all served the same emperor. But the sheer unity of their alliance at this moment was surprising. Their combined strength made it clear they weren’t to be taken lightly.

Aurora had a conflicted expression, her gaze filled with hostility as it lingered on Aria. There was no mistaking the bitterness in her eyes, as if Aria had taken something precious from her.

Dong. Dong. Dong!

Suddenly, a loud, resounding noise echoed through the battlefield, interrupting the rising tension. All eyes turned toward the massive metal gate, which slowly creaked open, shaking the very ground beneath them.

Aengus smirked, knowing that the real game was just beginning. The opening of the gate signaled the start of something far bigger. But who would come out victorious? That was a question hanging in the air, as uncertain as the chaotic forces swirling around them.

His mind raced. He needed to find a way to defeat that being, and break the seal—somehow.

A bright shimmer reflected from within the gate, revealing the glint of treasures that lay hidden beyond. The sight was enough to make the crowd surge forward like ants drawn to a flame. Greed and hunger for power overtook them, and hundreds of thousands of people swarmed toward the entrance in a chaotic rush.

The Dragonborne were no exception.

“Let’s move, Melina,” Sigard growled, casting a glance at the shiny treasures ahead. “We don’t have time to waste on these pesky humans. We need to get those treasures before anyone else.”

Melina nodded quickly. “Oh, okay.”

Without another word, Sigard, the Ice Dragon Princess, and the rest of their group started running toward the entrance, their eyes locked on the prize within.

“Hey, Zero, why did you let them leave? Are you just going to forget how they drove Mara and Lark to their deaths?” Nate’s voice trembled with frustration, barely masking his anger.

Aengus gave him a calm, measured glance before replying, “Let them go to their deaths.”

Sofia, sensing the weight in his words, furrowed her brow. “What do you mean? Is there something we’re not aware of?”

Aria's emerald green eyes mirrored Sofia's concern as they shifted toward Aengus. "Ethan, do you know something?"

Aengus nodded gravely. "Yes, Aria. This entire place is a trap—set by a single person who wiped out the Ancient Dwarves ages ago. He's the one who sealed this area from the outside world for an unknown purpose."

"What?" A wave of disbelief washed over the group. Some looked incredulous, while others grew more alarmed as the seriousness of his warning began to sink in.

Prince Mikail, however, wasn't convinced. His sharp voice cut through the murmurs, "And how do you know all this? Or are you just trying to stop us from gaining power?" His tone quickly shifted into an accusation.

Aengus's brows furrowed, his eyes narrowing. "Are you suggesting that I'm trying to harm everyone here? Who are you anyway?"

Sensing the tension escalating, Aria quickly stepped in, her voice soft yet commanding.

"Ethan, this is Prince Mikail Araknis, the third prince Araknis. And she," she gestured toward the young woman beside him, "is the second Princess, Delilah."

Delilah and Mikail was of similar age, having two different mothers. She didn't like his attitude, but he tagged along forcibly because of Aria.

Princess Delilah, with a gentle smile far warmer than her brother's harsh demeanor, inclined her head slightly.

"Hello, Ethan. It's a pleasure to finally meet you. Aria has spoken of you a lot."

Aengus gave a curt nod in acknowledgment but pointedly avoided any further glance at Mikail.

Chapter 174: Chapter 174: Liar!

"Let's go, men. We can't trust a stranger's word!"

Prince Mikail snorted dismissively and stormed off with the followers he had gathered under the lure of wealth and power.

"Brother Mikail, don't go! Didn't you hear the warning?" Princess Delilah called out, her voice laced with worry. But her efforts were in vain. Mikail had already made up his mind.

"No, you can't stop me, Delilah. If you trust this stranger instead of me, you can stay here!" he said coldly, not even turning back.

Defeated, she returned to Aria's side, her expression clouded with concern. Though they weren't blood siblings, Mikail was still her brother, and she couldn't help but feel a growing unease about his decision. If it weren't for the young man's warning, she might have followed him without hesitation.

Meanwhile, Aengus began explaining how he had encountered the ancient dwarves, though he carefully left out any details that were too sensitive to share.

"So, you're saying the ancient dwarves are still alive, hiding down the cliffs? That's incredible," Hank exclaimed, clearly astonished.

"I'd do anything to have a weapon made by them. They're the best at forging great weapons," Hank added with a sigh, realizing the unlikelihood of meeting the dwarves in their current situation.

Drake and Yona were also equally astonished. "What about the story of Hero Libros obtaining the Divine Demon Slayer sword? Was that also false?"

"Ethan, did you find a way to get out of here?" Aria asked, looking concerned.

Aengus's chest tightened as he heard Aria call him by his old name again.

The name "Ethan" brought back memories of a past he was still learning to come to terms with—one filled with pain, loss, and the innocence of who he used to be.

He hadn't yet found the right time to reveal his demonic identity to her, unsure if she would accept him for who he had become. Her clan, her friends; they had all died due to demons, after all.

Would she still stand by his side when she knew the truth?

But the warmth of her hand intertwined with his dissolved his doubts for the moment. She was here, with him, now.

"Ethan?" Aria's voice pulled him from his thoughts.

He blinked, realizing he had been silent too long. "Oh, yes. Sorry, I was just thinking," he replied. "I haven't found a way out yet. There's still too much we don't know. I plan to go in there—alone—to gather more information."

The moment he said it, a ripple of shock passed through the group. Aria's grip on his hand tightened, her emerald green eyes filled with concern.

“Alone?” she repeated, doubtful. “You’re not going anywhere alone, Ethan. No, I’m coming with you, whether you like it or not. I won’t be a burden. I am far more powerful than before,” she added stubbornly, her determination clear.

Aengus looked into her eyes, feeling a mix of emotions: gratitude, worry, and affection.

