

Chapter 411 Human

CRACK~

While the two continued staring at him in a very speechless yet startled manner with their eyes wide open, all of sudden, a noise much similar to glass shattering apart resounded throughout the area.

This was the sign that the Rift was about to throw everything within itself outside!

Thud!

And indeed, after a brief moment of brilliance, everything from the unknown side of the world was expelled to ours. However, against the two Guardian's expectations, instead of the usual army of monsters, a single enormous creature took shape in front of them.

"I-Is that... a butterfly?" Gun Mustache voiced, unable to take his eyes off of this nemesis of mankind.

Right now, the massive butterfly was about to flap its two pairs of transparent wings before ascending to the sky where it ruled.

"I-It's not a horde of monsters... only one monster, which means... this rift... is a single monster Rift! A Concentrated Rift!" A terrible quake went through Tongue Woman's body. And thereafter she couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief.

She was acting relieved because she truly felt comfort at the fact that Virus had bought out this hazardous Rift called the 'Concentrated Rift' from them!

And what are 'Concentrated Rifts'?

Well, conceivably ninety-nine percent of the time, the Rifts usually possess and expel a group of monsters that have a strength similar to or even lesser than the estimated star given to that particular Rift. This type of case is considered a normal one where the respective Guardians will be able to handle without much difficulty.

However, the headache begins when the typical does not happen. Instead, the Rift reacts abnormally and only ejects one or two monsters. And this is where things start to get more complicated.

After a lot of experiments, discoveries, and deductions, scientists and experts hypothesized that each Rift seems to be able to contain a certain accumulated amount of energy and power within itself.

This meant that if a Rift bore a group of monsters rather than a single one, the overall energy will most likely be distributed among them, therefore the Guardians will be facing comparably weaker enemies in greater number.

On the opposite, if a single monster was dispatched, there was a high chance that the energy will be concentrated on that particular monster, thus forcing humanity to face a much stronger adversary. And that is what a 'Concentrated Rift' was all about.

Of course, at the end of the day, all of this was merely probable theories made by humans which could not be confirmed due to their current lack of knowledge. Furthermore, the fact that the Rifts didn't always follow the same rules implemented behind these theories on many occasions also forced many doubts and shadows on the rationale of the experts.

Fwsh!

Meanwhile, watching the butterfly rise into the sky in all its grandeur, a brief grin came to be plastered on Virus' face as he decided, 'A great practicing dummy you are...'

"Do me a favor and live until I'm done determining and testing the limits of my 2nd level of Liberation, will ya?" Muttering this meaningful sentence which sounded nothing but nonsensical gibberish to the two by-standing Guardians, Virus wondered next, 'I'm really curious though, will you be able to last to the point where I'm forced to release my energy externally?'

Subsequently shaking his head, a glint of determination went through his eyes. 'Unlikely... but let's give it a try.'

Following that, without paying any attention to his unwanted spectators, he jumped at the butterfly without any warnings.

Swish!

While in mid-air, his gaze also did not leave the creature at all as he lifted his left leg before continuing to descend with all his might and momentum focused behind that particular foot.

Bam!

Thereafter, a small crater appeared on the ground. Unfortunately, the butterfly had dodged the attack.

SCREEEECH!

"Hmm?" Raising his head upwardly and looking at the angered butterfly at some distance above himself, he could only admit, "You fly faster than I expected."

"But that's not going to save you." Simultaneously, leading every ounce of energy within himself, he focused them all throughout the interior of his legs as the countless motes of energy began to pump through his feet pathways wildly.

JUMP!

Afterward, as he was right in front of the butterfly in what felt like even lesser than a single second, he sent a straight punch at its left eye.

Bang!

As his fist successfully landed on the monster's eye, it was followed by a bursting noise. One of the butterfly's eyes had just burst apart much similar to a bubble!

SCREECH!

Greatly enraged and even in some affliction now, after a short moment of struggling and adjusting, the butterfly no longer hesitated to charge in his direction.

Thereupon, just when it was in rather close proximity to him, the butterfly suddenly twirled around as it aimed one of its horrifyingly sharp wings at him while doing a slicing movement with it.

Meanwhile, watching the incoming sharp blade of wing in slow motion, Virus calculated and immediately knew he was capable of dodging it if he wanted to. Yet, for some reason, he refused to do so and instead allowed the attack to hit him head-on.

Swish!

A line was drawn in the air as blood started to pour down his right hand next.

And examining his bleeding arm which had been left somewhat injured, a thought of amazement flashed through his brain abruptly, 'Oh? It's able to injure me? That's one hell of a sharp and thin wing.'

In fact, to Virus, the butterfly's wing being able to injure his arm felt more like a situation of 'paper cut'. Indeed, although paper cannot compare to the solidity of skin, due to it being extremely thin, it sometimes cuts through it while making it bleed.

At the same time, watching the scene of battle between what they could only call monsters, Gun Mustache and Tongue Woman were experiencing an even greater state of astoundment. While Gun Mustache's straight mustache was shivering nonstop, the Tongue Woman's tongue was hanging loosely from her mouth.

"T-that butterfly... it's at the very peak of three stars at least! No... it might even be in the initial phases of four stars! But... apparently he's able to fight that all by himself! W-What

a monster..." Gun Mustache opened his mouth nervously. Droplets of sweat were also rolling down his face as he felt stressed at the sight of both monsters, one called a butterfly and the other... human.

Chapter 412 The Butterfly

He started running after that and before long, Virus was directly beneath the flying butterfly as he leaped above, leaving a fissured ground behind.

