

# Reincarnated With Three Unique Skills

## - Chapter 21 – 40

Chapter 21: Chapter 21: Increasing Mana Reserve

Ethan scoured the entire hunter's Market, buying every Mana orb he could find. Because Mana orbs were rare, he couldn't find them all in a single shop. He had to scour all the shops for that.

Typically, hunters who found Mana orbs in dungeons used them for themselves first. However, some people who reached their limit early sold them to earn a good amount of money, because of their potential reached early.

Potential determined how much a person could increase their mana capacity. It wasn't like anyone could increase their mana infinitely; different people had different potentials. Some could raise their mana to 1,000, while others could increase theirs to 100,000 or so.

Even if someone had the potential to gain high mana, they usually couldn't afford to do it due to the large cost and rarity. However, if you were associated with a noble clan or house, it became a lot easier to achieve it.

After a lot of effort, Ethan managed to gather a significant number of Mana orbs at last. He tried to buy the highest quality ones, but there were some low-quality ones as well.

– B-Grade – 3x

– C-Grade – 6x

– D-Grade – 9x

– E-Grade – 10x

– F-Grade – 20x

It cost him nearly 480,000 silver coins, leaving him with only 20,000. He couldn't help but feel a little remorse knowing all his piled-up coins ran out in a single night.

However, the gains were worth it. He looked at the glowing multicolored Mana orbs with fascination. Each of them was palm-sized and warm to the touch.

Now, the real question was how much mana he could absorb and what his potential was. It shouldn't be too bad as a reincarnator, right?

"Time to find out!"

Ethan remembered his initial plan to synthesize the Mana orbs. With this he could gain more mana.

“Synthesize!”

A new E-Grade Mana orb appeared in his palm instead of two F-Grade Mana orbs.

He began to synthesize them one after another. Mana was not a problem because he could replenish it using Mana orbs, after all. But he realized he couldn't make them to the highest level yet.

“Ding!”

“Error! Your Synthesization failed.”

“Error! Your Synthesization failed.”

Before he could enjoy his glee any longer, the notifications of failure kept ringing non-stop. He was able to synthesize them to C-Grade at the highest. Maybe he wasn't strong enough to synthesize them to higher levels yet.

Still, it was not all bad. He managed to get them all to C-Grade.

– B-Grade – 5x

– C-Grade – 20x

Finally, the calculation was all clear.

Ethan took a deep breath and began absorbing the Mana orbs one by one. The notifications kept ringing in his head non-stop.

“Ding!”

“Congratulations! You have absorbed a B-Grade Mana orb. Mana capacity increased by 550.”

“Congratulations! You have absorbed a B-Grade Mana orb. Mana capacity increased by 550.”

...

“Congratulations! You have absorbed a C-Grade Mana orb. Mana capacity increased by 260.”

...

“Yes!” He couldn’t help but feel excited. He managed to absorb all the Mana orbs one by one. And he still didn’t feel anywhere near his full potential. He could feel the vast amount of mana flowing through his veins and whole body.

[Status ]

[ Name: Aengus Degaro (Ethan Smith) ]

[ Occupation: Hunter ]

[ Race: Human ]

[ Level: 6 ]

[ Class: None ]

[ Age: 18 ]

[ Strength: 23 ]

[ Agility: 19 ]

[ Defense: 20 ]

[ Mana: 8070/8070 ]

[ Attribute points: 0 ]

[Skills ]

[ Active: Inferno Leap (D), Azula Sword Strike (E), Muscle Enhancement (E) ]

[ Passive: Blaze Guard (E), Fire Serpent’s Digestion (F) ]

[ Unique Skills: Appraisal (Basic), Skill Absorption (Mythic), Universal Synthesis (Ultimate) ]

[ Equipments: Titanium Runic Sword (D) ]

Seeing his improvement, Ethan couldn’t help but smile. His Mana Reserve had increased to 8,070 points, which was nearly 70 times more than the original amount. It was staggering number. He couldn’t help but glee realizing how much he could do with this amount of mana.

“Ah, sh\*t! I forgot to upgrade my sword. Oh well, no worries. I can manage for now.”

He looked toward the direction of the Fire Toad’s dungeon and muttered, “Now, it’s finally time to clear the F-class dungeon.”

He couldn’t just accumulate money and do nothing right? He needed to increase his level and acquire powerful skills.

With a swift motion, he activated [Muscle Enhancement] and started running at a high speed towards the dungeon.

Chapter 22: Chapter 22: F-Class Boss Monster

“Ah! F-Forgive me, My lord. We don’t have mana orbs left in the shop. Why don’t you...”

“Bang!”

The young man broke the glass of display window in anger.

“What’s going on? Why can’t I find a single mana orb in the city? Did all of them vanished somehow?”

He looked at the manager in anger. “Tell me, who the hell took away your mana orbs? Otherwise, I will teach you a lesson instead of him.”

The manager felt cold from head to toe. His lesson would definitely not be so simple.

He hurriedly answered while prostrating on the hard concrete floor, “My lord, I really don’t know who it was! He was wearing a dark cloak and had his face masked. So, I wasn’t able to see his face clearly. Please, don’t do anything to me. I have my wife and kids at home to feed. This humble one begs for your forgiveness.”

The manager rolled on the ground with his snot and tears flowing non-stop, pleading miserably.

“Humph!” The young man snorted and left the shop in a huff, not wanting to waste his time pointlessly. His entourage followed him from behind.

“Shadow!” the young man called out into the thin air.

“Yes, young lord! What can I do for you?” Suddenly, a black figure appeared in front of him out of nowhere.

“Go, find out who took away all the Mana orbs from me. I will cripple him. He dared to hinder my improvement for my upcoming noble hunters competition,” the young man ordered viciously.

“I will do as you say, my lord.” The shadow quickly disappeared thereafter.

“Now, let’s see where you hide.”

—

Fire Toad’s Dungeon, 19th floor.

“Bang! Crash!”

As the last creature went down on the 19th floor, Ethan received another notification about his level up.

His current level was 8. He managed to increase two levels after clearing all the floors behind. With his vast mana reserves, it was nothing difficult at all.

The 19th floor was burned and scorched everywhere, a clear proof of how intense the battle must have been.

He managed to collect a lot of old and new skill books using Skill Absorption and monster drops. But, he had no time to go into details now, because it was finally time to clear the final 20th floor, the boss floor.

With anticipation and excitement, Ethan opened the door to the boss floor.

At first glance, he was greeted with a giant fire toad nearly 8-10 meters in height. He had to raise his head to see its full form. He was tiny compared to it.

[ Appraisal ]

[ Fire Toad (elite) ]

[ Power Level: 15 ]

It was seven levels higher than him, and on top of that, it was an elite monster as well. It must be the boss of this dungeon for sure. Its giant fiery form was living proof of that.

As soon as Ethan touched the floor, the fire toad sensed him immediately somehow. There goes his sneak attack plan. Now, he had no choice but to fight it head-on.

Looking at its tough skin, he began to doubt his sword's capability. "A D-Rank sword should be able to pierce it, right? Still, I should have upgraded it for a situation like this. Now, no crying over spilled milk."

The giant toad lunged at him, causing loud rumbles with each long jump. Its jumping left the spot in a scorching mess of rubble.

Ethan took out his sword and activated [Muscle Enhancement] to raise his physical capability by twofold.

Just as the giant toad was on top of him, he used [Inferno Leap] to dodge to the side, causing a loud rumble of smoke at the spot.

Balancing himself, Ethan was about to launch a decisive strike at the giant toad. However, its giant limb came down upon him swiftly. He didn't have time to react. Its agility and power were on a different level.

"Bang!"

He was thrown to the side like a ragdoll, using its giant mass of his paws.

"Cough! Cough!" Spewing out fresh blood non-stop, Ethan found it hard to stand up for a moment.

Fortunately, his new skill [Muscle Enhancement] saved him from immediate organ ruptures.

He didn't expected it to be so powerful even at the solo level.

His [Blaze Guard] was helping him withstand the intense heat the giant toad was emitting.

So, he had a moment to think of a proper plan.

Only then he noticed a large triangular-shaped stone on the ceiling. Its sharp tip was pointing directly at the ground. If he could somehow use it to his advantage, he might stand a chance to defeat the boss.

Ethan immediately sprang into action, using [Azula Sword Strike] to tick it off a little.

As if right on cue, The giant followed him with a menacing look on its face. It was clearly angry at his provocation.

Realizing the first stage of his plan was a success, Ethan started moving towards the direction where the sharp stone was placed on top.

Using [Inferno Leap], he jumped from the ground, and the giant toad followed him from behind. Observing this, he grinned. Now, only the last stage was left. He gripped his titanium sword tightly and used [Azula Sword Strike] along with [Muscle Enhancement] to break the rock hanging from the ceiling.

“Boom!”

“Rumble!”

The sharp-tipped rock crashed, falling directly on the ground straight at the top of the giant toad. As for Ethan, he had already sidestepped according to his plan earlier. A perfect plan.

He grinned slightly, awaiting the giant toad’s demise.

“Croak!”

Followed by a miserable scream, the massive sharp rock fell on top of the giant toad.

It pierced its body from the front.

A wave of fiery ashes spread everywhere, turning the visibility on low.

It should have died by now... However, after waiting for a while as the dust settled, Ethan still didn’t receive any notification regarding the confirmation of his kill.

Chapter 23: Chapter 23: Special Skill: Monster Breeding

After the vision cleared, Ethan cautiously approached the creature to see if it was still alive. If it was, he would have to deliver the finishing blow to end its suffering.

Of course, these creatures never stay dead for long. They have a way of respawning almost daily, driven by some mystical dungeon powers.

As he drew nearer, he could hear the faint, labored croaks of the fire toad.

“CROAK!”

Suddenly, sensing his presence, the bloodied and battered fire toad emerged from the rubble with a chilling roar. Its eyes glowed with a mix of pain and defiance, and its body trembled as it struggled to rise.

Despite its severe injuries, a violent red aura enveloped it, flickering like flames around its wounded form. The air around it seemed to shimmer with heat, distorting the space and casting eerie shadows on the ground.

The creature's once vibrant scales were now dull and cracked, leaking a dark, thick fluid that sizzled as it hit the scorched earth.

It was clear the fire toad was on the brink of death, but the aura suggested it was channeling its remaining life force into one last act of defiance. Each breath it took was ragged and shallow, accompanied by weak embers escaping from its mouth.

He understood that it was clinging to life with every ounce of strength it had left, preparing for a final, desperate stand.

The giant toad began releasing an abundant amount of fiery breath from its mouth, turning the whole area into a blazing inferno. Flames surged and crackled, engulfing everything in their path.

However, Ethan remained unharmed, shielded by his E-Rank skill: "Blaze Guard." The flames licked harmlessly around him, leaving him unscathed in the midst of the firestorm.

Frustrated by its failed attempt, the toad revealed its fiery tongue, aiming to crush him into a bloody mess. He swiftly dodged using [Inferno Leap], the heat of the toad's attack barely grazing him as he moved.

Undeterred, the giant toad lunged at him with its massive paws, intent on turning him into a meat paste. Each strike was powerful enough to shatter bones, but he evaded them by repeatedly casting [Inferno Leap], his agility keeping him just out of reach. He could see the fury in its eyes as it became more desperate.

Gradually, the giant toad's movements grew sluggish, and its attacks became erratic. It was exhausting itself, and he knew it was time to strike.

Seizing the perfect opportunity, he activated [Muscle Enhancement], feeling a surge of strength course through his body. Then, he prepared his titanium runic sword and activated [Azula Sword Strike].

With a final burst of speed, he used [Inferno Leap] to close the distance and finish the kill, plunging his sword into the toad with a powerful, precise strike.

"Slice!"

"Bang!"



Finally, the giant toad fell to the ground with its head cleanly severed. Green blood gushed out, spreading everywhere and filling the air with a pungent, metallic smell. The sight was both gory and triumphant.

Ding!"

[ Congratulations! You have leveled up. ]

[ Congratulations! You have leveled up. ]

Whoa! Two levels in a row!

Ethan had finally reached level 10 as a hunter. The journey had been fraught with challenges, but the outcome was worth it. He felt a surge of pride and relief wash over him.

He approached the toad's corpse, and after a moment, it triggered a monster drop. Shimmering lights and items materialized around the body. He eagerly examined his loot.

[ Skills:

[ Predator's Instinct (E) – Passive. Allows the user to sense danger up to a certain limit ]

[ Enraged Boost (E) – Active. Temporarily increases magical power output by 50%.]

[ Items:]

[ Fire Toad's (Elite) Tooth: Rare material for crafting weapons and artifacts.]

[ Fiery Boots: Made from Elite Fire Toad's skin and bones. They grant the user agility +8 and high jumping ability. ]

"Nice!" he smiled, satisfied with his rewards. A smile spread across his face as he imagined the new possibilities these rewards would bring.

Two good skills and two rare items—both are going to help him a lot. Still, he regretted not being able to cast skill absorption on the boss monster.

Then, he looked around the floor, hoping to find something useful. According to his knowledge, there should be a dungeon core around here. With renewed fervor, he started searching for it.

However, after scouring every corner, he couldn't find it anywhere.

“Where is that thing?” he muttered in frustration.

“Click!” Just as he was about to lose all hope, a hidden chamber opened in one corner of the wall with a soft mechanical sound.

Peering inside the chamber, he found the dungeon core he had been searching for. It was a large, rounded ball, encased in a shimmering magical barrier. The core pulsed with a faint, otherworldly light, its surface etched with intricate, glowing runic patterns.

The barrier looked formidable, but he knew it wouldn’t be a problem. With his Appraisal skill, he could decipher its weaknesses, even if only slightly.

Concentrating, he used his skill to analyze the barrier. Gradually, he unraveled its enchantments, and the protective field dissipated.

The dungeon core was now exposed, radiating its powerful energy in its glorious, shiny form. It was the heart of this dungeon, and holding it in his hands felt like a significant victory.

“Can I really take it for myself?” he asked himself, sounding unsure.

He touched the dungeon core and tried to move it, but it didn’t budge an inch. It was magnetically glued to the stone altar somehow.

Gradually, he increased his strength using all his boost skills, but he still remained unsuccessful.

“Huff!” He sweated, finding the task incredibly challenging. Not even a level 20 individual might find this task possible.

What should he do? He didn’t want to leave it just like that. It would leave a bad taste in his mouth. He was expecting a good reward from it, after all.

He pondered hard on the matter. Time was running out before he was cast out of the dungeon.

Just as he was deep in thought, an idea suddenly crossed his mind. Rather than removing it, why not use [Skill Absorption] on it? Although he didn’t know if it would work, it was worth a try.

“Skill Absorption!”

“Ding!”

[ Congratulations! You have acquired a special skill: Monster Breeding.]