“Aria...” He looked at her, unsure of how to respond. He didn’t want to put her in danger, but he also knew it would be impossible to change her mind. She looked as determined as ever.

“No, no, you can’t stop me. I will always be by your side. I can’t lose you again. I know I haven’t had the time to confess to you yet, but let me tell you, Ethan, that I fell in love with you the day I saw you for the first time in that forest.

At that moment, I felt you were someone close to me, someone I could trust and give my love to, like it was written in our destiny, Ethan.

“I love you, Ethan. I love you, and no one can change my mind, not even you,” she said with raw emotion, her pretty eyes filled with conviction.

Aengus’s Heart of Light stirred, filling him with happiness, while the Heart of Darkness went silent in defeat.

“Aria, I also love—” Just as he was about to finish his sentence, Bella’s face flashed in his mind.

His face became conflicted.

Aria, who had been overjoyed, tensed at his sudden pause.

Her happiness quickly gave way to unease. Her green eyes, once filled with joy, now brimmed with concern.

“Why did you stop, Ethan?” she asked, her voice trembling slightly. “Say it. Please.”

The rest of the group looked awkward at the sudden love confession, turning their faces away to give the two some privacy. But Princess Delilah peeked from time to time mischievously.

Looking into Aria’s pure eyes, Aengus knew he couldn’t deny her anymore. He knelt down, gently taking her hand.

“Yes, I love you too, Aria. I want to make you my wife,” he confessed, speaking sincerely from the depths of his heart.

He knew there might be consequences for choosing Bella and Aria both, but what harm could come from this moment? He would seek their forgiveness when necessary, but for now, he wanted to embrace the tender love she had for him.

Overjoyed by his confession, Aria accepted his hand and threw her arms around him, and they shared a tender kiss, sealing their new relationship.

Princess Delilah, watching from afar, blushed deeply, embarrassed by the sudden display of affection.

"Ahem! Ahem!" Hank, Drake, Yona, and the others coughed loudly, trying to remind Aria and Aengus that they were still there and the situation was critical.

When Aria and Aengus finally pulled away from their passionate exchange, Sofia spoke up, her voice steady but tinged with disappointment.

"Zero, me, Hank, and Nate also want to come along. We need to find Alisha, to know if she's in there. We won't get in your way."

Sofia looked upset, a clear result of Aengus's deception to get into the party.

Aria turned to Princess Delilah and the others with concern. "But what about Princess Delilah, Drake, and Yona? Will you guys be fine?"

Drake and Yona reassured her. "Don't worry, Sister Aria. We will be fine here. You should accompany Ethan there."

"Yes, Lady Aria, we will take care of each other. Please take care of yourself in there. If only I were stronger, I would have accompanied you too."

Yona said, her head low, but her bow ready to be drawn at any moment.

"It's fine, Yona. You can take care of Drake and Delilah here," Aria said in a comforting tone, slightly relieved.

"And, Sofia, do you really need to go in there? You might find your friend Alisha outside too, you know."

Or... are you starting to doubt Ethan too?" Her brows furrowed as she posed the question.

"No, Aria. It's not that," Sofia responded, shaking her head. "We're grateful for all the help. But after losing Mara and Lark, we can't trust anyone fully right now. We can't afford to lose another friend. We've had enough..."

Hank and Nate exchanged conflicted glances before Hank spoke up. "Captain, I'm sure Brother Zero has his reasons for keeping things from us. He shouldn't be blamed for Mara and Lark's deaths." His voice was firm, trying to mediate the tension.

Sofia glared at Hank, her anger boiling over. "Shut up, Hank. You weren't there when they died right in front of us. I know I shouldn't blame him, but why did he give us hope then? We trusted him, and now it's all broken. What trust can be restored after that?"

Aengus replied calmly, "You're right, Sofia, but I never said I would take responsibility for their deaths. You don't know why I did what I did. I had my reasons, but you can't hold me accountable for their deaths. All of you decided to come here of your own volition to seek power, did you not?"

He paused, taking a breath before continuing.

"But I will ask for your forgiveness: I am sorry!" He bowed slightly, then straightened, his tone turning cold, chilling the air around them. "But, once again, I am not responsible for their deaths."

Sofia snorted in response, crossing her arms stubbornly. "Humph! Your excuses don't mean anything, Zero."

"You... are... a liar!"

"Let's go, Nate, Hank. Follow me! We don't need to rely on others to save our friend," she declared, storming off in frustration.

Nate followed her without hesitation, casting Aengus a sidelong glance, similarly upset as Sofia.

"Brother Zero, don't mind them. They're just too emotional after witnessing those deaths. Please pray for our safety," Hank said, giving a respectful bow before joining his companions.

Drake, Yona, and Princess Delilah looked at each other, seemingly understanding the situation.

Chapter 175: Chapter 175: Trial Begins

"Ethan, what's the story between you and them? Why are they blaming you? What exactly happened to you? Why do you look so different? I mean, it's not that I don't like your appearance, but I'm curious about the change. How did you survive?" Aria asked, bombarding Aengus with questions.

Drake, Yona, and Princess Delilah's ears perked up at the mention of survival and change, their curiosity evident as well.

Aengus sighed inwardly, feeling the weight of their expectant gazes. He didn't want to lie to Aria, but with a stranger—Princess Delilah—standing there, he couldn't be entirely forthcoming either.

"Aria," Aengus said gently but firmly, "I promise, I'll tell you everything once we get out of here, alright? But right now, we don't have time for this." He glanced toward the looming threat beyond the gate, emphasizing the urgency of the moment.

"Oh, okay..."

Aria's eyes softened, understanding that now wasn't the right time but still craving answers. She nodded reluctantly, trusting him to reveal the truth when the time was right.

Delilah and the others kept their thoughts to themselves, but the intrigue in her gaze remained.

"Aria, you two should leave us here quickly. We will stay at a safe distance. We are not that weak, you know," Princess Delilah smiled, trying to sound reassuring.

"Yes, Sister Aria, go quickly!" Drake said.

"Be careful, Lady Aria!" Yona added worriedly. "And you too, Ethan. Please come back safe. We need to have a get-together after so long..." She looked at Aengus with a faint smile.

Drake added with a grin, "Yona is right, we should get together, Ethan. Then you can tell us your story."

Before Aria and Aengus could respond, Delilah suddenly shouted, "Look, the gate is closing!"

They both turned to see the massive gate slowly closing.

"Let's go, Aria!" Aengus called out, not wasting a moment. In a flash, he swept Aria into his arms, moving like a gust of wind.

Though Aengus knew Aria had grown independent and didn't need constant protection, he couldn't help but want to keep her safe by his side.

As he carried her, something caught his attention—his Eyes of Appraisal failed to detect Aria's stats. It was rare, a sign that either a mysterious power was involved or the person was simply too strong for his ability to gauge.

He became curious about what had changed her so much but kept the realization to himself.

Aria, nestled in his arms, gazed up at his serious, focused face. A faint blush crept along her neck as she became aware of the closeness between them, her heartbeat quickening at their body contact.

As they took one last glance at Princess Delilah and the others, the gate shimmered with a bright, blinding light, obscuring what lay beyond. But Aengus, with his heightened senses, saw what others couldn't: an energy portal leading to an unknown space.

Instinctively, he pulled Aria closer, gripping her tightly, remembering how they had been separated when they first entered Dwarvania. He couldn't risk losing her again.

"Aria, we might get separated. Be careful!" he warned, his tone serious.

Aria smiled softly, trying to ease his worry. "You don't need to worry about me, Ethan. I'll find you quickly if we do," she promised, her voice calm and reassuring.

"Swoosh!"

"Swap!"

As they crossed through the portal, a strange sensation of energy surged through them, the familiar pull of displacement gripping their bodies. The moment Aengus landed on the other side, his worst fear was confirmed. He stood alone, Aria nowhere in sight.

His heart sank as he scanned the eerie, unfamiliar surroundings. The portal had indeed separated them.

His Heart of Darkness calmed him down, but his face turned cold with silent fury.

He was in an open field, with the horizon seeming endless.

Observing everything, he was impressed by the level of Space Manipulation at play. From his initial guess, the person had effortlessly separated hundreds of thousands of people, which shouldn't be that easy.

"Ho ho, what do we have here? Another powerful warrior!"

All of a sudden, Aengus heard an unfamiliar voice and found an old man with a kind face standing there out of nowhere.

“Who are you?” Aengus asked calmly, trying to gauge if this was the being the dwarves had spoken about.

The old man let out a warm smile.

“I am in charge of the trial, young warrior. There are exactly 100 levels to this trial. If you can clear all the levels, you will be granted any wish you desire. And of course, with each level cleared, you’ll receive an exciting reward. Are you ready, young hero?”

Aengus raised an eyebrow.

“Heh, you’re going to give everything away for free? Or is there another catch?” Aengus asked sharply.

The old man’s eyes flashed with a strange glint for a moment, which Aengus didn’t miss.

“You’re sharp, young warrior. There is a catch. If you fail, you’ll die—nothing more, nothing less,” the old man said, his smile now taking on a chilling edge.

Aengus remained unfazed by the threat.

“Is it the same for everyone you brought here? And can I refuse?” he pressed on, keeping his calm.

The old man’s smile tightened, irritation flickering beneath his calm facade.

“Yes, it’s the same for everyone, young warrior. I trust that answers your question. May you survive!”

Without waiting for a response, the old man vanished in a hurry, clearly uninterested in answering anything further.

Aengus carefully scanned his surroundings, his senses heightened as he searched for any signs of being watched.

Given the level of space manipulation the other party had demonstrated, it wasn’t impossible.

Nevertheless, it would be no small feat to monitor hundreds of thousands of people at once—even for a powerful being.

What puzzled him more was the reason behind the trial. If the being in charge could wipe out the dwarves so easily in the past, why go through the trouble of creating something as elaborate as this trial? There had to be something restraining them, preventing him from doing as they wish.

Or maybe, there's something more to this test, Aengus guessed.

Suddenly, with a soft swoosh, the air rippled around him. Two creatures appeared, seemingly tearing through the fabric of space itself.

They were towering, twice his height, with skeletal forms, razor-sharp claws, and ghostly bodies that flickered in and out of existence. Their presence felt almost ethereal, like shadows, and their glowing eyes locked onto Aengus with malevolent intent.

A quick use of his appraisal ability revealed their information. They were Nyx Creatures, beings capable of traveling through space, existing in a soul form.

Chapter 176: Chapter 176: Supreme Hunter (A)

The old man, who had just disappeared, reappeared in a dimly lit chamber, merging seamlessly with a tall figure already present in there.

The man, strikingly handsome with an air of nobility, carried a presence unlike anyone native to this world. His aura was regal, commanding, as though he were born to rule, but it was tinged with something far darker.

Before him were several mirrors, each displaying scenes from the ongoing trials. He watched the participants struggle—some meeting their demise, others barely scraping through the first levels, only to be plunged into greater danger.

There was no pity in his gaze, only a cruel glint as he observed their fates. His lips curled into a faint sneer, and his eyes lingered on two specific mirrors.

One showed Aengus, the other Aria. They stood out from the rest, their vibrant energy drawing his attention.

"Heh, heh... two bright souls, unlike anything I've ever sensed," he mused, a sinister gleam in his eyes. "These two should provide enough energy to create the Soul pill for my recovery. Then, I can finally escape this wretched cage."