[ Monster Breeding: You are now capable of breeding monsters in a dimensional space. You can summon them whenever you wish. Current Level: 1 ]

[ Current summonable monsters: Fire Toads and Flame Serpents. Unit: 5x.]

[ Note: Summoning units will consume your mana directly.]

He stared at the system panel in shock. He had gained an overpowered skill just like that. It would be extremely helpful for solo dungeon clearing next time.

“Rumble!”

Just as he was celebrating, the whole dungeon started shaking crazily as if it was about to collapse. He noticed a crack forming on the dungeon core’s surface as if it was about to shattered. Had he caused this somehow?

There was no time to ponder. He hurriedly sprinted toward the exit, using all the speed he could muster. Fortunately, he had put on the Fiery Boots. They helped him leap side to side, narrowly avoiding falling rocks and collapsing walls.

Unfortunately, In his haste, he dropped the Fire Toad’s teeth on the way without even realising it. It was already about to spill out because of it big size. So it was somewhat expectable.

Well, no matter. His life was more important than a teeth, I guess.

After a tense escape, he was lucky enough to make it out of the dungeon alive.

Chapter 24: Chapter 24: Dungeon Disappearance

“Sh\*t!”

Ethan looked at the destroyed dungeon in shock. The entire structure had completely collapsed, now buried underground.

“Hey, what just happened? How did the dungeon collapse all of a sudden?”

“Oh heavens! How did this happen?”

“I don’t know, I just got here.”

The commotion drew the attention of a lot of people. Hunters, townsfolk, and curious onlookers gathered, their voices rising in a chorus of confusion and concern.

Ethan quickly blended into the crowd to avoid suspicion, his heart still erratic from the frantic escape of dungeon collapse. He kept his head down and moved with the flow of people, listening to their bewildered conversations while trying to steady his breathing.

“This kind of thing has never happened before. It’s really a mystery.”

Taking a deep breath, Ethan quietly slipped away from the place. His presence was inconspicuous as it could be. He walked like nothing happened.

“Neigh, Neigh!”

“Hee...hah!”

As he neared the inn, he noticed a lot of horses and carriages heading towards the collapsed dungeon site. They must be officials from the city government, likely having just received the news.

Fortunate timing, he thought, exhaling a sigh of relief. He was lucky to have escaped before their arrival. Blending into the evening shadows, he made his way to his living quarters.

Once inside, he locked the door behind him and leaned against it, finally allowing himself a moment of respite.

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In the City Lord’s mansion:

“My Lord, we have just received a report of an unusual disappearance of an F-class dungeon within the city,” the butler announced, his voice steady yet urgent.

The city lord, a middle-aged man exuding an air of authority, looked up from his work, his attention immediately captured by the unexpected news.

“A dungeon disappeared? What kind of joke is this? Did you verify it yourself, Butler Jeffrey?” The city lord chuckled lightly, finding the report hard to believe.

“No, my lord. But the news is 100% true. We got it directly from the Night Patrol Division. Moreover, other citizens also discovered it with their very own eyes,” Butler Jeffrey replied calmly.

City Lord Longus frowned at the confirmation, finding the situation very critical. He asked with raised brows, “Which one disappeared, Jeffrey?”

“It’s the F-class dungeon, Fire Toad’s Den at the riverside to the west. We haven’t identified any specific suspect yet.”

The city lord's expression grew serious, his mind racing through the potential ramifications.

"Okay, immediately investigate the matter using all the resources we have. Handle this with special care. This matter is really serious."

"Yes, my lord. As you wish," the butler replied, bowing deeply.

As the butler left, Longus Emberion fell into deep thought.

"What could be the reason for this sudden disturbance? Is there some kind of deep conspiracy against humans? If this happens more frequently, won't it spell the end for the human race?" he pondered, gazing at the serene lakeside view from the mansion.

"Dad, I saw Butler Jeffrey leaving in a hurry. Did something serious happen?" came the crisp voice of a young girl with red hair.

"Ah, Lenora, my dear, why are you here?" City Lord Longus asked, returning from his reverie as he noticed his daughter standing in the room.

"Forget about me, Dad. Tell me what's going on with you. You looked so worried. And don't try to lie to me; I noticed you spacing out earlier." Lenora asked with some worry.

With a heavy sigh, City Lord Longus patted his daughter's head and answered slowly, "Lenora, an F-class dungeon disappeared just a while ago. I suspect the demons are behind it.

They've been making a lot of moves lately. If these disappearances become more frequent, it could be catastrophic for us. While we don't know if they can do it on a large scale, it's still very concerning. Humanity relies on these dungeons for improvement after all."

Lenora's beautiful face frowned with worry, her green eyes reflecting the gravity of the situation. "A dungeon disappeared! Which one, Dad?"

"It's called Fire Toad's Den," City Lord Longus replied, his voice tinged with unease. "It was a crucial training ground for our young adventurers and a source of rare resources. The loss is a significant blow to our city's future."

"Fire Toad's Den? Isn't that the place where Ethan was grinding?" Lenora Emberion's thoughts moved to a certain person with black hair. "Is he okay?"

Seeing his daughter in an absentminded state, he called out to her, "What are you thinking so deeply, my dear?"

Lenora bit her lip before answering, "Dad, didn't I tell you about a black-haired boy with high potential? He was also grinding there. I haven't seen him since yesterday, where we were supposed to meet. I'm a little worried."

"Ohh..You should go and look for the boy. Make sure he's safe."

"Alright, Dad. I will do as you say."

"Wait, don't go now. Look for him tomorrow," her father reminded.

"By the way, what was that boy's potential again? I forgot; my attention must have been elsewhere."

"Dad, how can you forget such an important detail? It's S+ grade. I saw it with my inherent skill, Ember's Eyes."

"Wh-What? S+ grade? That boy has transcendental potential? Is it true?" Longus asked, astonished. City Lord Longus was an S-Rank powerhouse, so he knew what S+ potential means. That's why he was excited a little.

He was trying hard all the while to reach to Transcendental level himself. But he failed many time due to exhausting all of his potential.

Lenora nodded confidently. "Yes."

"If that's true, why didn't you invite him to join our clan?" City Lord Longus asked impatiently.

Lenora rolled her eyes. "Dad, we just met. You want me to invite him right away? You're hopeless."

Embarrassed, the city lord apologized, "Sorry, sorry, dear. But be sure to invite him next time, alright?"

"Okay, Dad. I will invite him to join our after we get to know each other."

Chapter 25: Chapter 25: Obtaining E-Rank Hunter License

[ Name: Aengus Degaro (Ethan Smith) ]

[ Occupation: Hunter ]

[ Race: Human ]

[ Level: 10 ]

[ Class: None ]

[ Age: 18 ]

[ Strength: 27 ]

[ Agility: 23 ]

[ Defense: 22 ]

[ Mana: 8,070/8,070 ]

Attribute points: 0

Skills:

– Active: Inferno Leap -3 (D), Azula Sword Strike-2 (E), Muscles Enhancement-2 (E), Enraged (E), Paralyzing Breath (E)

– Passive: Blaze Guard -2 (E), Fire Serpent's Digestion (E), Predator's Instinct (E)

Special skills: Monster Breeding (Level-1)

– Unique Skills : Appraisal (Basic), Skill Absorption (Mythic), Universal Synthesis (Ultimate)

Equipment: Titanium Runic Sword (D)

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Ethan felt a wave of satisfaction as he looked at the progress he'd made so far. It had definitely left a significant mark on his growth. Early in the morning, he gazed at the bustling streets with a smile on his face. He had become a Rank-E hunter, though it wasn't official yet. Still, it had taken him less than a week to reach this level, and he had done it solo.

"Big brother, breakfast downstairs!" Emily's sweet call, as pleasant as a bird's chirping, reached his ears.

Ethan headed downstairs to enjoy a sumptuous breakfast.

"Bro, did you hear? An F-class dungeon has mysteriously disappeared out of nowhere. And no one knows how it happened. I mean, how could a dungeon disappear? Aren't they formed by nature itself?" one guest said mysteriously.

Yes, I heard about it too. The municipal guards and the knights are taking the investigation very seriously,” another guest replied.

“Hey, forget about the dungeon. I heard some mysterious guy bought nearly all the mana orbs available in the market. It caused quite a commotion today,” a third guest added. “And that’s not all. The same guy sold a lot of D-Grade Sentient Swords as well.”

“Wow! A sentient sword? How enviable!”

“Yeah, it’s incredible! How amazing must that person be to afford so many sentient swords?

In the past, we rarely found a few, but now they’re available in the market for just 7,000 silver coins each. Perhaps he’s a legendary weaponsmith or something? If so, then why hide while selling them? Really mind boggling!”

“I heard they’re going to auction them today,” said another.

“Yeah, bro, if only I had the money, I would have joined the auction to get one for myself. Why are we so poor?” another guest grumbled, slapping his forehead.

While waiting in the dining room for breakfast, Ethan overheard the guests talking about his exploits from the previous night. His actions yesterday had been a little crazy, so he reminded himself to handle things more carefully from now on.

After breakfast, he strolled through the bustling market, seeking useful information about a new dungeon to conquer. Strangely enough, he felt a tense atmosphere throughout the market. Guards, knights, and suspicious people were lurking everywhere, as if they were searching for something.

With a casual expression, he passed through them without fear. That seemed the best course of action to him for now. Then, he headed to the hunter’s guild to get his E-Rank hunter license.

Without a license, he couldn’t even enter the higher-rank dungeons in the city. Although, there was another option to join a party to kill the ferocious beasts in the wilderness, but that idea seemed pretty far fetch to him. He was not ready to venture into the wilderness yet.

“Hey, Melinda, good morning!” Ethan greeted the receptionist introduced by Aria, as soon as he entered the hunter’s guild.

Today, Melinda was wearing a long Sapphire blue dress, looking more feminine than usual. Her glasses also added extra charm to her appearance.



“Oh, Ethan, you’re here. Good morning!” she replied with a soft smile. “I didn’t think you would still be alive.” Melinda replied with an inexplicable smile.

“Yeah, I made it somehow. But, you look more beautiful than ever, Melinda,” Ethan complimented sincerely. Her long Sapphire blue dress with red streaks, along with her glasses, made her look stunning.

“Oh, thank you, Ethan. I usually don’t wear these kinds of clothes. But today, I’m going on a date with my fiancé at noon. So, yeah...”

Ethan smiled. “Congrats, Melinda! I wish you the best.”

Considering Melinda’s real age, it wasn’t surprising she had a fiancé already. She should have gotten married by now.

She shrugged. “Forget about me. Why are you here? Are you here to sell your spoils once again?”

Ethan shook his head. “No, Melinda. I’m here to take my advancement test for the E-Rank hunter license this time.”

The requirements for reaching E-Rank was to reach Level 10 + 2 active skills. Other power ranks were the same.

Level 25→ D-Rank

Level 40 →C-Rank

Level 60 → B-Rank

Level 80 →A-Rank

Level 100→ S-Rank

With each 10 level up, one gets 1 added active skill slot + 1 passive skill slot.

That means, at level 100, one could equip a total of 11 active skills and 12 passive skills.

On the other hand, he had already equipped half of the maximum number of skills, which was extremely abnormal. Was it simply because he had been reincarnated into this body, giving him a powerful soul, or were there entirely different reasons behind it?

Fortunately, he hadn’t revealed his skills out of cautiousness, otherwise it would have been really problematic. He had no choice to reveal his short progress, because he won’t be able to enter higher tier dungeon without the licence.

“Ohh...Okay, then. Come with me.” Melinda nodded, a little shocked by his progress.

## Chapter 26: Chapter 26: Auction House

They entered a room filled with various measuring device and training facilities.

There, she measured his level and tested his skills for the documentation.

Ethan revealed what was is only necessary while hiding other abilities after learning the requirement list. That way he could be safe more. The previous incidents reminded him to be cautious, never to do anything reckless again.

After an hour's of gruelling process, Finally Ethan got his E-Rank hunter license, and headed out from the Guild.

“Ethan, you're here. Thank goodness!” A crisp female voice called out to him.

Ethan turned to see Lenora Emberion, the girl in fiery red from the tavern. Her sudden appearance surprised him, especially since she finally used his real name for the first time ever.

“Why are you here, Lenora?” He asked, knowing full well the answer. He realized he missed her invitation to the dungeon raid due to being at the prison at that time.

Lenora's face turned into a slight pout. “What do you mean by ‘Why am I here’? You missed our appointment for the dungeon raid! Why didn't you show up?” Her tone was like that of an annoyed kitten.

“Uh...” Feeling a twinge of guilt, he said, “I'm sorry, Lenora. I was caught up in an unfortunate accident, so I wasn't able to join you guys.”

Lenora's expression softened a bit. His sincere apology touched her soul.

“O-Okay, if you say so. I accept your apology. Now, let's go somewhere to talk in detail,” she said, pointing towards a luxury looking tavern.

Ethan, sensing Lenora's discomfort, agreed.

“Sure. Let's go.”

They went to a beautifully decorated tavern with a serene atmosphere. The place was luxurious, with ornate decorations and a royal aristocratic vibe. The sweet smell of incense filled the air, creating a perfect setting for their conversation.

Although Ethan was unsure about spending time here with someone five years younger than him to be exact, Lenora seemed to enjoy the place, so he went along. The dishes were expensive, costing as much as an average family's monthly expenditure. However, recalling his ability to earn money easily, he decided to splurge a bit.

As they ordered a variety of expensive dishes, they resumed their conversation.

"Ethan, the rest of my party members are really mad at you now. They started cleaning out the dungeon on their own. What are you going to do?" Lenora's snake-like eyes locked onto Ethan's.

Ethan chuckled softly, imagining their reaction amusing and troubling. He could imagine how they would react when he met them again. While he wasn't sure if he needed a party, considering he could handle things solo, he didn't want to be alone and lonely like his previous life.

He wanted to change and find joy. Despite the cruel people in this world, there were good ones too, like Aria, Aunt Greta, and perhaps this girl in front of him. Her character still needed to be evaluated further.

"I'll apologize to them when we meet, Lenora. That day was really hectic for me," Ethan replied softly, not going into details.

Lenora smiled lightly, satisfied with Ethan's response. Their lunch continued with occasional talk, laughter, and chuckles. They planned to set another raid together with her party two days later. She told him that she would try to convince them again.

Afterwards, Ethan went to the hunter's market to buy materials for upgrading his sword. Although his D-Rank sentient sword was powerful, he wanted to upgrade it further for added assurance.

Thereafter, he learned that a nearby Auction House would feature valuable materials. However, he needed more money than he had—about 500-700 gold coins, according to the market.

So, once again he discreetly gathered more funds by selling a few sentient weapons once again. After a while, he amassed a total of 500 gold coins—in bank notes this time. Otherwise, who would carry this much money.

He put the bank notes in his pocket and left for Auction House with quick steps.

Unbeknownst to him, a small boy of 10 began to follow him in secret, his actions finally catching someone's attention.

At the Heavenly Florence auction house, Ethan registered as a participant. The staff were taken aback by the amount of wealth as he displayed the banknotes before them.

It's not like they haven't seen that much money on others, but considering his background and age, it was a bit surprising.

"Alright, Sir, your procedure is complete. You can proceed to the venue," the staff said with a smile. They didn't forget to take the entrance fee at all.

Ethan nodded and made his way to his seat in the large auction hall.

The auction hall was a circular building with a small stage in the center. Ordinary people sat on designated seats surrounding the stage, while VIPs occupied the rooms above.

Ethan surveyed the grand venue filled with guests, wondering if they were all there to bid or simply to watch the spectacle. The thrill of witnessing others spend money with reckless abandon seemed to be part of the excitement for many. It was as if the act of spending, more than the actual purchase, held a certain allure in this gathering.

As the grand venue continued to fill up, a young man beside Ethan leaned in and whispered, "Hey, dude, are you here for bid as well? Or, are you also here for watching others throw their money around, like me?"

Ethan turned to see a skinny young man with loose brown hair, his clothes a bit rumpled, suggesting he was likely a commoner as well. The young man's curious eyes hinted at a mix of eagerness and uncertainty.

"I'm here to buy something," Ethan replied calmly, his tone measured. "What's it to you?"

"Nothing, dude. Just asking casually," the young man responded, trying to sound nonchalant. "So, what are you planning to bid on?"

Ethan found the young man's curiosity meddlesome. Rather than indulging him, he simply turned his gaze back to the stage, choosing to ignore the question entirely. The less attention he drew to himself, the better. In a place like this, keeping one's intentions under wraps was a matter of survival.

Chapter 27: Chapter 27: Wyvern Bone

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our monthly auction ceremony! Hold your horses, folks, because we have a selection of treasures that you'll definitely want to claim for yourself," announced the middle-aged auctioneer, stepping confidently into the spotlight.

His voice echoed through the grand hall, commanding the attention of the diverse crowd gathered below.

The hall was abuzz with excitement. Ornate chandeliers cast a warm glow over the sea of eager faces, while the rich, red velvet drapes added an air of opulence to the venue.

Wealthy patrons, collectors, and curious newcomers filled the plush seats, their eyes fixed on the auctioneer and the treasures yet to be revealed.

With that, the ceremony commenced to a chorus of enthusiastic applause and cheers. The atmosphere was electric, charged with anticipation and the thrill of potential discoveries.

Ethan waited with bated breath, his heart racing in anticipation of the materials he was interested in. He sat towards the back, his eyes scanning the stage as assistants wheeled out the first items for bidding.

The flicker of gold, the shimmer of rare gems, and the gleam of ancient artifacts captured the attention of the audience, their murmurs filling the room.

While his primary goal remained paramount, Ethan couldn't help but feel a spark of curiosity about the other intriguing items the auction might unveil. He noted the competition around him—seasoned bidders with steely gazes, their wealth and determination evident. Not to forget, the VIP nobles as well.

Yet, he was undeterred, his resolve strengthened by the 650 gold coins he possessed. It was not a low number. It should be enough to buy some materials, right?

The auctioneer, holding a small vial, announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, our first item is an A-grade health restoration potion. Crafted by a renowned alchemist, this potion can restore a dying man to full health in seconds."

Gasps and astonished murmurs filled the room as participants reacted to the high value of the potion. The sheer rarity of such an item sent a ripple of excitement through the crowd, and even the most seasoned collectors couldn't hide their amazement.

Ethan was also surprised. "An A-grade potion! Amazing!" he thought, his eyes widening as he leaned forward in his seat. The potion's shimmering liquid seemed almost magical, a testament to its alchemical perfection.

"The starting price for this precious item is 5,000 gold coins, with bidding increments of 100 gold coins," the auctioneer declared, his voice brimming with confidence and authority.

As soon as the emcee finished speaking, VIP guests jumped into the fray, bidding with fervor. An A-grade health potion was indeed a rare find, and for many, it was a lifeline. The atmosphere in the hall grew intense as guests from the VIP rooms raised their paddles, their voices overlapping in a cacophony of determination and desire.

“Five thousand gold coins!” shouted one VIP bidder, swiftly followed by another. Regular commoner could stare at the scene with envy. 5,000 gold coins were a lot to them. They counted the numbers in silver coins and bronze coins, reminding how high it was out of their league.

“5100!”

“5200!”

“5500!”

Ethan watched the escalating bids, his heart pounding. He marveled at the intensity of the competition, recognizing the potion’s potential to tip the scales in any critical situation. His fingers drummed on his armrest as he calculated his own resources, and found out that he don’t even qualify to bid for an A-Rank item.

Well, It’s not like he won’t get his chance to get one. They started with A-Rank item first, likely to make the venue exciting from the start.

As the bids soared higher, the auctioneer’s hammer hovered, ready to strike.

As Ethan remained silent, the person beside Ethan seemed excited a little. “Wow! A rare item right off the bat! Looks like this auction is going to be something special. What do you think, dude?”

Ethan shrugged. “Who knows?”

“6,700,” came a dignified voice from Room No 21.

“6,700 gold coins from Room No 21. Is there any higher bid?” the auctioneer called out, scanning the room for any remaining contenders.

No further bids came in. The price had already exceeded most people’s budgets, and the air was thick with the realization that the first item had set a high bar for the evening.

The auctioneer began the final call, his voice measured and deliberate. “6,700, once. 6,700, twice. 6,700, sold!” With a decisive strike of the gavel, the A-grade health potion was claimed.

As the first item was successfully sold, a murmur of excitement and anticipation rippled through the crowd. The auction had begun with a bang, and expectations were now sky-high.

Ethan grew concerned about whether the auction would feature the materials he needed. He tapped his foot anxiously, recalling the detailed information he had gathered.

According to his sources, the rare and essential components he sought should be available here. But with such fierce competition and sky-high prices, he worried about his chances.

He adjusted his position, trying to maintain a calm demeanor despite the uncertainty gnawing at him. The thrill of the auction was undeniable, but for Ethan, it was more than just a spectacle—it was a crucial opportunity to acquire what he needed for his sword. His mind raced with strategies, ready to seize the moment when the items he sought would finally appear on the auction stage.

The auction continued, with rare items being presented one after another. Ethan's mood grew heavier as he failed to find any materials suitable for his needs. His eyes were glued to the stage, hoping for the right opportunity.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the item number 21 on our list is a set of five D-Rank Sentient swords, each with special effects attached. You know how rare it is to find this kind of weapons, right? So let's get started."

The auctioneer paused for dramatic effect before continuing. "The starting price is set at 350 Gold coins for all five swords, with increments of 10 coins each."

"Finally, something affordable for people like us!" murmured the common hunters, excitement flickering in their eyes.

"Yes, leader, we should definitely get these swords," one of them urged, nodding eagerly.

The common hunters began discussing among themselves, their interest evident. Meanwhile, the nobles in the VIP rooms dismissed the swords with a wave of indifference, considering them less valuable compared to the more exotic items they usually pursued.

Ethan was surprised to see his swords being auctioned there. Then It also meant that he might be able to find his desired materials soon. He leaned forward, intrigued by the shift in dynamics. The auction had primarily catered to the elite, but this item opened the floor to a different group of bidders, bringing a new energy to the room.

He was also interested in seeing how his swords would fare in this auction. The D-Rank Sentient swords, though not the most powerful, were rare and useful. Their sentence meant they could potentially grow stronger and develop unique abilities over time, making them valuable assets for any hunter.

As the bidding commenced, Ethan watched closely. The common hunters' excitement was evident as they raised their paddles, their voices competing in a fervent but friendly rivalry.

"350 Gold coins!" a party leader bid.

"360," another bidder added with a fierce grin.

Despite the aggressive bidding, others were not deterred. The auction continued with increasing bids.

"370."

"400."

"450!"

"500!"

At last, the swords were sold to a party of six hunters for 600 gold coins. Ethan was astonished. He had sold each sword for 50 gold coins each, and here they had been auctioned for double that amount.

He wondered if he should have auctioned them instead, but given that he was a bulk seller, such a result was somewhat expected.

"Now, for the next item, we have a single chest bone from an adolescent Wyvern. It's a C-Grade material and highly valuable for crafting," the auctioneer announced with a smile.

The crowd gasped. Although Wyvern bones were not extremely rare, they were still considered valuable for weapon crafting. The murmurs of excitement and appreciation filled the hall as attendees discussed the potential uses for such a material.

Ethan's interest was instantly piqued. He had been looking for this type of material for his sword. If he could get it, his sword would receive a significant upgrade. His eyes focused intently on the bone displayed on stage, its smooth, ivory surface gleaming under the lights.

Chapter 28: Chapter 28: The Key to the Ancient Land

The auctioneer's voice echoed through the grand hall, "The starting price is 500 gold coins, with increments of 50 gold coins. Let the bidding commence."



Ethan's eyes widened at the announcement. He hadn't anticipated the item to be valued so high. He quickly calculated in his head—he only had 650 gold coins. Would it be enough?

Sensing Ethan's interest and uncertainty, the young man beside him leaned in, a sly grin spreading across his face. "So, you're eyeing that piece, but short on funds, huh?"

Ethan, caught off guard, nodded and replied firmly, "Yes."

With a mischievous twinkle in his eye, the young man produced a few banknotes from his pocket and handed them to Ethan. Ethan's surprise deepened as he realized he was holding notes worth exactly 600 gold coins. He stared at the young man in disbelief.

Why does he have so much money? At first he thought he was just a commoner, but now...Ethan began to doubt the young man's identity.

"Haha..." The young man's smile grew wider, sensing Ethan's curiosity.

The young man chuckled. "You can ask me questions later. Use this for now," he said, laughing.

Coming to his senses, Ethan accepted his help and quickly placed his bid. "500 gold coins."

The auctioneer's eyes turned to Ethan. "We have a bid of 500 gold coins. Is there any higher bid?"

"600," a burly man from the back raised his hand, glaring fiercely at Ethan.

"650," Ethan raised his paddle and said calmly.

"700," said a girl from the back.

Ethan looked at the girl, and shouted, "750!"

"770!" The girl raised once again, struggling a little.

"850!" Ethan said, not caring about the beautiful girl at all.

Hearing his bid, the girl backed down with a disheartened face.

"900 Gold... Coins..!" The burly man gritted his teeth, his gaze never leaving Ethan. He was also close to his limit. 900 is already a lot for a commoner hunter like him. His hesitation spoke the truth.

Ethan remained calm and composed.

“1100 GOLD coins,” he declared, his voice steady.

“What! Is this guy mad? Directly raising it to 1100? What a moron!” Some guest whispered, taking Ethan for a fool.

On the other hand, Ethan had raised his bid to 1100 gold coins, intending to intimidate the burly man and discourage any further competition.

The room fell silent for a moment, the tension palpable as everyone waited for the burly man’s response.

The burly man hesitated, clearly weighing his options, before finally shaking his head and lowering his hand in defeat.

“Congratulations to participant no. 987 for obtaining the adolescent Wyvern bone,” the auctioneer announced loudly, looking at Ethan.

At long last, Ethan had secured the bone of a Wyvern for 1,100 gold coins. The burly man gave Ethan a fierce glare, but Ethan didn’t care. It was worth the trouble.

He picked up the Wyvern bone from backstage and returned quickly. The bone was remarkably sturdy and etched with intricate runic symbols. It was about three feet long, so he had to place it in a large box. Taking the box, Ethan sat down and looked at the young man beside him with grateful eyes.

“Thanks for that. My name is Ethan Smith. What’s yours?” Ethan asked softly, extending a hand for a handshake.

The young man chuckled lightly before replying, “You’re welcome, Ethan. My name is Leon. Forget about my family name for now. Nice to meet you.” He flashed a bright smile.

“Yeah, same to you. But can you tell me why you helped me?” Ethan asked, curiosity evident in his voice. No one helped for no reason, right?

Leon leaned back in his chair, his eyes twinkling with amusement. “Because you needed it. Aren’t I right? Moreover, I can tell you won’t cheat me. I observed you closely earlier. You don’t look like someone who cares about money.”

Seeing Ethan’s confusion, Leon elaborated, his voice taking on a more serious tone. “Look at these people,” he said, gesturing subtly to the crowd around them. “Whenever they hear a large amount of money, their faces glow with greed and desire. They whisper, plot, and scheme. But you? You’re different. Your focus is on something far more significant than gold.”

Ethan's gaze followed Leon's gesture, taking in the eager faces, the eyes that shone with avarice at every bid. He saw the truth in Leon's words but still couldn't shake off his doubts. "What if I ran off with your money? What then?"

Leon's laugh was hearty, drawing a few curious glances from nearby bidders. "If that happened, my character judgment would be a joke," he said, his smile widening. Then, his expression turned steely, eyes sharp as daggers. "But trust me, no one can cheat me out of my money. I have ways of ensuring that doesn't happen."

Ethan felt a chill run down his spine at Leon's sudden change in demeanor. It was clear that this young man had layers he couldn't yet fathom. "I see," he said slowly, nodding in acknowledgment. "Well, I'm grateful for your help. I will return the money for sure."

Ethan became curious about this stranger's background. Leon looked so confident, as if he were some kind of lord or something. At first, Ethan thought him a minor character with a meddlesome personality. But now, Leon seemed entirely different.

"Is he one of those low-key protagonists, or some kind of mysterious side character?" Ethan wondered.

Deciding to find out more, Ethan cast Appraisal to uncover Leon's identity. To his shock, it didn't work. That could only mean one thing: Leon was at least above level 50. How frightening! What was he doing here?

Ethan's mind raced with possibilities. "Why would someone so powerful be at the commoners sitting area? It isn't normal at all," he thought, glancing at Leon with newfound respect and caution. The young man beside him wasn't just a generous stranger; he was a formidable presence, cloaked in mystery.

Leon seemed to notice Ethan's scrutiny and raised an eyebrow, a knowing smile playing on his lips. "Trying to figure me out, huh?" he asked lightly, his tone teasing yet gentle.

Ethan coughed and turned his attention to the stage, looking at different items with intrigue, as if there was no overpowered character beside him. After more than an hour, the auctioneer left the stage, leaving everyone confused. Soon, a grey-haired old man appeared on stage, bringing a hexagonal-shaped box with him.

As the ordinary participants quieted, excited sounds from the VIP rooms became more evident. What was so important inside the box that made these nobles so excited?

"Ethan, you might meet an unexpected event today," Ethan heard Leon mutter excitedly, with a hint of anticipation in his eyes.

The old man on stage cleared his throat, commanding the room's attention. "Honorable guests, I am Gresham Bel'or, the owner of this glorious auction hall. I am here to present the last precious item of today and witness the joy it will bring. This is a

salvation for mankind, a historical relic, and a piece of our glorious past. We are honored to present it to you after so many years of darkness.”