He spat the last word, his face contorting with disgust as he glanced around the dim room.

"I don't understand how these people can live in such a trashy world." His voice dripped with contempt.

The man sneered, his gaze narrowing as he clenched his fist, causing the very space around him to tremble from his power.

"If only this damned will of this world (System) wasn't interfering," he muttered darkly. "I wouldn't have to sit and wait for this charade to play out.

But heh, I can still bend the rules of this lower world to my will. How could these lesser beings ever hope to match my power or intellect?" He chuckled, the sound cold and devoid of any warmth, his eyes gleaming with cruel satisfaction.

"Once you're all dead, the fun begins. I'll return to the Primal Realm, and those who betrayed me will know the true wrath of this emperor. They thought they could kill me, but I will rise again."

His voice suddenly softened as he spoke the last part, as though addressing someone far away. "My love, just wait for me. This emperor will not be brought down by some measly betrayal."

With a surge of power, he clenched his fist harder, the room shaking under the weight of his rage. The very fabric of space around him distorted, as if it, too, feared his strength. His ambitions were clear: revenge, power, and the return to his rightful place at the top, no matter how many lives it would cost.

"Huh, what is this kid doing?"

His gaze suddenly fixed on Aengus, who had just defeated the two Nyx and approached their dead bodies, placing his hand on the soul-like form.

He didn't know what the kid had done, but the smile on Aengus' face felt ominous to him.

Still, he couldn't interfere unless he wanted to risk punishment for using his powers against the system.

Curious, he turned his attention fully to Aengus.

"Be happy while you can, kid. Let's see how far you can go against my minions," he laughed coldly.

—

[You have acquired a new Active Skill: Space Slash (D); With this skill, your sword can cut through space, causing a spatial tear that pulls enemies into the chaotic Spatial Storm. It is lethal to the user as well.]

[You have acquired a new Active Skill: Space Claws (D); Your claw attack can now instantly reach enemies from a 10-meter distance.]

[You have acquired a new Active Skill: Space Warp (D); Allows short-distance space teleportation (5 meters).]

Aengus absorbed the skills while using Darkness Shroud to conceal them as much as possible.

It had been a little difficult to deal with the Nyx because of their Space Warp ability, but after observing their patterns and relying on his heightened awareness, Aengus handled them effortlessly.

Regardless, it could have been much more difficult if they had been higher-level Nyx.

He decided to synthesize his passive skills for extra assurance and to prepare for confronting the real enemy.

His soul was now fixed, so he easily commanded the system in his mind to synthesize the appropriate skills.

[Melee Combat (C) + Quick Reflexes (C) + Critical Strike (C) + Predator's Instinct (E)
+Extreme Onigiri Combat Body (C) + Enhanced Stamina (C)]

Step by step he merged all the the passive skills, and the final result was satisfying.

[Supreme Hunter (A)]

[Description: The Supreme Hunter is an higher level predator, combining agility, strength, and instinct to dominate the battlefield. With enhanced melee combat skills, six enhanced senses, and lightning-fast reflexes, they strike with deadly precision (↑300%).

Their Extreme Onigiri Combat Body allows for brutal close-quarters fighting, while heightened stamina enables relentless pursuit of prey.]

[Poison Resistance (C) + Blazing Purge (D) + Health Regeneration (D)= Phoenix Resurgence (B)]

[Phoenix Resurgence (B)]

Description: Phoenix Resurgence channels the mythical power of rebirth, allowing the user to recover health instantly while igniting their surroundings in purifying flames. When the user is critically injured, this skill activates automatically, granting a

substantial health boost while simultaneously creating a fiery barrier that burns enemies and neutralizes poison passively.]

With the synthesis done in his mind he now had only three passive skill: Supreme Hunter (A), Phoenix Resurgence (B), Water Breathing (C)

Aengus felt his senses heighten to an unnatural degree, and his body became more controlled, almost as if he were attuned to every movement and sound around him. He could hear faint echoes of people's screams, even through the very fabric of space nearby.

His All-Seeing Eyes, however, couldn't pierce through to the other side, but his new passive skill had sharpened his five senses to an extraordinary level, enriching his combat experience.

With his sixth sense, he could now sense danger and detect killing intent from miles away.

With Phoenix Resurgence, he was able recover health quickly, like how a Phoenix and Vampires heal themselves.

Turning his gaze to where the dead bodies once lay, he saw two D-grade soul cores—the "reward" for clearing the first level. It felt almost like progressing through dungeon floors, reminding him old memories.

Without hesitation, Aengus used soul devour to absorb the cores, feeling his soul heal slightly, though only a minuscule portion.

Moments later, with his enhanced hearing, he detected the sound of space tearing again. More Nyx creatures emerged, their presence immediately felt by Aengus. But This time, there were five of them.

Chapter 177: Chapter 177: Dimitri, Emperor Of Kievan

They were all D-Rank, so Aengus finished them quickly without revealing too much of his abilities.

Now, he could easily feel someone was watching him using his sixth sense.

The Supreme Hunter skill proved very useful in times like this.

Swish, swish...

He dispatched the creatures with ease.

He needed to end this quickly to force that person out of their shell.

Aengus understood that the person was clearly trying to gather some sort of energy from the humans, so he needed to steal whatever energy he could from the creatures to draw him out of his cocoon.

He also remained cautious not to alert his observer too quickly.

Using Darkness Shroud, Aengus concealed his actions as he absorbed the soul bodies with Soul Devour, before they could be recycled by the one watching him.

In this way, he quietly stole their energies, and it was working well.

He could feel it as he cleared the 34th wave without stopping. His space related skills from Nyx were also upgraded to B rank using synthesis.