Ethan’s curiosity piqued even further. What could be so significant? He glanced at Leon, whose eyes were fixed on the stage, a fierce intensity burning within them.

Gresham Bel’or continued, his voice reverberating through the hall. “Alright, let the finale of this auction begin.”

With enthusiastic applause, the old man opened the hexagonal box, revealing an ancient-looking key that glimmered faintly under the stage lights.

“This,” Gresham Bel’or announced, his voice filled with reverence, “is the key to the ancient land of treasure, where our legendary hero Libros once obtained the famous Demon Slayer Sword.”

He paused, letting the weight of his words sink in as the crowd murmured in awe.

“You must be wondering,” he continued with a sly chuckle, “why I didn’t keep this treasure for myself?” His tone carried a hint of irony. “The answer is simple—it would require an astronomical amount of energy to activate. So, keep that in mind, honorable guests, as you consider its true value.”

The room buzzed with astonished whispers. The legend of Hero Libros and the Demon Slayer Sword was well-known, but the key to that ancient land had been thought lost forever.

“Wait! Is the key real, Gresham? Tell me honestly.” Suddenly, a deep and imposing voice boomed from one of the VIP rooms.

The old man stiffened slightly before replying, his tone respectful and reassuring. “Yes, my lord. I vouch for it with my honor.”

“Okay then. Proceed!” the overbearing person said arrogantly, his authority palpable.

Ethan’s eyes widened as he realized the gravity of the moment. The key to the ancient land of treasure was not just a relic; it was a gateway to untold power and wealth. He glanced at Leon, whose eyes were alight with a mix of anticipation and a fierce grin spread across his face as if he was waiting for some kind of prey to appear.

“It should be in any moment,” Leon whispered, his voice extremely calm all of a sudden.”

## Chapter 29: Chapter 29: The Hidden Undercurrents

Ethan kept quiet, choosing to stay out of the matters of such powerful characters. He knew meddling in their affairs could be perilous, perhaps even fatal.

"Alright, let's start the bidding," Gresham Bel'or announced. "You can place your bid as you wish for this item."

"5,000 gold coins." The bid came from a well-dressed VIP who looked both eager and determined. As soon as he finished speaking, several other VIPs joined in, their bids escalating with an urgency that suggested their lives might depend on it.

"Fools!" Leon muttered quietly, his disdain barely concealed. Ethan caught the words clearly and glanced at Leon with bafflement.

"7,000 gold coins."

"8,500 gold coins."

"9,000."

"10,500."

"15,000." The same imposing VIP bid, his voice dripping with arrogance as he glanced around the room, daring anyone to challenge him. His demeanor suggested he was a very high-level character, someone of considerable influence and power.

"He is the Devil Ape Clan's leader," Leon said, noticing Ethan's interest in the man. His voice was calm and controlled.

"Oh!" Ethan exclaimed, his curiosity piqued. "The Devil Ape Clan? Are there no other powerful clans that could rival him?"

Leon chuckled softly. "Haha, the real show hasn't started yet, dude. This is just the beginning. Watch closely."

As the bidding war intensified, Ethan could feel the tension in the air. The atmosphere was charged with anticipation and unspoken rivalries. He watched as the VIPs engaged in a fierce contest, knowing that the true significance of this auction was yet to unfold.

Just as the auction seemed to be winding down, a commotion erupted near the entrance, causing a stir among the attendees.

Dressed in luxurious robes, several new groups entered the auction hall, attracting immediate attention.

"Winged Tiger clan arrives!"

Following them, other prominent groups made their entrance.

“Thunder Leopard clan arrives!”

“Fire Crow clan arrives!”

“Silvermoon clan arrives!”

“Phantom Wolf clan arrives!”

Each clan was represented by 30-40 people, moving in organized groups of 5-6 important individuals each. The hall buzzed with excitement and curiosity as the new arrivals made their way to their VIP rooms, their presence adding an extra layer of tension to the already charged atmosphere.

Others watched in awe as these powerful clans entered, each one exuding an aura of authority and strength. They had heard tales of their influence, but seeing them in person was an entirely different experience. They were the five great clans of Arcadia City. Their mere presence commanded respect.

Ethan’s interest was piqued when he heard the names of the Fire Crow and Silvermoon clans. He scanned the crowd and spotted Aria and her uncle among the Silvermoon clan members. Aria’s father, a stern-looking man with sharp eyebrows, was in the center.

Among the Fire Crow clan, Ethan didn’t recognize anyone immediately, but his thoughts were preoccupied with Lenora. She also wasn’t present there. Neither was the leader of the Fire Crow clan. Instead, a few powerful elders were present.

The presence of these powerful clans brought an air of tension to the auction hall.

“Haha, how can you start the fun without us, Gideon?” laughed Mirrel Nortel, the leader of the Winged Tiger clan—a person in his fifties, while glancing disdainfully at the Devil Ape clan’s room through the transparent glass.

The leader of the Thunder Leopard clan, Zephyr Stormclaw, chimed in, “It seems Gideon doesn’t respect the five great clans anymore, now that he’s achieved S-Rank. So arrogant!” He snorted.

“Hmph..” In response, Gideon, the leader of the Devil Ape clan, snorted in irritation. “Whatever! But you should all know this: the key will belong to our clan in the end. No one can change that.”

The other clan leaders responded with disdain. “We’ll see about that.”

They all huffed and proceeded to their respective VIP rooms.

“See, brother, that Gideon never respects us. He’s so arrogant,” Astrid, Aria’s uncle, complained to Aria’s father.

Aria’s father sighed. “I know. He’s always been like that. But he’ll get his karma today. Isn’t this why we’re here?”

He paused before continuing after brief moment, “For now, focus on looking for any suspicious activity. Today’s mission should not fail; this is our primary goal.”

Aria, her uncle, and the rest of the Silvermoon clan members nodded in agreement.

As the Silvermoon clan members settled into their seats, Aria’s gaze unexpectedly fell on Ethan. “What is he doing here?” she wondered and became worried recalling their mission of coming here. This could be dangerous for Ethan, she realized, and her face turned pale.

Their eyes met, and they exchanged a brief nod.

Her father noticed the interaction and inquired, “Who is that boy, Aria? Do you know him?”

Aria’s uncle, recognizing Ethan as the boy he had saved from imprisonment, kept silent, curious about Aria’s response.

“Ah, um...” Aria hesitated. “Yes, Father, he’s a friend.”

Her father shook his head disapprovingly. “Aria, how many times must I tell you? You can’t just befriend anyone. It doesn’t fit your image as a noble.”

Aria lowered her gaze, feeling a pang of frustration and sadness. She wondered if her father would ever accept her feelings for Ethan if their relationship ever deepened.

Once everyone was seated, the auctioneer resumed. “We have received a few more honorable guests at our auction hall, so let’s continue where we left off.”

“Lord Gideon has offered 15,000 gold coins. Are there any higher bids?”

“We, from the Winged Tiger clan, offer 17,000 gold coins.”

“25,000 gold coins from the Fire Crow clan.”

“26,000 from the Thunder Leopard clan.”

“28,000.”

“29,000.”

The bidding escalated rapidly as each clan vied for the prize. The other participants could only watch in awe, realizing the stakes involved in this auction.

“Brother, the time is here. Shouldn’t we place our bid now?” Astrid asked, anxious.

Aria’s father remained calm. “Not yet. Wait for a little more.”

Aria, meanwhile, continued to focus intently on Ethan. Her uncle shook his head, realizing Aria’s distraction.

Gideon, fuming with frustration, raised his bid to 33,000 gold coins, nearing his limit.

“35,000,” the Fire Crow clan countered.

“36,000,” Gideon snapped, glaring at everyone with bloodshot eyes..

“Ba\*tards!”

It seemed the other clans were deliberately pushing Gideon to his limits.

“Brother, the price already gone so high,” Astrid said, concern evident in his voice. “We should bid now, right? Everything had gone according to our plan, after all.”

Aria’s father nodded. “Yes. Raise the stakes now. Push Gideon to the limit. Only then will he reveal his true face to us.”

“Okay, brother,” Aria’s uncle nodded and raised his paddle for an increased bid.

“Aria, focus! Where are you looking?” her father snapped.

“Hmph!” Aria pouted but returned to her seat in frustration. Her heart was full of worry regarding Ethan’s safety.

“We have a bid of 36,000 from the Devil Ape clan. Are there any higher bids?”

“40,000,” Aria’s uncle announced loudly.

The crowd gasped. “40,000? The Silvermoon clan is really wealthy.”

“Yes, as expected from an elite assassin clan.”

“Bang!” Gideon, furious, smashed his chair. “Damn these cockroaches! It looks like I have no choice.”



He turned to his subordinates. "Go and bring them here. It's time to make our move. We can't let them get the key for the humans."

His subordinates, clad in dark, imposing armor, nodded and quickly left the room, their movements precise and intimidating.

The tension in the auction hall escalated as people whispered among themselves, speculating about Gideon's next move.

However, even after awaiting for a while, there's no further offer from the Devil Ape Clan Leader, so the key went to the Silvermoon Clan.

"Congratulations to the Silvermoon clan for winning the auction at 40,000 gold coins," the auctioneer Gresham announced, prompting applause.

"Clap, clap!"

While the other attendees clapped, the major players in the room knew that something significant was about to unfold.

Ethan, sensing the rising tension, knew he had to stay vigilant. Despite his decision to avoid meddling, he couldn't shake the feeling that he was already too involved.

Chapter 30: Chapter 30: Betrayal?

"Ethan, Stay sharp!"

Leon's urgent warning snapped Ethan back to the present. The seriousness in Leon's eyes was stark against the chaos erupting around them. "Get to safety!" Leon's command was underscored by a cruel smile, hinting at something more sinister at play.

"What could be the reason for his sudden seriousness?"

Ethan's confusion turned to alarm as he scanned the auction hall. The luxurious ambiance had been abruptly overshadowed by an encroaching darkness. Strange humanoid creatures, their forms grotesquely twisted, emerged from every corner. With their horns jutting from their foreheads, tails flicking behind them, and eyes glowing an unnerving red, these creatures were unmistakably demons.

"Ah! Demons!"

"Help!"

The demons' presence sent ripples of terror through the crowd. Their sudden appearance was a brutal reminder of the dark history of this world, where two realms existed in constant strife.

Ethan suddenly recalled the history of this world. The vast world of Mythraldor was divided into two realms. The human land of Solis, blessed by the gods, and the demon land of Abyss, cursed and forsaken, were eternally at odds.

The vast majority of land of Solis were occupied by the humans, and alongside them lived Demi-humans and Elite magical creatures such as Dragons, Phoenix and more dominant ones.

On the other hand, Abyss was full of Demons, deemed the cruelest creatures for mankind.

Demons, the embodiment of cruelty and suffering, were bound to their bleak land until they found their Demon God. This Demon God deity granted them the power to breach the boundaries between the realms, leading to catastrophic invasions.

The history Ethan recalled detailed how the demons, after breaking into Solis, had wreaked havoc on humanity.

Then, came the Heroes who were picked by the system to grant Salvation for the humans.

The arrival of the Heroes, wielding the holy power of elements, was the only way kill these demons forever as demons were nearly immortals due to their species ability. Therefore the Heroes gained the status of deities from mankind, making them subjects of worship and reverence.

Their battles with the demons were fierce and costly, culminating in the defeat of the Demon God and a temporary retreat due to his serious injuries. The Demon God accumulated grudge with the heroes because of this.

However the heroes were not unscathed either. In that battle two out of seven heroes died, leaving humans in remorse for their loss.

Like this, the cyclical invasions, occurs every few centuries between two parties. As a aftermath billions common humans dies every time it occurs, even then no significant result achieved until the appearance of Hero Libros, titled The Demon Slayer. He got the Demon Slayer sword, and let the humans made the replicas of the sword.

These replicas allowed other regular hunters also joined in the fray and vanquish demons of their immortal ability. As a result, the humans gained an upper hand and sent back demons to the Abyss with catastrophic damage for the demons.

It happened nearly 500 years ago, and presently the demons began to extend their demonic clutches towards the Human Land once again.

Back to the present.

As the demons began their brutal assault, panic surged throughout the hall. Shouts of terror filled the air, and people scrambled, their fear palpable.

Ethan saw one unfortunate soul being drained of blood by a demon, his body rapidly desiccating into a skeletal husk. The sight was horrifying, underscoring the demons' deadly hunger.

Amid the chaos, Mirrel Nortel, leader of the Winged Tiger clan, stepped into the fray. His display of raw strength was impressive as he crushed a demon with his bare hands. Yet, even this did not end the threat, as the demon began regenerating almost immediately. The regenerative ability of the demons was a terrifying prospect. This was the same ability that made them unkillable 500 hundred years ago.

However, humanity had devised a countermeasure: Holy elemental swords capable of destroying even these creatures.

Mirrel brandished his Holy elemental sword, its blade shining with a purifying light. With a decisive swing, he struck the demon again, this time reducing it to ashes. The flames of purification consumed the demon, ensuring it could not regenerate.

"Silence!" Mirrel's commanding voice cut through the chaos, restoring a semblance of order. His authoritative presence reassured the crowd. "Everyone, calm down! These fiends cannot harm you as long as we five great clans are here."

Every clan members took out their Holy Elemental Sword as if they were prepared for this beforehand.

The other clan leaders, floating above the ground, exuded an aura of immense power, further reassuring the frightened crowd. Their combined presence was a formidable deterrent against the demonic threat.

Aria's father, Alger Silvermoon, addressed the crowd with a grave tone. "We have everything under control citizens.

From the beginning this trap was planned to deal with both the demons and the traitors among us." His declaration about the trap, using the ancient key as bait, sent a wave of murmurs through the crowd.

Ethan, though somewhat understanding the strategy, was troubled by the recklessness of risking so many lives.

“Yes, the lords are right guys. We have the best of the best powerhouses amongst us. We don’t need to worry.”

“Yeah, how can we forget the five great clan members are amongst us? They will save us for sure.” Some people began to murmur, feeling reassured.

“Hoho...”

As the crowd began to calm down somewhat, Gideon, the Devil Ape clan leader, made a dramatic entrance. With him were several high-ranking demons, their formidable presence adding to the tension.

“Ohh, are you that sure, cockroaches?” Gideon’s taunting words revealed his betrayal. “Look closely! I’ve brought these elder demons to ensure that no one leaves here alive.” His maniacal laughter filled the hall, heightening the dread.

Aria’s father’s voice thundered with righteous anger. “So, our suspicions were correct. You are the real traitor, Gideon!” The other clan leaders joined in the condemnation, their voices echoing their outrage.

“What a shameless traitor!”

“He should be burned to death.”

“Kill him!”

Gideon remained defiant, his confidence unshaken. “You think you can handle this? These elder demons will bury you all here alive!” His taunts were met with resolve from the assembled leaders.

Mirrel Nortel’s gaze was steely, his sword gleaming with anticipation. “Five elder demons? We have more than enough power to deal with them.” His readiness for battle was evident, and the other clan members prepared themselves for the impending conflict.

The auction hall had transformed into a battleground, with the fate of everyone present hanging in the balance. Ethan, caught in the midst of this epic confrontation, had no choice but to brace himself for the inevitable clash between the forces of light and darkness.

## Chapter 31: Chapter 31: New Upgrade

“Haha, is that why you’re all so confident about?” The Devil Ape Clan leader’s laughter echoed through the air, dark and mocking. “Then let me show you something.”

At his signal, the shadows around him seemed to writhe and stretch as more Elder demons emerged. The ground trembled under the weight of at least twenty more elder demons that appeared, their massive forms looming like nightmarish towers.

The five great clan members stared in disbelief. They had expected a tough fight, but this—twenty-five Elder demons—was beyond their wildest fears. The unexpected appearance of so many powerful foes sent waves of panic rippling through them.

“What do we do, Clan Leader? I don’t want to die here,” one of the panicking warriors cried out, his voice trembling.

“Clan Leader, there are twenty-five of them! Should we retreat before it’s too late?” another asked, eyes wide with terror.

“Enough!” Mirrel Nortel’s voice cut through the chaos with a sharp edge. “Shut your mouths, cowards! We are not going to surrender. If anyone’s going down today, it will be him!” Mirrel Nortel pointed toward Gideon.

Aria’s uncle, standing close by, looked around with increasing anxiety. “Brother, we’re in serious trouble. They have a thousand ordinary demons and twenty-five Elder demons. We barely have over a hundred fighters. Shouldn’t we have brought more men? And that arrogant Gideon is an S-Rank powerhouse. We’re no match for him at all.” His gaze locked onto Gideon with a mixture of fear and awe.

Aria’s father, maintaining a grim but composed demeanor, addressed the situation with a steely resolve. “Don’t panic. Help will arrive soon. Focus on dealing with the other demons for now.”

Aria, positioned near her father, was intensely focused on Ethan, her worry for his safety growing with every passing second. Amidst the roiling chaos of battle, her gaze was fixed on him, her concern palpable.

“Kill everyone!” The Devil Ape Clan leader’s command rang out like a death knell, directing his demons to commence their onslaught.

“Defend and charge!” Mirrel Nortel’s order was immediate and forceful. His voice was a rallying cry for all the hunters behind him, members of the five great clans. The clan leaders were ahead ready to face the elder demons.

Armed with holy elemental swords, the hunters advanced towards the demon ranks. Their blades glowed with sacred energy as they fought valiantly to protect the terrified

commoners. Despite their skill and determination, the sheer number of demons made their task nearly impossible.

They fought with fierce determination, bringing down a few demons, but the battlefield quickly turned into a cacophony of demonic roars and anguished screams. Blood and fire mingled in a gruesome dance.

“Brother Alger, come with me,” Mirrel Nortel shouted over the din. “The rest of you, Please focus on taking down the Elder demons!” He said to the Zephyr Stormclaw and other two leaders.

In response, they nodded and ordered their men to kill the lesser demons, while they would be facing the elder demons, even though the task seemed impossible.

“Yes, leader!” came the unified response. The hunters moved swiftly, their resolve set on the daunting task before them. Their fate was uncertain, hanging in the balance between life and death. This could even be their last fight of their lives.

Ethan stood alone, his heart pounding as he saw a demon approaching him, its grin predatory and menacing.

“Oh, sh\*t,” he muttered under his breath, his mind racing. “What level is this guy? Can I handle him?” He activated [Appraisal] to gather information about the demon.

“Name: #&%#&

Species: Blood Demon

Rank: Lesser Demon.”

“That’s it? What’s Lesser Demon rank? Is it their own hierarchical rank? No specific level?” Ethan cursed softly, frustration mounting. “Looks like I’ll have to find it out in the hard way.”

Drawing his sword, he prepared to face the demon.

“Roar!”

The demon charged with a guttural roar, its claws and teeth gleaming with lethal intent.

“Azula Sword Strike!”

Ethan took a deep breath, channeling his energy into his attack. The blue flames of his sword surged forward with incredible speed. But—

“Clang!”

The sword collided with the demon's tough hide, producing a metallic clang. The blade failed to pierce through the demon's flesh.

"Uh!" Ethan's eyes widened in shock. "Why is their body so tough? It's like I am hitting somekind of hard metal. Are demons always this tough?"

"##@#&##&."

The demon spoke in an unfamiliar, mocking tongue, taunting Ethan for his blatant weakness.

Undeterred, the demon intensified its assault. Ethan, sensing the urgency, activated [Muscle Enhancement] and [Enraged], feeling his strength surge to new heights.

With boosted agility, he dodged the demon's ferocious claws, narrowly avoiding deadly strikes.

"##&#%#&#."

The demon's rage seemed to escalate. Ethan's annoyance grew. "You talk too much. Time to end this."

He activated [Inferno Leap], propelling himself into the air with a blazing force.

"Boom!"

The impact of Ethan's leap created a massive crater upon landing. The enhanced [Inferno Leap] showcased his newfound power, and a few onlookers, including some of the combatants, noticed the display with astonished expressions.

However, they were too occupied with their own battles to offer comments.

Aria, watching Ethan intently, was stunned by his dramatic increase in power. However, she understood that despite his newfound strength, it wasn't enough to defeat a demon without holy swords. Determined to help Ethan, she focused on her own fight against an Elder Rank demon. She intensified her attacks, using her dagger with renewed ferocity.

As the dust began to clear, Ethan observed that the demon's wounds, though significant, were healing at an alarming rate.

"If this continues, how am I going to kill him?" Ethan thought, frustration growing.

"If only my sword was more powerful," he mused. His gaze fell upon the Wyvern Bone lying nearby.

Acting quickly, he crouched down, placing his sword beside the bone. He carefully concealed his actions from view.

“Synthesis!”

He activated Universal Synthesis and silently prayed for the success.

“Ding!”

[ Congratulations! Synthesis successful.]

[ Appraisal: Titanium Runic Sword (D) → Draconic Skeletal Sword (C) ]

The sword had transformed into a formidable, sharp bone weapon. Crafted from Wyvern Bone—a lesser species of dragon known for its might, the sword now looked both majestic and formidable, reflecting the power of its draconic origins.

Chapter 32: Chapter 32: Holy Elemental Sword  
[ Appraisal ]

[ Name: Draconic Skeletal Sword (Sentient) ]

[ Grade: C ]

[ Attack Power: 91 ]

Durability: 300

Special Ability: Dragon’s Wrath; It triggers at critical times, dealing massive damage upto 200 points.”

Without wasting a moment, Ethan gripped the newly acquired sword firmly and swung it down with all his might at the demon, who was poised to launch another attack.

“Slice!”

This time, the blade cut through the demon’s flesh with an ease that was previously unattainable. The demon let out a gut-wrenching scream of agony, his fury palpable as he was astonished by the injury inflicted by the seemingly insignificant human.

The wound on the demon’s chest began to close rapidly, the healing process visibly accelerating.



“Damn! Are demons some kind of undead or something?” Ethan exclaimed in frustration, “How am I supposed to kill these things?”

The demon, now enraged, charged at Ethan with its gaping, bloody mouth to bite him and drink his blood.

Ethan began to defend himself while retreating, his mind racing to find a way to finish the demon off.

Just as the standoff reached a critical point, a striking figure with silver hair appeared beside him. It was Aria. Without hesitation, she tossed a gleaming sword toward him.

“Ethan, use this!” she urged, her voice filled with urgency.

Ethan caught the sword effortlessly and, in a seamless motion, cast [Azula Sword Strike].

The demon, caught off guard by the sudden turn of events, was sliced cleanly from his waist by the flaming sword. As the sword struck, the demon’s body erupted into flames, reducing him to a charred, burning corpse. Ethan stood momentarily stunned by the sheer power of the weapon; its potency was beyond what he had expected.

“Appraisal:

Holy Elemental Sword (Fire)

Grade: B

Attack Power: 148

Durability: 340

Special ability: Holy purge; it has effect to purify demons.

The sword was a B-grade weapon, imbued with holy fire that radiated a sacred aura. It was designed specifically to combat demons, and its holy flames were a testament to its divine nature.

“Thanks, Aria. If you hadn’t shown up, I’d have been in serious trouble. You’re a lifesaver,” Ethan said gratefully.

Aria responded with a warm, charming smile. “Yes, I can see that.”

Ethan was momentarily entranced by her radiant smile, her lips a striking red. But he quickly refocused on the pressing battle at hand.

Approaching the demon's lifeless body, Ethan seized the opportunity to activate [Skill Absorption]. He knew he couldn't afford to miss this chance.

"Ding!"

[ Congratulations! Your Skill Absorption was successful ]

[ You have acquired a new demonic ability—Blood Regeneration.]

"Blood Regeneration: A species skill originating from the demon race. This unique skill, typically exclusive to demons, allows you to regenerate health by absorbing the blood of fallen enemies. You are the first human to possess this skill. You can't use the skill due to your lack of Nether Energy Core."

Ethan read the description carefully, understanding the gravity of the skill he had obtained. The ability to absorb blood for regeneration was a technique usually reserved for demons, a practice that was considered taboo for humans. He can't even use this ability due lack of something called Nether Energy.

"What's a Nether Energy core? Is it some kind of energy source from the demons?"

Aria, noticing Ethan's intense focus, gently inquired, "Ethan, is this how you always say goodbye to your enemies?"

Ethan chuckled, "Oh, what a pleasant misunderstanding! You can think of it that way."

"I see. You're really kind," she said, her gaze affectionate as she smiled at him.

Ethan felt a flush of warmth at her compliment. However, their moment of respite was interrupted by a deafening roar that drew their attention to the center of the auction hall. There, high-level hunters were locked in fierce combat against classic and elder demons.

The once pristine auction hall had become a scene of utter devastation. The ground was shattered, walls had collapsed, and the bodies of both demons and humans lay strewn across the debris. It was a hellish tableau of destruction.

"Hahaha! Do you think you two can challenge me?" The Devil Ape Clan leader's voice echoed with contempt.

"How laughable! You haven't even reached S-Rank, yet you dare confront an S-Rank like me? Allow me to show you the true power of an S-Rank!"

As he spoke, Gideon, the Devil Ape clan leader, transformed into a colossal fifty-meter-tall Devil Ape. His form was engulfed in dark energy, radiating an aura so deadly that it seemed capable of extinguishing life with a mere touch.

Mirrel Nortel and Alger Silvermoon, facing this formidable opponent, exchanged concerned glances. Gideon was an S-Rank powerhouse, a rare and elite figure even in the city of Arcadia where S-Rank hunters were the pinnacle of strength. Only two people had achieved this rank within the city till now.

With a deafening roar, Gideon launched himself forward with incredible speed. Mirrel and Alger, recognizing the peril, quickly took defensive positions. Mirrel transformed into a twenty-meter-tall Winged Tiger, his form both majestic and fierce. Alger Silvermoon melded with the shadows, preparing to strike decisively.

The Winged Tiger and the Devil Ape collided in mid-air with a thunderous impact.

“Boom!”

The collision generated a massive shockwave that obliterated everything in its vicinity. The force of the impact sent debris and dust soaring, turning everything caught in the blast radius to ruin. Fortunately, Ethan and Aria were outside the immediate danger zone, though they watched in horror as the battle unfolded.

The raw power of A-Rank and S-Rank powerhouses were astounding. Even the residual shockwave from their clash was powerful enough to cause harm from a distance. The aftermath of the collision was stark—the Winged Tiger was hurled back violently, blood pouring from his mouth. The gap in power between S-Rank and A-Rank was painfully evident.

Yet, the Devil Ape was far from finished. With unrelenting determination, he charged forward, intent on securing victory and finishing the fight.

Chapter 33: Chapter 33: General Leon; The Legendary Ice Guardian

As Gideon charged towards Mirrel, his enormous form propelling him forward with a terrifying velocity, suddenly a shadowy figure darted past him with uncanny swiftness. The figure was almost too fast for the eye to follow, and with a precise and practiced motion, the blade connected.

“Slash!”

Gideon’s head snapped to the side just in time and a deep gash appeared along his neck. The pain was immediate and searing, causing him to stagger slightly. With a guttural roar of agony and rage, he tried to shake off the impact, but the injury, though

serious, didn't seem to faze him completely. His monstrous form was still very much alive and furious.

The attack was from Aria's father using one of his assassination skills.

"I will kill you all!" Gideon roared, his voice echoing through the auction hall like a death knell. His massive body began to shimmer with a dark, menacing energy. He stomped his foot onto the ground with such force that the entire hall trembled.

"Ape's Gravity Domain (S)," he rumbled, casting his S-Rank skill.

In an instant, the auction hall was enveloped in a crushing gravity field. The sheer force of the gravitational pressure bore down upon everyone present. The very air seemed to thicken, making it almost impossible to move.

Aria's father, previously maintaining his shadow form, was forced into visibility by the oppressive force.

"Bang!"

His figure was slammed to the ground, his shadowy form dissipating under the immense pressure.

"Father!" Aria cried out in desperation as she watched her father's injured body. Her voice was swallowed by the overpowering gravity that immobilized her as well. She wasn't even allowed to reach his side.

Ethan struggled against the crushing weight, his breath coming in labored gasps as he lay sprawled on the floor. The power of an S-Rank hunter was overwhelming, making him feel insignificantly small. "Is this the true power of an S-Rank hunter?" he thought in horror. The difference in power was stark and terrifying, with Gideon's single stomp effectively rendering everyone powerless.

"Hahaha! You miserable rats, know your place!" Gideon's laughter was filled with malevolent glee. "You should just grovel beneath my feet and beg for a quick death." His mocking tone was laced with cruelty as he relished in their helplessness.

He glanced down at the ancient key lying on the floor, a cruel smirk spreading across his face as he discovered it was a fake. With a contemptuous sneer, he crushed it under his enormous grip, the key splintering into pieces. "You dared to deceive me? I'll make sure you suffer for this!"

"Now, my minions, go forth and exterminate the humans!" Gideon commanded, his voice booming with authority. The demons, seemingly unaffected by the gravity domain, surged forward with lethal intent. Their eyes glinted with a predatory hunger as they descended upon the immobilized humans.

“Oh no! Are we going to die like this?” The cries of despair spread among the humans as they faced their imminent demise. “If only the city lord were here, we might stand a chance!” Their thoughts turned to the city lord of the Fire Crow clan, a powerful figure whose absence was conspicuous.

“Haha! Die!” Gideon roared with sadistic pleasure, savoring the sight of their fear. His enjoyment of their terror was palpable, and he continued to gloat over their suffering.

Suddenly, a calm, almost nonchalant voice cut through the chaos.