—

“Huh. What’s going on? Why is this kid still not dead? How is he not running out of energy at such a young age? And why is the soul energy depleting? Is that brat behind this?” the observer seethed in anger.

“And her too—why are these two so troublesome?” His gaze shifted to Aria, who was also dominating the Nyx creatures.

He clenched his fist in frustration.

“What should I do now?”

“Should I interfere? Is it worth the punishment?”

He weighed his options, glaring at Aria and Aengus with murderous intent.

—

Aengus now faced hundreds of C-Rank Nyx creatures, relying on his sharp instincts to predict their movements and his refined blade skills to dispatch them swiftly.

As soon as one wave was cleared, another began, each increasing in both number and power. Yet, Aengus dealt with them efficiently, using his versatile skills to stay ahead of the threat.

He had no worry about mana anymore, as he could now freely use Mana Harvest to swiftly recover from the environment. Although the Nyx didn’t possess mana in their soul bodies, he used Soul Devour to drain them of any other energy they held.

A grin of satisfaction crossed his face—a strange smile that seemed to anticipate the observer’s next move.

As he expected, the monotonous grind continued up to the 67th level, until the person finally revealed himself before him.

Aengus panted slightly, looking at the person without fear.

[Appraisal]

[Name: Dimitri Kievan]

[Race: Seeker]

[Age: 1587]

[Affiliation: Emperor Of Kievan, Primal Realm (Otherworlder)]

[Current Rank: A (Severly Weakened)]

[State: Severely Injured Soul and law Cores]

[Laws: Space, Water ; Mastery: Unknown]

“An old monster!”

His initial guess was correct—the person before him was an otherworlder, far more powerful than anyone Aengus had encountered before.

However, Aengus found himself puzzled. Unlike other otherworlders who had skills or unique abilities, this person seemed to wield something entirely different. There were no visible skills, just a strange mastery over some mysterious laws that Aengus couldn’t fully comprehend. It seemed like a more advanced and powerful way of using energy.

It was fortunate, though, that this figure appeared severely weakened. Despite that, his commanding presence, like that of an emperor, made it clear just how powerful he must have been in his prime.

“You’re playing with fire, kid. Now it’s time to die!” Emperor Dimitri spoke coldly, his voice filled with disdain.

“What do you mean? And Who are you?”

Aengus remained calm, his blades gripped firmly in his hands as he prepared to strike.

“No need to know, Kid. Just die!”

“Wait, before we fight, can you tell me why you’re doing this? Where are you from?”

Dimitri, momentarily stunned by the boy’s composure, raised an eyebrow. “So, you knew all along. Then I’m curious—why didn’t you run?”

“Why else? I’m here to finish you off,” Aengus replied, his voice steady.

“Hahaha…” Dimitri laughed, as if he had just heard the most amusing joke.

“Kid, when you weren’t even born, I had slaughtered millions, building up my great legacy. And now you think you can defeat me after handling a few of my minions?”

His expression darkened as his voice lowered. “You lower beings would never understand the true meaning of power. Your world is nothing more than a playground for people like me.”

But then Dimitri stopped, his gaze narrowing. “Wait… why do you smell just like those rats from my world?”

Aengus’s ears perked up at that statement, piecing together the final clues. It meant only one thing: Aengus was also from the Primal World, just like Emperor Dimitri.

“You mean the Primal Realm? Yes, I’m also from there. But, I don’t know you. Who are you, really?” Aengus asked, his tone calm but probing.

“Shut up, rat,” Dimitri snarled, his voice filled with contempt. “You rats are just defective products of our great race. Don’t compare yourself to this Emperor. I am the great Emperor of Kievan. I have conquered hundreds of planets and ruled over trillions.”

His eyes gleamed with arrogance as he continued, “Now, bow down to me and accept your death. You should feel honored to sacrifice yourself for this Emperor. I will reward your family for seven generations. Tell me your family name,” he offered generously.

Aengus scoffed internally, suppressing the urge to laugh at the absurdity of the emperor’s offer.

However, he decided to play along for now, hoping to extract some useful information. Especially regarding the Degaro family.

“My family, you ask? Tell me, do you know anything about the Degaro family?” he asked, his eyes sharp, though he kept his expression neutral.

“Huh? You’re from that Devil family?” Emperor Dimitri looked momentarily stunned.

“What is your name? From my knowledge, there was no defect in the entire Degaro lineage. Who is your grandfather?” he asked, a spark of curiosity flashing in his eyes.

Aengus, still processing this newfound information about his family’s significance, appeared deep in thought. He was getting just enough to piece together some history but not enough to fully understand.

“I don’t know,” Aengus finally answered, keeping his tone neutral.

“You don’t know? Or are you just trying to bluff your way out of my clutches?” Dimitri snorted, his gaze hardening.

Aengus remained nonchalant.

“Why don’t you tell me how you ended up here if you’re not a defect?” Aengus pressed on.

“Me? Of course, it’s all because of my friend’s betrayal. They colluded with my second concubine to dethrone me and steal my position. I was defeated badly and ended up here, forced to escape in a desperate manner,” Augustus sneered, the bitterness in his voice unmistakable.

Chapter 178: Chapter 178: Leviathan Of Death

“Enough talk, kid. Since you can’t prove your identity, let me send you away. Judging by your expression, it doesn’t seem like you’re going to give up that easily,” Dimitri said coldly, his voice dripping with disdain.

Doomscale Dragonification!

As soon as he finished, Aengus transformed into his Dragonoid form, unleashing a formidable pressure that rippled through the air.

But to Dimitri, it was nothing more than a child’s play.

He laughed coldly, his tone mocking.

“Is that all you’ve got? Turning into a lizard—what a joke.”

Without hesitation, Aengus launched his attack.

Venomous Flash Strike!

He unseathed his blade slashing down with enough force to make the air tremble, distorting the very space around them.

“Weak!”

Before Aengus could even process what happened, he heard Dimitri’s disdainful snort. In the next moment, he was violently thrown into a nearby rock with a deafening crash.

“Boom!”

Dimitri had altered the space, causing Aengus’s attack to miss entirely. The smug grin on Dimitri’s face deepened, watching with mockery as Aengus shook off the rubble and debris.

Aengus met Dimitri’s gaze, unshaken. His eyes blazed with determination, knowing he couldn’t afford to back down, no matter how overwhelming the odds seemed.

Space Warp!

Spectral Blade Storm!

Aengus repeatedly using Space Warp, trying to close the distance or strike Dimitri, but the emperor seemed untouchable, blending seamlessly with space itself.

“Is it because of his space laws?” Aengus wondered in frustration.

Dimitri chuckled, his voice filled with disdain. “Hahaha, trying those pitiful space skills on me? You truly are a child who doesn’t understand the difference between heaven and earth.”

“Huff....”

Aengus was starting to feel fatigued from the repeated use of Space Warp, a skill he wasn’t fully accustomed to yet.

But he refused to back down. With renewed determination, he unleashed a barrage of skills:

“Judgment Strike!”

“Rapid Cast!”

“Mana Harvest!”

“Divine Retribution!”

“Boom, boom, rumble!”

The sheer ferocity of his attacks almost cornered Dimitri, forcing him back. The landscape around them crumbled into ruins, massive craters forming as the aftershock of their clashing powers. Aengus fought like a battle-hardened machine, relentless in his assault.

“Enough!”

Dimitri suddenly shouted, his tone darkening. He hadn’t wanted to use his full strength, knowing the terrifying punishment that came with unleashing his laws, but now he had no choice.

“Be silent, mortal!” he raged, his voice echoing with authority.

Suddenly, Aengus found himself frozen in place, unable to move. It felt as though he had been trapped within space itself.

“What’s this?” Aengus struggled, but his body wouldn’t respond.

“Die!” Dimitri snarled, waving his hand.

“Shua, shua... swoish!”

A massive oceanic wave, towering 50 meters high, came crashing toward him like a tsunami. The force of the water hit Aengus hard, the water pressure like sharp blades cutting through him.

“Argh...” Aengus groaned, his body taking damage despite his dragon scales. His clothes were shredded, and his skin bore deep scratches from the water’s sheer force. He knew if this continued, he’d be dead in seconds.

“Inferno Overlord’s Descent!”

In a desperate move, Aengus activated the skill, engulfing himself in a fiery eruption. Flames erupted from within him, creating a volcano of heat that battled against the tidal force. Fire met water in a violent clash, creating hot steams.

Aengus, now free from the space freeze, erupted from the ground in a fiery surge. His Inferno Overlord’s Descent propelled him skyward like a blazing meteor, and he came crashing down hard on Dimitri.

“BOOM!”

Caught slightly off guard, Dimitri was thrown into the air by the impact, blood spurting from his mouth.

Hovering mid-air, Dimitri quickly stabilized himself, forming a platform of water beneath him. His eyes locked on Aengus with murderous fury.

“Damned kid! If I wasn’t injured, you would’ve been dead long ago! Even gods and demon gods were nothing before me, and now I’m forced to bleed at the hands of a mere brat. This is shameful!”

He seethed, his pride deeply wounded. His aura flared dangerously as he vowed, “To erase this disgrace, I will grant you utter annihilation!”

“Spatial Collapse!” Dimitri commanded silently, twisting his face in rage.

Aengus felt the space around him distort, crackling as if the very air was about to implode on itself. The ground beneath him warped, and reality seemed to twist as Dimitri unleashed his devastating attack, aiming to obliterate him completely.

Aengus tried to flee using both Space Warp and his high agility, but it was too late; the collapse had already caught up to him.

“Crack, Crackle!”

Aengus was engulfed by the space collapse, drowning in the chaotic flow of a space storm behind the once-beautiful world’s spatial barriers.

“Argh!”

The pain from being torn apart by the chaotic spatial energy was overwhelming, that even his pain resistance failed to suppress it.

His body suffered deep cuts and burns as the intense radiation sank into his flesh.

If any normal ranker was in his place, they would have died by now. It’s only thanks to his high stats and Dragonification skill he had survived till now.

“Ugh!” Aengus cursed himself and activated his most powerful ability to escape the situation and turn the tide.

“Hellfire Leviathan Of Death!”

This was his trump card, and he hadn’t wanted to use it so early, but the circumstances forced him to reveal everything he had.

“ROOARRR....”

With a rumbling roar of devastation, Aengus transformed into a mythic dragon-like creature, emanating an aura of death and searing black flames.

“Rumble! Rumble!”

With a thunderous noise, Aengus broke through the space barrier with sheer force, returning from the chaotic storm before he could be swept away.

The spatial barrier near him was weak, so it was not that tough.

His massive form—a 200-meter-tall, 500-meter-long leviathan—was revealed to the world.

The aura of death and corrosion radiating from his body shattered the nearby spatial constructs created by Emperor Dimitri with hard work.

The trial participants who had survived looked around in confusion, finding themselves in open field all of sudden.

But when their gaze fell upon Aengus’s Black Death Leviathan form, they were struck speechless, and some even wet themselves in sheer terror.

Chapter 179: Chapter 179: Aengus VS Dimitri

Seeing Aengus’s Leviathan form, the crowd shouted in astonishment.

“Oh my God... What is that creature?”

“Oh Lord, it looks just like the Leviathan from the legends!”

“It’s look like a demonic Creature!”

“Is the world coming to an end?”

Sigard, Melina, and Aurora, who had survived the ordeal, also stared at the creature with wide eyes.