“Ohh! What’s the hurry?” The voice, smooth and casual, seemed to mock the gravity of the situation. The speaker—a young man, moved with a serene grace, unaffected by the oppressive gravity. Gideon’s instincts flared with an intense sense of danger, but his body was frozen, paralyzed by a deep-seated fear.

Emerging from the chaos, the figure of the young man became clear. His approach was deliberate, each step resonating with an almost otherworldly calm.

Seeing the figure of the young man, Gideon’s instincts were screaming to tell him to run, however his body was not moving somehow. “Who is this young man?” He trembled at the thought of any higher power involved in this game. Even the city lord won’t be able to scare him this much.

Ethan and everyone else’s attention was also drawn to the young man. As soon as the young man arrived, the demons halted their actions as if an invisible shackled binded them with strong force.

Ethan found the young man familiar. His eyes widened realising who it was. It was Leon, the dude guy who just sat beside him. So his suspicions came true at last.

As Leon stepped forward, his each step reverberated in everyone’s ear in the deathly still atmosphere.

His demeanor changed completely as he drew closer, his youthful appearance underwent a striking transformation. He became a distinguished adult, clad in a regal military uniform adorned with the Arkanis kingdom’s royal insignia on his chest.

The man exuded an aura of supreme dominance, his long icy blue hair cascading in elegant waves that framed a face of flawless perfection. His lean, muscular build suggested both formidable strength and agility, while his ocean-blue eyes, serene as an ancient lake, held an intensity that could command legions. His skin, smooth as polished jade, accentuated his otherworldly beauty.

Clad in a strikingly handsome military uniform that highlighted every sculpted muscle, he appeared less as a mortal and more as a god among men. His commanding presence was irresistible, captivating every woman who gazed upon him.

Despite the perilous situation, his sheer allure was a blazing force that captured the delicate hearts of women's, making them swoon and fill their eyes with stars. The dangerous circumstances only heightened his charm, enveloping them in a fervent embrace they couldn't escape.

With a gentle touch of his flickering fingers, a wave of cooling sensation spread throughout the auction hall, making everyone's mind relaxed, and instantly freeing everyone from the ape's gravity domain.

Gideon's eyes went saucers as he finally recognized who the man was.

Gideon's eyes widened in disbelief as recognition dawned on him. "G-General Leon!" he stammered, his voice tinged with terror even in his formidable Devil Ape form. The mere presence of General Leon was enough to shake him to his core.

"A Transcendental Powerhouse!"

The other clan leaders, equally alarmed, struggled to fathom the presence of such a high-ranking figure in their midst. To them, he was more than just a leader; he was almost like a god, a being of immense power and authority. In his presence, they felt like mere mortals, his devoted followers in awe of his every move..

The realization that General Leon, a Transcendental, was present, added a new dimension to the unfolding events.

"Brother, did you really summon General Leon? I didn't know you have such influence." Aria's uncle marveled, his face reflecting awe and disbelief. "So that's why you were so enigmatic about the help we would receive. I didn't realize you had such a powerful ally."

Aria's father shook his head, his expression a blend of relief and astonishment. "No, you fool. How could I ever have the audacity? I only sent a letter to the capital requesting assistance. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect him to come in person. It's truly a mystery."

Aria's uncle, realizing the misunderstanding, felt a surge of embarrassment. "Regardless, it's fortunate that General Leon is here."

"Yes," Aria's father agreed, a note of relief evident in his voice.

"Father, are you okay?" Aria approached her father, her concern palpable.

"I'm fine," her father reassured her with a pained smile. His gaze then shifted to Ethan beside her, and a flicker of disapproval crossed his face. But in the presence of General Leon, he held his tongue, not daring to make the slightest mistake.

Before they could continue their conversation, their attention was drawn back to the most anticipated confrontation unfolding before them. General Leon's presence had undeniably altered the course of the battle, and the tension in the auction hall reached a fever pitch as the final showdown was near.

However, everyone could guess the result already.

Chapter 34: Chapter 34: General Leon's Might  
"Looks like I have no other choice."

As Gideon faced the overwhelming power of General Leon, he realized the gravity of his dire situation. Desperation drove him to a grim and ancient solution: absorbing the blood of the fallen using forbidden demon incantations. This act of dark magic from demons was his last-ditch effort to gain the strength he needed to confront Leon.

Despite his initial reluctance, Gideon had long ago abandoned his moral compass in the pursuit of power. His ambition to rise above his peers had led him to make a pact with demons, a choice he had never truly wanted but felt forced into by his own limitations.

He had been at a bottleneck in his quest for greater strength, having exhausted all potential to increase his level. The demons had offered him a shortcut to transcendence, but it came at the cost of betraying his own kind. Gideon, driven by his insatiable hunger for power, had agreed without hesitation. Now, facing the imminent threat from General Leon, he sought to demonize himself to bridge the gap between his current state and the power he desperately needed.

General Leon, observing Gideon's futile attempt, shook his head in disappointment. "You will never learn, Mongrel. A traitor will always be a traitor," he remarked with a tone of finality.

Gideon's lips curled into a sneer, his resolve unwavering. "General Leon, power is all that matters to me. Nothing else. No one can stop me," he declared, his voice filled with defiance. As he spoke, his body began to expand, his form becoming more monstrous and intimidating. But before he could complete his transformation, General Leon interrupted with one single skill.

"Absolute Freeze (SS)!" Leon's voice rang out with icy determination.

"No..!" Gideon's defiant roar was abruptly silenced as his massive form was encased in a block of ice. The transformation was instantaneous and brutal. Gideon's cries of anger



and betrayal echoed as he was frozen, his once fearsome presence now reduced to a mere ice statue. The massive Devil Ape, who had once been a symbol of terror, was now a silent testament to Leon's overwhelming power.

With Gideon neutralized, General Leon turned his attention to the demons that had been wreaking havoc. His eyes, cold and unyielding, surveyed the chaos around him. He raised his hand to the sky, his next move precise and devastating.

"Icicle Arrows (S)!" he commanded, and immediately hundreds of razor-sharp icicle shards materialized in the air. They descended with deadly accuracy, each one aimed at the demons. The icicles pierced through their forms, turning them into frozen statues at a molecular level. The destructive skill was executed with such efficiency that within moments, the demons were reduced to nothing more than shards of ice, their bodies shattered into dust. Not even their blood regenerative ability was able save them.

The auction hall fell into stunned silence. The magnitude of Leon's power was nothing short of awe-inspiring. He had decimated an entire army of demons while remaining in the same spot. The clan leaders, previously caught up in their own troubles, now approached General Leon with deep respect and gratitude.

"G-General Leon, thank you for your help," they said in unison, their voices full of awe and reverence. "Without you, we would have been doomed."

General Leon acknowledged their gratitude with a nod. "Why didn't your city lord come to assist? Had he been here, I might not have had to intervene personally." he said with doubtful expression.

The clan leaders shared uneasy looks, their uncertainty evident. "City Lord Longus mentioned he had urgent matters to attend to elsewhere," one of them responded cautiously. "At least, that's what he told us," another chimed in, though their hesitation suggested lingering doubts.

"I see," Leon replied, his expression unreadable.

"General Leon," Aria's father spoke up, his voice filled with an ingratiating tone. "If you are free, would you please like to come to our humble home for some rest?"

"Aiya, this sly fox!"

The other clan leaders looked on with a mix of envy and frustration. They whispered among themselves, grumbling about the overt flattery and regretting their own missed opportunity to extend an invitation first.

General Leon considered the offer with a thoughtful expression before agreeing. "Sure, I would be pleased to visit your establishment."



“Yes!” The members of the Silvermoon clan were visibly relieved and excited, knowing that such a visit could significantly elevate their status. The prospect of receiving valuable treasures from one of Arkanis’s three great Generals was also a tantalizing thought.

Alger Silvermoon, eager to facilitate the visit, smiled and motioned towards the exit. “After you, General.”

As Leon prepared to leave, his gaze fell upon Ethan, who was standing somewhat apart beside Aria. The general’s eyes narrowed with interest.

“Wait! Can you take that boy along?” Leon commanded, his voice firm as he pointed directly at Ethan.

Alger Silvermoon’s eyes followed Leon’s gaze, his expression shifting from surprise to confusion. He saw Ethan, the same commoner boy from earlier, standing next to Aria. Alger’s initial reaction was one of indignation; he wanted to separate them immediately. However, Leon’s clear interest in Ethan caused him to pause.

“What could be so special about that boy?” Alger Silvermoon wondered, his mind racing with questions. “Why is General Leon interested in him?”

Suppressing his irritation, Alger called out, “Aria, come here. And bring that boy with you. We’re going home.” His tone was firm, leaving little room for argument.

Aria, slightly perplexed, gently took Ethan’s arm and guided him forward. “Hey, Ethan, it looks like my father wants you to come along. Let’s go,” she said, her cheeks flushing slightly as she led him towards her father. She was unaware that her father’s displeasure was all too evident by their close contacts.

Ethan felt the warmth from Aria’s strong yet smooth skin. This was the first time they held hand, although unconsciously.

Ethan approached cautiously, his nerves on edge as he faced the powerful figures surrounding him. All of them radiated an aura that was hard to miss.

As he looked at General Leon up close, he was surprised by the sheer handsomeness of the man before him. Even the term ‘male god’ seemed inadequate to describe his striking presence. Any ordinary woman would start drooling, if they look at him from up close.

By instinct he looked at Aria, who seemed to charmed as well, but not too much.

The difference between Leon's imposing presence and the young man (dude guy) he had spoken with earlier was really striking.

Before he could greet anyone, Aria's father spoke with an impatient tone, "Let's go." He did not even look at Ethan in the eye, his demeanor cold and unwelcoming.

Aria, sensing Ethan's discomfort, said, "Please ignore my father's rudeness. He has some prejudices against commoners. But he doesn't mean any harm."

Ethan nodded understandingly. "I know."

With that, the group departed, leaving the frozen statue of Gideon behind.

The tale of the battle and General Leon's intervention quickly spread through the city, causing a wave of excitement and curiosity. The people buzzed with anticipation, eager to catch a glimpse of the legendary Ice Guardian and learn more about the dramatic events that had unfolded.

#### Chapter 35: Chapter 35: Invitation To a Gathering

With a mix of apprehension and curiosity, Ethan followed Aria's father, Aria, and the other clan members through the streets of Arcadia City. They were riding in a luxurious carriage drawn by two majestic lions, their powerful strides making the journey remarkably smooth.

Inside the carriage, Ethan was seated beside Aria at the back, while her uncle and another unfamiliar member of the Silvermoon clan occupied the front.

Aria's uncle, a man with a stern face and a hint of arrogance, glanced at Ethan with a smirk of irony. He had previously warned Ethan to keep his distance from Aria, but now found himself in the uncomfortable position of sharing a carriage with the very person he had cautioned against.

"Uncle, why do you look so displeased?" Aria asked, her gaze shifting from her uncle to Ethan and back again.

"It's nothing," her uncle replied with a dismissive shrug. He was clearly frustrated but couldn't voice his true feelings, especially with General Leon's presence looming large over the occasion. His thoughts were interrupted by a sudden realization of how ironic it was that Ethan was now so close, despite his earlier admonitions.

As the carriage continued its journey, the passing landscape captured Ethan's attention. The view outside was a picturesque blend of rolling hills, majestic mountains, and sprawling fields. Arcadia City was unlike any modern city he had known.

The ancient structures and natural beauty created an otherworldly charm, making it feel like a timeless realm. For a fleeting moment, Ethan was reminded of his own lack of a permanent home in this world, but he quickly brushed aside the thought. His focus was on the unfolding beautiful scenarios.

When the carriage arrived at the Silvermoon mansion, Ethan was awestruck by its grandeur. The mansion, designed in an elegant European style, stood majestically beside a tranquil lake, surrounded by meticulously tended gardens and smaller structures likely housing servants and guards.

The mansion's size was imposing; Ethan had to tilt his head to take in the entire view, with a large bell prominently displayed high above.

A servant, a middle-aged maid with a curious glint in her eyes, led Ethan to a spacious guest room. The room was adorned with rich fabrics and luxurious furnishings, but Ethan's mind was preoccupied with the purpose of his visit. He wasn't entirely sure why General Leon had requested his presence, but given the general's stature and recent events, he felt obliged to comply.

"Dear guest, this is your resting room," the maid said with a bow, opening the door to reveal the opulent accommodations. "Please make yourself comfortable. If you need anything, just call for me."

"Thank you," Ethan replied, nodding as he stepped into the room.

The room was lavishly decorated, with a large, comfortable bed that seemed to invite him to rest. Ethan wasted no time in settling down, quickly drifting off to sleep after a long and exhausting day.

—

A few hours later, Ethan was stirred from his slumber by the maid's persistent calling.

"Dear guest, please wake up! Master is calling for you. Dear guest!"

Ethan yawned and rubbed his eyes, gradually coming back to consciousness.

"Coming," he mumbled, pushing himself out of bed. His head felt heavy from sleep, and he felt the urgent need to freshen up.

After dressing in his usual hunter attire—leather and furs suited for movement but somewhat plain for the occasion—Ethan stepped out of the room and inquired about the location of the bathing facilities.

"There is a bathroom nearby. Please follow me," the maid responded promptly, leading him down a series of corridors.

Ethan followed her to a beautifully appointed bathing room. After a quick but refreshing bath, he emerged feeling revitalized, his black hair now slightly disheveled but giving him a rugged charm. Despite the improvement in his appearance, his attire still felt out of place in the opulent environment. His hunter's clothing, though practical, contrasted sharply with the noble setting.

The maid, noticing Ethan's attire, hesitated before suggesting, "Perhaps you would like to change into something more suitable for the occasion. We have some fine clothing available."

Ethan, feeling somewhat indifferent, shook his head. "I appreciate the offer, but I'll pass. I'm not too concerned with appearances right now."

The maid, slightly exasperated but understanding, led Ethan to the grand hall where the clan members and General Leon were gathered. As the door creaked open, Ethan and the maid entered, drawing immediate attention from the assembled crowd.

The hall was filled with nearly a hundred young clan members standing in neat rows before a series of thrones. General Leon occupied the central throne, exuding an air of authority and grace. The elders and Aria's father were seated beside him, their thrones slightly set back to show respect for the guest of honor.

The moment Ethan entered, the noise in the room died down, and all eyes were drawn to him. The sudden silence heightened the scrutiny from the assembled nobles. Ethan felt a wave of self-consciousness as the gaze of the powerful figures, including the legendary General Leon, settled on him.

Aria's father, who was seated near General Leon, looked slightly impatient. "Hey boy, come here quick. At least don't be late at such occasion," he called out, his tone full of annoyance.

Aria, sensing Ethan's discomfort, quickly added, "Please don't mind my father's demeanor. He can be a bit direct, but he means well."