They were bloodstained and exhausted after fighting for their lives, grateful to have been pulled back from that hellish place.

They gazed up at the Leviathan in awe, impressed by its immense size and power.

Even in their Dragon Forms, they knew they’d look like mere children beside it. Only their elders might stand against the Leviathan.

But despite their awe, a lingering concern gnawed at them—the creature’s true intentions were still unclear, even though they had been freed them from the forced trial, they didn’t who did it.

Aurora's eyes gleamed as her sixth sense tingled. There was something familiar about the creature's aura.

Far away, Aria's face showed worry as she desperately searched for Ethan. Her heart raced, desperation flooding her as she frantically scanned the area for any sign of him.

—

Aengus carefully controlled the Death Aura radiating from his massive form, ensuring it didn't harm the humans below.

"It's time to finish this, old man!" he growled coldly.

He knew he had at most two minutes in this form, and even Mana Harvest might fail to recover enough mana to sustain him. Every second was precious; he had to end Dimitri within those moments.

Emperor Dimitri stood speechless, stunned by Aengus's sudden transformation and the overwhelming power he now commanded. But then, a grin spread across his face. He welcomed the challenge of survival.

"You're on, boy. Let's finish this."

Dimitri roared, his grin ferocious as he unleashed the full extent of his Water and Space laws, ignoring the potential consequences. If he didn't fight with everything he had, he would die anyway.

In an instant, he appeared in the sky, just a short distance from Aengus's massive Leviathan form. Though he looked small in comparison, years of battle experience kept him calm. He had faced countless powerful creatures before, but never had he felt this vulnerable.

The crushing pressure of Aengus's combined aura of death and searing black flames weighed heavily on him, the sheer physical strength and hellfire almost unbearable at such close proximity.

—

"Hey, who is that person? Is he trying to save us?"

"Yes, it must be! Help has arrived! We can finally be free from that demonic creature!"

"Kill it, hero! Finish off the abomination!"

"He dared to trap us in this death trap. He must be destroyed!"

Some of the survivors below roared, mistakenly cursing Aengus's demonic form, unaware that he had just saved them.

But there were others, more cautious, who didn't understand what was happening. Confusion swirled as they questioned which side to take, unsure if the one battling Dimitri was their savior or the real threat.

Nate, Sofia, and Hank quickly gathered together, their eyes scanning the sky with caution as they searched for Alisha. The air was tense, filled with uncertainty as the battle raged above them.

—

"You hear that, boy?" Dimitri sneered, his voice laced with contempt. "They're cursing you. Ingrates, ignorant mortals! Why risk your life for them? Join me, and I will grant you eternal rewards and power beyond this world. The kind of power your father and grandfather once possessed. I'll show you the way. Come!" He offered, his words dripping with pride and temptation.

"I don't care about their opinions, Emperor Dimitri. You have harmed the ancient Dwarves, endangered my loved ones and now you will pay for it." Aengus replied coldly, in a deep resonating voice, like coming a demonic creature.

Aengus's response was swift and opposite. With a powerful swipe of his massive claws, he tore through the air, distorting the very fabric of space as his attack hurtled toward Dimitri's tiny frame.

Dimitri barely dodged in time, his expression darkening. "Boy, you're stubborn and foolish," he growled, his voice filled with frustration. "Fine, I'll give it my all. You asked for it."

With that, Dimitri pulled out a vial containing a shimmering pill, radiating an intense soul energy. It was an incomplete elixir he had refined using countless poor human souls to heal his damaged soul, but it would allow him to fight on equal ground with Aengus, at least for a while.

He swallowed the incomplete pill without hesitation, feeling a surge of power course through him, slightly healing his severely damaged Soul Core and Law Core.

"Now, let's see how long you last!" Dimitri roared, his aura flaring as he prepared to unleash his full might against Aengus.

Aengus didn't hesitate. In a single, swift motion, he unleashed his Hellfire, a blaze of crimson flames scorching the air, while Death Strings shot out like tendrils, seeking to

bind Dimitri in place and burn him alive. The sheer intensity of the attack warped the surrounding space, distorting reality as it raced toward its target.

But Dimitri, with his soul slightly healed and strength returning, was no easy prey. His mastery over Space and Water Laws provided him with a perfect balance of offense and evasion. He bent the space around him, slipping out of Aengus's grasp as if vanishing from reality, then reappeared at a safe distance, his water techniques weaving barriers of liquid force to deflect the Hellfire.

Yet Aengus, with his monstrous wings ablaze, moved with a speed that defied comprehension. He shattered the sound barrier with every wing beat, blurring across the sky with near-teleportation precision. His colossal form tore through the heavens, chasing down Dimitri with ruthless efficiency, Hellfire trailing behind him like the breath of a demonic dragon.

Dimitri barely managed to keep his distance, his heart shaking as he realized that no matter how far he fled, Aengus was always one step ahead, his power far more terrifying than anticipated. Even his recent power up didn't help much.

"This boy..." Dimitri thought, his grin faltering as he felt the deadly pressure closing in.

"Who's child is he?"

He summoned another Oceanic Tidal wave in sky, but this time it was much more bigger and ferocious, covering the sky like blue dome descending from heaven.

The crowd was awestruck by display of power, leaving them a reminder of how the A and S ranked typically fought.

Chapter 180: Chapter 180: Settling Old Scores
After 1 minute 40 Seconds.

Aengus and Dimitri had already clashed hundreds times with their extreme speed.

Crack! Crack!

Up above the sky, there were spatial fissures everywhere, turning the sky into a chaotic mess. The sky was gloomy and artificial raindrops fell on the ground like cursed poison.

Under the fierce onslaught of Aengus, Dimitri quickly found himself bruised and severely injured.

"Is this how it feels when karma hits you?" Dimitri thought bitterly, remembering the sins he committed by murdering millions after arriving in this place.

He had never faced such a situation where he was forced into a corner by a brat. It felt like heaven was playing a joke on him.

Boom!

“Cough, Cough!”

Crashing to the ground with a loud shockwave, he spat out blood after being hit by Leviathan’s tail, as if he were nothing more than a fly. His flesh was torn and scratched, with death energy seeping into his fragile body bit by bit.

His health became severely low, but he laughed maniacally. “Hahahaha...”

“I, Dimitri Kievan, who ruled over 119 worlds for years, am now getting defeated by a brat... How ironic... It’s as if fate was never on my side from the beginning. First, the betrayal, then locked up in this cage, only to wait for years to be slain by a kid. This is just nonsense!” he shouted, his voice spreading far and wide.

His sorrowful words stirred everyone’s hearts—filled with despair and helplessness. The spectators from heard his resounding last words and felt sympathy for the man who was trying to kill them.

Their misunderstanding was justified as Aengus truly looked like a menace.

He looked up at the sky. “My love, it seems like my time has finally come. Forgive me for not being able to meet you one last time. And our child—”

He turned to Aengus’s monstrous form and said, “Kid, you win. Kill me and set me free. Just don’t do anything to my soul. If I can pass through the gate of Samsara, I want to meet my love once again. Please!” Dimitri begged, kneeling on the ground.

“For this favor, I will grant you this, boy of House Degaro.”

He produced a shiny white crest seemingly out of thin air. It was inscribed with unknown text, but looked far more extraordinary on the surface.

Aengus felt no sympathy for the man. It’s only because, Dimitri had lay his hand on his interest and the unknown pact to be fulfilled.

His massive form hovered over Dimitri, listening to what he had to say. He still had a few seconds before his Leviathan form would wear off. Though he didn’t show any weakness, Dimitri’s proposal was tempting. He wanted to hear what he had to offer.

“This is true key to my legacy. With it, you can become the true inheritor of the position of Emperor. This position is definitely far more beneficial for you than being one with a defected status in your family.”

“You would become the rightful Emperor of the Kievan Empire.”

Seeing the interest in Aengus’s eyes, Dimitri continued, his body barely holding on like fragile glass.

“But I have another condition: you must protect Empress Fiona, my first wife, and the child she should have probably given birth to by now.”

He looked melancholic at the mention of the child, his eyes reddening.

He looked at Aengus and asked for confirmation.

“Just say yes, boy. You will be the rightful heir. Money, fame, and resources will all be available to you. You will become far stronger than you are now.”

Aengus quickly contemplated the options and decided to agree.

He knew he would have to confront his past, which was slowly resurfacing in his mind. Considering the terrible conditions he had suffered at House Degaro, this was a far better option. Although there were risks involved, he believed he could get through them one step at a time.

This identity could be useful if he needed it in the future. Overall, he wasn’t losing on anything by agreeing.

Sooner or later, he would have to go to the Primal Realm, and he felt that time was approaching.

“Alright, I agree to both of your conditions. But if you lie, the consequences will be severe. I will slaughter your whole family and everyone involved if anything proves to be wrong!” he said ruthlessly.

“Cough! Cough! Boy, who do you think I am? Why would I lie at my death’s door? Here, take it. Please take care of my child. Tell them I loved them very much, and watch out for my friends. They... they... are—”

His words were cut off, his eyes turning lifeless all of a sudden.

As the shiny white crest merged onto Aengus’s right hand, the man died in loneliness, far away from his loved ones.

Aengus looked at the white crest in his hand, and somehow he could understand its significance now.

It bore the words “Bow,” “Kievan,” and “Emperor.”

“Bow Before the Emperor of Kievan.”

Such was the domineering meaning of those words.

They were specially inscribed runes crafted by Dimitri himself, and no one could replicate them.

Aengus turned to Dimitri’s soulless body and picked it up with his massive claws -it was still useful to him. If Dimitri had known what Aengus intended to do with his corpse, he would have died a second time, coughing blood from the sheer ruthlessness.

Who could be so merciless toward a fallen enemy?

Just as Aengus was about to retreat into the woods to revert from his Leviathan form, his gaze shifted to Sigard and the Dragonborne. A lingering score demanded settling. Sigard had harmed Aria and tried to kill him and his allies- now, it was time to pay the price.

Far in the distance, kilometers from the battlefield, Sigard and thousands of spectators murmured among themselves, fear creeping into their hearts as they watched the aftermath of the hero’s defeat.

“Hey, that demonic creature is looking at us... Will it kill us now?”

“Oh no! The hero is dead! Who will save us?”

Sigard, deep in conversation with Melina and Aurora, suddenly felt a chill run down his spine. His gaze met the cold, indifferent eyes of the Leviathan.

“Ah... Why is it looking at me, Melina?” he asked, fear seeping into his voice.

Having witnessed the battle, Sigard knew he was no match for this monstrous creature. Even his father might not be able to save him now.

Before Melina could respond, Sigard was violently yanked through the air at breakneck speed, pulled by invisible forces.

“Ahh! Save me, Melina! Father!” he screamed, his voice drenched in desperation.

Wrapped in Aengus’s Death Strings, Sigard felt his life force slowly being drained, the cold grip of death closing in.

“Sigard, I’m coming!” Melina shouted, her voice frantic.

Without hesitation, Melina transformed into her regal Ice Dragon form, determined to rescue her lover.

Aurora, worried for her sister, followed closely behind.

But their efforts were in vain.

In a blink, both Aengus and Sigard vanished from sight, disappearing as if they had never been there.

Melina's heart sank. She had seen it clearly-Sigard had been swarmed by the suffocating Death Energy.

That could only mean one thing: Sigard was already dead.