Ethan nodded, trying to mask his nervousness. As he approached, he felt the weight of the room's gaze even more acutely. General Leon's presence was imposing, a dimensional difference to the young man he had spoken to earlier. The irony of his situation was not lost on Ethan; here he was, a mere commoner, standing before some of the most powerful figures in Arcadia.

As Ethan reached the front, General Leon's piercing ocean blue eyes met his. The general gave him a slight nod, acknowledging Ethan's presence with a hint of recognition.

"Ethan, I appreciate you coming here," General Leon said in a calm, measured tone. "Please, join us."

Ethan bowed slightly, trying to maintain his composure. "Thank you, General Leon. I'm honored to be here." It felt really strange to be polite to the young man he knew so soon. It was really ironic.

The elders and other clan members watched in silence as Ethan took his place among the gathered nobles. The atmosphere was a mix of formality and curiosity. The clan members whispered among themselves, their eyes occasionally darting towards Ethan and then back to General Leon.

As the gathering resumed its conversation, Ethan couldn't shake the feeling of being an outsider in this grand assembly. Yet, he knew he had to remain composed and respectful, especially in the presence of such distinguished individuals.

With a final glance around the room, Ethan settled into the background, his thoughts racing about what might come next. The sense of awe and the weight of expectations were palpable, and he could only hope that his presence would not be a source of discomfort or trouble for anyone.

#### Chapter 36: Chapter 36: Bestowing Emblems

The atmosphere in the grand hall was a mix of curiosity, disdain, and surprise as the younger generation of the Silvermoon clan took in the sight of Ethan, the unexpected guest among them. The room buzzed with hushed whispers and exchanged glances, as their reactions ranged from curiosity to outright disdain.

"Hey, who is this commoner guy? What is he doing here?" a young man asked, his voice tinged with curiosity.

"I don't know. He just appeared out of nowhere," another replied, their tone equally intrigued.

"Wow! He's quite handsome though," a few girls murmured, their eyes wide with fascination.

"Handsome? So what?" a scornful hunter interjected. "He's just a lowly commoner." His words were laced with jealousy and contempt.

As the conversations continued, the young clan members watched with growing interest as Ethan approached Aria. "See, that idiot is directly going to hit on the clan leader's daughter. He's dead for sure," one of them muttered, expecting the worst.

To their astonishment, Aria smiled warmly at Ethan, a stark contrast to their expectations. The sight of her smiling happily while interacting closely with Ethan left the onlookers speechless.

“Drake, your sister is talking to that guy so closely. Do you know what their relationship is?” a tall boy asked, addressing Drake, who was visibly agitated by the scene.

Drake, who was Aria’s direct cousin and the only son of Astrid Silvermoon, glared at the tall boy. “How would I know? And don’t talk about relationships between them. It will never happen. I won’t let it, nor will our uncles or grandparents. A puny commoner like him is just courting death,” Drake said disdainfully.

At nearly sixteen, Drake’s deep-seated disdain for commoners was a result of societal influence and his own pampering by his parents. His arrogance was palpable, reflecting the high expectations placed on him as the heir apparent of the Silvermoon clan.

“Silence!” an elder with a goatee stepped forward, commanding attention. His voice carried authority as he addressed the gathered youths. “Children, you are here today because General Leon, the Ice Guardian, will be assessing your talents and potential. This is a rare opportunity to earn something extraordinary. You should feel honored and grateful to General Leon for this chance.”

The elder’s words were met with a wave of excitement and disbelief among the younger generation. The prospect of receiving a reward from the legendary general himself was thrilling. The air was charged with anticipation as they imagined the possibilities.

“Wow, Drake, we’re going to have the chance to receive a personal reward from General Leon. But, sigh! I don’t think I have the talent to receive it,” one of the boys said, looking at Drake with a mix of hope and doubt.

“At least you have the chance, Drake. You’re the most talented among us after all. If you can’t get it, nobody can,” the tall boy said confidently, trying to bolster Drake’s spirits.

“Of course!” Drake’s pride swelled at the thought of impressing his idol, General Leon. The idea of receiving a personal gift from such a revered figure excited him, and he focused intently on the upcoming event, eager not to miss a single detail.

Ethan, meanwhile, found himself intrigued by the unfolding scene. He was witnessing a legendary talent-gauging event—a plot device common in fantasy novels. His curiosity about how this would unfold kept him engaged.

The goatee elder turned his attention to the younger generation. “Now, all of you, line up. We will call you one by one, and General Leon will judge your true potential.”

Noticing that Ethan had not joined the line, the elder frowned in irritation. "Hey, boy, get in line quickly," he ordered, his patience wearing thin. The elder had been informed that Ethan would also participate in the event, so he had no choice but to insist.

However, Ethan remained unmoved, standing in place with a look of indifference. His refusal to join the line was met with growing annoyance from the elder, who was about to reprimand him further.

Before he could continue, a soft voice interrupted the commotion. "Let him be," General Leon said with a calm smile. "You may proceed with the others."

The general's unexpected intervention left the room in stunned silence. The elders exchanged puzzled glances, their minds racing with questions. "Why is General Leon giving such preferential treatment to that commoner?" they wondered. "Is he perhaps one of the general's illegitimate children?"

Drake's irritation grew. "Why does that commoner get to enjoy special treatment? Why not me?" he thought, feeling a mix of indignation and confusion.

Ethan, surprised by General Leon's unexpected interest, glanced at the general with curiosity. "Uh, spotlight again.

What could this low-key character want from me exactly?" he pondered, baffled by the situation.

As the younger generation resumed their anticipation for the talent assessment, Ethan's presence remained a topic of intrigue and speculation. The general's motives and Ethan's role in the unfolding events were yet to be fully understood.

The goatee elder then began calling the younger generation one by one to stand before General Leon.

"Caelan, step forward!" the elder shouted, his eyes fixed on a boy standing nervously at the front of the line.

Caelan, a slender boy with a mop of dark hair, hesitated for a moment before taking a deep breath and stepping forward. He glanced around nervously, his eyes darting from the elder to General Leon, who sat in a grand chair with an air of authority.

General Leon's sharp eyes Caelan from head to toe and then shook his head in disappointment.

The elder understanding his meaning, shouted, "Step down!"



The boy left the place in disappointment

Next, the elder called out another name. "Lyria, step forward!"

A girl with fiery red hair and a determined expression stepped up. Unlike Caelan, Lyria exuded confidence.

General Leon shook his head once more, still not finding what he was looking for. The minutes ticked by in a series of disappointing rejections, creating a tense atmosphere in the grand hall. The situation was becoming increasingly unfavorable.

"Is there no one talented enough to seize this precious opportunity?" the elders sighed in disappointment, their hopes dwindling.

"Drake!" the elder called out, his voice echoing through the hall as he summoned one of the few remaining individuals in line.

Drake stepped forward confidently, an arrogant smirk on his face. His assured demeanor rekindled a glimmer of hope within the elders and his father.

General Leon's ocean-blue eyes scanned Drake's body with a hint of intrigue. He seemed somewhat satisfied, revealing a soft smile. "Come here, boy," General Leon instructed, motioning for Drake to step closer.

Seeing this, several elders' faces lit up with blossoming smiles.

Drake gazed at his idol with fascination. He aspired to become a powerful figure like General Leon, though their paths and thought processes were fundamentally different.

"You have the potential to reach the top, but you need to work hard," General Leon said, handing him a strange, circular emblem etched with the kingdom's crest. "Here, take this."

"Thank you, General!" Drake exclaimed, receiving the emblem with gratitude. Although he didn't fully understand its significance, he knew it must be valuable.

The elders' eyes glistened with excitement at the sight of the emblem being bestowed upon one of their own.

"Next!" General Leon called out.

After a while, it was Aria's turn. She also received an emblem alongside high praises. At 19, reaching Level 40 was a rare feat, and she was undoubtedly talented and full of potential. Aria beamed with happiness as she accepted the gift, feeling honored to receive something personally from one of the three great protectors of their Kingdom. She thanked him genuinely and left the place with a radiant smile.



Finally, it was Ethan's turn. But to everyone's shock, General Leon personally called for him.

"Ethan, step forward," General Leon said, his voice carrying a tone of interest.

The hall fell into a stunned silence. All eyes were on Ethan as he approached General Leon, the atmosphere thick with anticipation and curiosity.

Chapter 37: Chapter 37: The Ancient Land Of Treasures

Ethan felt uneasy. "Why was he suddenly being put in the limelight?" As he approached, he pondered General Leon's real motive.

"Take this!" Without any further words, General Leon tossed an emblem to him.

Ethan caught it hurriedly, feeling the weight of the strange emblem in his hand.

The others' eyes went wide with surprise. How could a commoner boy receive an emblem so easily? Speculation ran wild. Was he really General Leon's illegitimate child? Or was he simply too talented?

Aria's father, however, had a thoughtful look. He knew General Leon had only one spouse no children yet, so the idea of illegitimate children was nonsense. "Does this mean the boy has something special within him? Is that why General Leon was impressed and gave him the chance that others would beg for?"

Their next conversation confirmed his suspicions as his ears perked up to listen.

"Ethan, do you want to join our royal army?" General Leon asked him personally. "You will be directly under my care," he added, tempting him a little bit more.

The proposal shocked everyone. "A personal invitation from General Leon? How fortunate!" If they were in Ethan's shoes, they would have agreed immediately. Joining the Royal Army meant honor, recognition, and fame.

But for Ethan, the idea was impractical. He had barely made it to E-Rank after all his efforts. He couldn't just risk his life for nothing. Moreover, he valued his freedom above all else.

So, he politely turned down the tempting offer. "Uh, I am sorry, General. I think I am not capable enough for that post yet. So I think I will have to refuse. But, don't worry, as a ideal subject of this kingdom, I will do my duty with all my heart," he said solemnly, not wanting to disappoint General Leon.

“Oh!” General Leon nodded in understanding. He had expected this kind of response as well. However, seeing such incredible talent, he couldn’t resist the urge to recruit Ethan for the kingdom’s benefit, especially with the upcoming Great Demon War at hand.

“Alright, then,” General Leon sighed, feeling a tinge of disappointment.

Seeing his disappointment, Ethan was about to return the emblem to General Leon with a gracious step.

However, General Leon rejected this sternly. “Ethan, you don’t need to return it. You can keep it for yourself. It has nothing to do with my offer to join the royal army.”

“You will learn its usage a little later. Now, go back.”

Ethan nodded and stepped back, feeling the indistinct pressure from General Leon.

As he returned, he noticed everyone’s faces filled with shock and awe. They found it unfathomable how someone could reject such an offer from General Leon himself.

Ethan shrugged and went to Aria’s side, as she was the only familiar person there.

“Great job, Ethan!” Aria said with a smile.

Aria seemed genuinely happy seeing Ethan getting recognition from the General himself, indicating a bright future awaiting him.

Drake looked at them with a frown etched on his face, growing jealous and indignant knowing the commoner boy had received a personal invitation from the General, instead of him.

“Humph, I will show you who is more talented,” he muttered with hostility while glaring at Ethan.

“Now, everyone disperse!” The goatee elder said to all the youngsters who hadn’t received the emblems.

They all left in disappointment leaving behind Drake, Aria, and Ethan amongst the elders and other respectable figures.

Thereafter, General Leon stepped forward, his expression serious.

“NOW, I will tell you the usage of these emblems you received.” He addressed the trio who received the emblems.

Standing beside a commoner, Drake looked very pissed at this. However the elders orders were law here. No disrespect was allowed.

Later, realising the seriousness of the matter he focused on General Leon's speech.

General Leon continued, "You should feel lucky to receive this emblem, because it is the ticket to Ancient Land Of Treasures. We recently discovered the key to that place after nearly 500 years later of its disappearance. That's why we are a little secretive about the matter."

Ethan's thoughts moved to the auction hall incident, was he talking about the same ancient land of treasure?"

"You're not the only one who received these emblems. We have chose thousands more youngsters from across the whole Kingdom."

"Exactly one month later from now on, the ancient land will open, and all of you will be granted entry inside it. So, be ready. You might have to face some challenges in there. But, the rewards will be worth the risk," he added with a smile.

He looked at Ethan and said, "Only the young generation can enter the place as there are some restrictions that forbid us from entering. Only people whose age is lower than 20 years can enter that place according to records we know. So, you might want to power up as much as possible."

The trio's expression became serious hearing all these. They realised how rare the opportunity was.

General Leon wasn't finished. He added more, "You must remember Hero Libros, right? He played a major role in the last Demon War 500 years ago. He was from our kingdom originally, later settled in Hero Empire.

He also went to the that Ancient Land and received the Demon Slayer Sword by luck, which helped him a lot in the fights with demons 500 years.

Five centuries ago, it was hard kill demons because of their blood regeneration ability, which made them nearly immortal. The only way to kill them was to by burning their body to ashes. Although, the Heroes could kill them due to their blessing easily. That's a different matter.

"Hero Libros wasn't a true hero actually, but just because of his demon slayer sword he was renowned as a hero. His Demon Slayer sword had the same ability as otheres heroes had. It can end demons life completely."

"So, do you now realise how important this opportunity is? Especially, when we are on the verge of another Demon War. So get prepared quickly." General Leon said gently.

Ethan and others nodded in understanding the full story. At the same he realised this opportunity could be a game changer for him to grow up powerful.

He felt grateful towards General Leon for the opportunity. The man had done a lot for him, even without asking.

The elders and respectable figures couldn't be more agreed with General Leon's suggestion.

"Who knows, the next outstanding hero might be born in their clan after this." They couldn't help but feel excited at this thought.

If that happens, they will not only be known in Kingdom but also the whole Kairos Empire. Their prestige would rise through the roof.

#### Chapter 38: Chapter 38: A Duel

Aria led Ethan through the mansion's grand halls, the opulence of the place a stark contrast to his humble origins. "This is our training facility," she said, gesturing to an expansive open field with a hard floor. "Each clan member hones their assassination skills here."

The training area was immaculate, with a variety of equipment designed for both stealth and combat training. Ethan observed the intricate setups, each designed to test and refine the skills of the clan's members. The place radiated a sense of discipline and dedication, a testament to the clan's rigorous standards.

The tour continued, showcasing the mansion's beauty and sophistication. The architecture was a blend of grandeur and elegance, with ornate decorations and lush gardens. It was clear that the mansion was not just a residence but a symbol of the clan's status and influence.

Despite the impressive surroundings, Ethan felt the sting of Drake Silvermoon's disdainful comment. The young noble's contempt was palpable as he sneered at Ethan. "Tsk... Country bumpkin!" Drake's voice was filled with condescension.

Ethan, accustomed to worse in his 30 years of life, chose to ignore the insult. Engaging with a spoiled child seemed pointless, especially when he had more pressing matters to focus on.

Aria's face flushed with anger. She turned sharply toward Drake. "Drake, what is your problem? Why are you insulting Ethan again?"

Drake's expression remained stubborn. "Why shouldn't I, sister Aria? He's just a commoner. You should be careful with whom you associate. What will other nobles think of you?"

Ethan could only chuckle inwardly at the absurdity. The concept of nobility seemed so alien to him—after all, weren't nobles once commoners themselves? It was a strange notion that status was inherent rather than earned.

Drake's voice grew more scornful. "And don't think you're special just because General Leon praised you. It's probably a mistake on his part. You can't possibly compare to us."

Aria's eyes blazed with fury. She stepped in front of Ethan, her posture radiating authority. "Drake... shut up! It's not your place to decide who I befriend or not. If you insult Ethan again, you'll face punishment from me."

The tension in the air was thick as Aria's anger boiled over. Drake's usual arrogance seemed to falter for a moment under her fierce gaze. The silence that followed was heavy, and Ethan could sense the shift in the atmosphere.

He hurriedly stepped in. "Let it go Aria. Don't argue with a kid."

Hearing this, Drake fumed more. "Hey, who are you calling a kid, peasant? Do you know who I am? You're just a low level hunter, while I am a D-Rank Assassin. Who is the kid here, stupid?" He asked, fuming.

Ethan began to feel a little embarrassed as the kid was right. He should have said his piece carefully. After all he was one year old than Drake, still at level while Drake was a whole league above him.

[ Appraisal ]

[ Name: Drake Silvermoon ]

[ Age: 17 ]

[ Level: 26 ]

[ Affiliation: Silvermoon Assassin Clan ]

The data was a little shocking, also as expected of Drake. He was whole 16 level higher than Ethan. Moreover he might have hidden assassin skills with him.

"If you have the guts, duel me one on one. I will show what your true worth is. Come!" Drake said arrogantly, stepping in the middle of the training field. His hand revealed mocking gestures.

There were other members present as well. They noticed the commotion and gathered around.

Ethan looked a little hesitant, should he duel with him or not?

“Don’t fall for his provocation Ethan, he is really powerful. While you just started your journey. You cannot compete with him right now. You have still have time, don’t worry,” Aria said consoling him.

But, how could he let a kid taunt him like this?

“Haha! Scared? Don’t worry I won’t kill you.” Drake mocked, looking smug.

At last, Ethan decided to teach him a lesson. Like this, he could also learn to fight a human. And their assassination skills intrigue him a little. Can he overcome their skills while using the evolved skills from his Arsenal?

He was not scared, rather he felt a little excited about the upcoming battle.

“Fine! I accept your challenge.” Ethan said stepping forward with his sword in his hand.

“Ethan, No, You shouldn’t..” Aria was about to stop him, but Ethan cut him off while shaking head. It was now matter of a pride.

Ethan’s confidence eased Aria a little. She revealed a soft smile tinged with worry.

She prepared herself for any unfortunate accident to fall on Ethan.

Ethan confidently went to middle stage facing Drake opposite to him.

The crowd gathered more, sensing an inevitable fight coming. They noticed Ethan was unfamiliar here and his eye-catching Skeletal Sword caught their attention.

“Young man, if you’re here for a friendly duel, no weapons allowed here.” An Instructor stepped forward in the middle. He recognised Drake and gave respective bow and faced Ethan with authority. “It is for your own good youngster!”

“Sure!” Ethan just smiled and returned the Sword to Aria.

Aria took the sword and looked at with interest. “Where did this sword come from? It’s probably a C-Grade sword or above.” However, she didn’t ask considering he was about to face a difficult opponent.

“Okay, get into your position.” The Instructor started to act as a middleman.

Drake looked overflowed with confidence while Ethan was focused completely. He was facing an assassin after all.

Chapter 39: Chapter 39: Another D-Rank Skill  
Ethan faced Drake with a determined expression.

The air was charged with tension as the crowd of clan members watched closely, eager to see the outcome of this unexpected duel.

“Ready?” The instructor’s voice cut through the silence.

Ethan nodded, his focus unwavering. Drake smirked, clearly confident in his abilities.

“Begin!”

Drake moved first. To Ethan surprise, Drake completely vanished from his view. Ethan seemed confused as looked around to find his trace. But, it was futile.

“Uh!”

Exactly at that time, his passive skill [Predator’s Instinct(E)] kicked in, and dodged in the nick of time where a fist landed with metal gloves worn on.

“Phew!” Ethan felt a cold sweat forming on his forehead. It was really a close call. If he had been a little late, his face would have been directly hit by Drake’s fist. The metal gloves in his hand looked very sharp. It will definitely leave scars if he gets hit by it.

“Hm..You dodged it?”

Drake looked surprised, not expecting him to dodge his signature move. He had used his Inherent Assassination Skill [Shadow Void Step(E)], expecting to defeat Ethan with one swift move, but the other party dodged it somehow. It should have been impossible to do it, unless Ethan had a more counter effective skill in his arsenal.

Ethan looked at the Instructor and said, “Instructor, you said no weapons are allowed. Then, what about his metal gloves?”

The Instructor stared at him and answered coldly, “It is allowed.” He said nothing else. No explanation. It was obvious, he was playing favourites.

“At least, explain the rules at first, man.” Ethan grumbled.

He moved back his attention to the duel, where Drake looked a little more serious than before.

"I never thought you could dodge that. But no matter, I am just getting started," Drake said gathering his confidence.

"Okay, come at me." Ethan replied interested to witness his skills more.

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While they were prepared to start their real battle, a beautiful woman in long violet dress appeared in the training field from the corridor.

She leaned on the wall to watch the duel with interest. A few seconds later, Astrid Silvermoon, Aria's uncle also appeared by the woman's side.

"Dear, what are you watching?" he asked the woman in violet dress.

"Our Son." she smiled, her eyes charming.

"See, he is dueling that commoner boy from earlier," she replied with a beautiful smile.

"Oh." Aria's uncle's interest piqued and began watch the duel alongside his wife.

"Who do you think will win?" The woman asked curiously.

"My Son, of course." Aria's uncle replied confidently. He was confident about Drake's victory.

"It's our son, dear. Not only yours." She revealed proud smile.

Aria's uncle gazed lovingly at his beautiful wife and said, "Yes."

....

Ethan knew that he couldn't confront Drake face to face as his base stats were higher compared to him. So, he decided to strike fast before Drake could get the chance to attack once again.

He activated [Muscle Enhancement(E)], [Enraged(E)] buffing his stats as much as possible, then he cast [Inferno Leap(D)] targeting where Drake stood.

With a thunderous fire energy he landed on the ground, however Drake disappeared in the air once again before his attack could even touch him.



The hard stone ground remained intact, as if some kind of magical enchantment engraved on it. However fiery ashes spread nearby turning the spectators back away from the platform a little.

“Mmhm..That’s a good destructive skill alright. Don’t you think dear?” Aria’s Aunt asked, impressed by strange skill Ethan displayed.

“Yeah, That skill is a little strange indeed. I have never seen this kind of skill in our city. Where did this boy get it from? It’s really a mystery.”

They were not worried about their son at all, because they knew he will be alright. They had confidence in their son’s ability.

“Haha...” Drake emerged from the void, looking unharmed, a playful smirk on his face...

He appeared right behind where Ethan was, to counterattack Ethan by surprise.

As Drake was about to attack using his [Shadow Strike] skill targeting Ethan’s weak points. If it hits surely Ethan have to be bed ridden for a while.

However, once again his [Predator’s Instinct] kicked in, saving him by a hair’s breath once again. It was acting as nemesis for Drake’s [ Shadow Void Skill ].

Moreover, Drakes Shadow Void Step skill was at low level, so it was rather easy for Ethan to detect them. Otherwise, Ethan would’ve been great danger. It was a very formidable skill of the Silvermoon Clan after all.

“Again..!” Drake seemed to be angered by Ethan’s defensive skill.

“Fine.. I will show you what true Power is.” He said fiercely while looking at Ethan with hate.

Ethan prepared himself after hearing his threat. From his tone, Drake was going to fight Ethan head on now. So, he had to be extra careful.

Ethan activated his buff once again, ready face what’s coming ahead.

“Rock Giant’s Body(D)!”

“Rock Giant’s Rage(E)!”

Drake activated a skill, and his body became tough as a hard rock. His body glistened with soft glow of power. Then, the second skill made him look ferocious as a rock giant.

At level 26, Drake should have 3 active skills, however his inherent skill, Shadow Void Step added another, making it 4. From this, it could be said he was a genius for sure.

His transformation was a little startling to Ethan, he found it hard to deal with. He wasn't sure if he could evade this time.

He had only two skill to counterattack. One: Inferno Leap (D), another: Paralyzing Breath (E).

He was unsure of Paralyzing Breath's effect on this enraged monster in front of him.

"Looks like it was finally time to create another D-Rank skill," he thought, finding it the only option.

He commanded to synthesis (Enraged(E) + Muscle Enhancement(E) in his mind.

"Ding!"

[ Congratulations! Your skill synthesis was succesful ]

[ Your skill evolved to: Berserker's Might (D) ]

[ Berserker's Might: Unleashes the user's latent power, drastically improving their strength and defense by 500% while in a frenzied state ]

[ Drawback: After usage, User will fell in a state of weakness for 15 minutes ]

"Nice!" Ethan found the skill very useful, leaving aside the small drawback. However, it could be critical in other times on the dungeon, but not this time.

It was perfect skill what he need right now—to fight head on with a D-Rank powerhouse.

Chapter 40: Chapter 40: Collision Of Rage Skills

Seeing Drake charging at him like a unstoppable bull, Ethan hurriedly activated his newly evolved skill [Berserker's Might]. His eyes turned red, feeling a primal rage from deep within, increasing his power by a notch. He felt almost invincible, even though it was just a illusion.

His strength increased tremendously. Each of his steps caused the hard stone ground to crack a bit. Even the magical enchantment was beginning to lose its effect.

Drake's eyes widened slightly as he sensed the surge of power emanating from Ethan. The other clan members watching from the sidelines murmured in astonishment, taken aback by the sudden display of raw strength.

Ethan didn't wait for Drake to close the distance. He lunged forward with explosive speed, his fists glowing with power. With [Berserker's Might] enhancing his physical capabilities, he felt an almost supernatural force behind his movements.

Drake, despite his rock-hard transformation, barely managed to block Ethan's first punch. The impact sent a shockwave through the training ground, causing a few spectators to stumble back. Ethan didn't let up. He followed with a rapid series of strikes, each one fueled by the primal rage coursing through him.

Drake attempted to counter with a powerful swing of his own, but Ethan's heightened senses and reflexes allowed him to dodge and weave effortlessly. It was clear that the tables had turned, and the once-confident noble was now on the defensive.

"Impressive," Drake's mother whispered to her husband, her eyes fixed on the intense battle. "That commoner boy is more powerful than I thought."

Aria's uncle nodded, equally surprised. "Indeed. He's no ordinary opponent. Otherwise, why would General Leon choose him?"

Ethan pressed his advantage, using the full extent of [Berserker's Might]. He could feel the strain on his body, but the rush of power was intoxicating. He knew he had to end this quickly before the skill's effects wore off.

Drake, recognizing the shift in power, stomped hard on the ground spreading shockwaves nearby. The ground shook, and a wave of force radiated out from him, causing Ethan to stumble.

Drake seized the opportunity, launching a counterattack with renewed vigor. He threw a punch with his rock-hardened spiky fist, landing a solid hit on Ethan's side. The impact was like being hit by a boulder, and Ethan felt the air rush out of his lungs.

Ethan gritted his teeth, refusing to back down. He had one last move to play. Summoning the last reserves of his strength, he prepared to use his last card of collision.

"Inferno Leap!"

With a roar, Ethan leaped into the air, flames trailing behind him. He targeted Drake, who stood his ground, bracing for impact. The two collided with explosive force, the flames of Ethan's attack engulfing them both.

"Boom..!"

The clash was booming, shaking the entire training ground. Spectators shielded their eyes from the blinding light and scorching heat. When the dust settled, both Ethan and Drake lay on the ground, battered and burned but not severely injured.

Ethan struggled to move, his body aching all over because of weakness state. He had given everything he had in that final attack. He looked over at Drake, who was equally injured but still conscious, his rock-hard transformation cracking and crumbling away.

Drake's father, Astrid Silvermoon, rushed forward, his face a mask of concern. He knelt beside his son, carefully lifting him. "Drake, are you alright?" he asked, his voice trembling with nervousness.

Drake coughed, wincing in pain. "I'll be fine, father," he managed to say. "Just a little... Burned."

Astrid looked up at Ethan, his expression hard to decipher. "You're a formidable opponent, Ethan. My son has learned a valuable lesson today." he said nothing else.

Ethan nodded weakly, barely able to keep his eyes open. The pain was overwhelming, and he felt his consciousness slipping.

Aria ran to Ethan's side, her face pale with worry. "Ethan! Stay with me!" she cried, gently lifting his head. "You're going to be okay. Just hang on."

With the help of other clan members, Aria carefully lifted Ethan, supporting his weight as they moved him to a more secure location. She could see the extent of his injuries and knew he needed immediate medical attention.

As they left the training ground, Drake's mother approached her husband. "That boy is so strong, are you sure Aria and the boy should not be together?," she asked softly. "Perhaps, he would be the next Transcendental of our kingdom? I am not belittling my son, or anything. It's just, you see that boy's level, barely 10. And he had such power and mysterious skills."

Astrid nodded. "Yes, he has potential. But It's not for me to decide alone. Aria's father needs to decide for himself, then the elders."

Aria led Ethan to the mansion's infirmary, where the clan's healers quickly began tending to his wounds. She stayed by his side, her heart aching at the sight of him in such pain.

"You did it, Ethan," she whispered, holding his hand. "You proved yourself today."

Ethan managed a weak smile, his eyes fluttering open. "Thanks, Aria," he said softly. "I managed somehow." Although, he realized he had overdone it a little. The skills drawback was taking a toll on his body, as if each cell had gone out of energy.

The side effect of Berserker's Might kicked in, making him feebly weak.

Aria squeezed his hand gently. "Rest now. You need to recover before you could anything else."

As Ethan drifted into a much-needed sleep, Aria sat beside him, her thoughts racing.

Meanwhile, back in the training ground, Drake was being carried away by his father. The pain of his injuries was a stark reminder of his defeat, but it also fueled his resolve. He would train harder, become stronger. He would not be bested again. At the same time he felt a little admiration growing for the commoner boy who defeated him.

"Ethan, was it? We will meet again soon." Drake murmured looking back at the training ground.

Although the winner was not clear, it was a defeat to him as he was in advantage from the Start.

As the clan members dispersed, the echoes of the fierce battle lingered in the air. It was a day that none of them would soon forget.

The result of the battle spread throughout the clan mansion leaving everyone awestruck. They couldn't believe that one of their genius had been defeated by a commoner brat. On top of that, he was just at level 10.