This time, however, as he was upon the butterfly, he did not attack. Instead, reaching out with his hand, he head-on grabbed one of its legs as he brought it down with himself.

Bang!

Of course, just when he was about to hit the ground, he did a downward slashing motion as he smashed the beast right into the earth.

SCREECH!!!

"Shut up."

Bam!

Sending a cruel punch at its tube-like tongue next, Virus pondered, 'Although I would be able to just rip its head off, let's test how energy liberation feels like.' Thinking this, raising his left hand before his face, he made a finger gun with it.

Simultaneously, within his body, a large amount of his energy was led into his left arm.

FSSSH!

Promptly, a beam of light came to be visible from the tip of his index finger. 'Hmm, cool... so this is what releasing my energy outside my pathways feels like.'

'Unfortunately, I'm only able to liberate energy from here since I've just fused the pair of pathway within this particular arm of mine...'

In fact, every time a new pair was fused, the body would be able to release energy from the location of that particular fused and synthesized pathway. This meant that as one progresses and synthesizes more pathways, the said person would be able to liberate energy from more parts of his own body. This process will go on until the cultivator finally completes the 6th level of Liberation when he or she will be able to release energy from most of the major areas surrounding the corporeal figure.

Regrettably, however, even then, the cultivator would not be capable enough to release energy from every part of his or her own body. Not even close!

This had to do with the fact that in Virus's previous world, a cultivator being able to liberate energy from any desired part of his figure was a mere long lost myth. An impossibility even.

Furthermore, it was said that even those legendary geniuses who will be able to tread upon to the 7th or even the 8th level of Liberation would be incapable of achieving that kind of miracle.

No matter, gazing upon the smashed yet struggling butterfly within his locked grasp, without any delay whatsoever, Virus directly slashed with the beautiful beaming light on his finger.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

Subsequently, anywhere his finger went and the energy beam touched, destruction followed as that part was detached from the rest of the butterfly's physique without any resistance.

It was like a knife cutting through butter, with the beam of light being the knife and the butterfly being the butter, only without the fly part.

Swish!

The energy knife caressed one of its wings next...

And the wing was cut off!

"So smooth..." Whispering this, Virus proceeded as the beam of light brushed past its head...

And the butterfly's head was no more!

Therefore, as simple as that, a gory corpse of a messed-up butterfly was now exhibiting itself in front of the two speechless Guardians, Tongue Woman and Gun Mustache.

"I-It died... just like that?" Gun Mustache mouthed with every strand of his mustache having stood up in goosebumps.

Nodding, Tongue Woman also mouthed, "Yeah... that beam of light... it must be his trait. The damage it deals must be horrifying for it to cut through that terrifying monster as easy as that."

Meanwhile, having already killed the butterfly, Virus was just about to turn around and leave...

Abruptly, however, he started to feel great palpitations within his body which increased by every second.

At the same time, the butterfly's corpse seemed to be reacting to whatever that was palpitating within his body as something strange seemed to be drawn from within its carcass into Virus's being.

'W-What is this?' Shell-shocked, Virus didn't hesitate to sit down and close his eyes as he focused every bit of his awareness within himself.

'I-I can feel the existence of Origin again!' Greatly dumbfounded, Virus realized that this strange reaction was from the Origin itself.

Currently, the 'Origin' seemed to be trying to absorb and suck something from the butterfly's carcass into Virus's body.

Nonetheless, marking time patiently, Virus waited for what was to come.

Afterward, slowly but surely, he felt a very odd type of energy appear within his body as Origin gradually guided it to his third and fourth energy pathways.

Then, as the strange fuel was tightly escorted into his third and fourth passage which were supposed to form his 2nd synthesized pathway, something even more shocking took place!

The synthetization and fusion rate increased to one percent!

Right after that, it shot up to 2%, 3%, 4%...

Whatever it was that Origin had extracted from the butterfly was insanely directly fusing and synthesizing his second pathway!!!

"What the fuck!" Murmured Virus speechlessly. He was truly horrified at the concept of cultivating like this since he had never seen or heard of anything like it.

Of course, not waiting for Virus to get a grip, slowly but surely, the fusion rate continued to go higher.

5%, 6%, 7%...

In the meantime, watching Virus suddenly sit down cross-legged and close both his eyes beside the corpse of the butterfly, the two Guardians were really confused.

"What's he doing all of a sudden?" Gun Mustache said in all his puzzlement.

Even more befuddled, Tongue Woman suggested, "I... I don't know? Maybe he's resting? Or... praying for the monster perhaps?"

"Sigh... whatever he's doing, let's get lost before he's done with it. Although we didn't offend him exactly, who knows if he's one of those weirdos with a strange personality and decides to teach us a lesson." Was Gun Mustache's response.

"Yeah, the young generation these days are really weird. Moreover, he must have one hell of a background for him to know such detailed information about me..." Recalling the scene of Virus narrating every little detail about her and her life, a shiver went down Tongue Woman's spine as she decided to get away from this rather young man as soon as possible.

Listening to her, an awkward expression took shape on Gun Mustache's face as he proclaimed, "Uh... but, just what kind of background is it that's even able to unearth and get to the bottom of the mole on your right butt-cheek?"

"Left butt-cheek!"

"... O-okay?"

Quickly noticing what she had done, a slight shade of red was drawn on her face as she changed the subject. "L-Let's just get away from here."

"Ah, okay..." Feeling even more awkward, Gun Mustache replied in his frozen state.

"..."

"..."

For a few seconds after that, the two Guardians stared at each other in some embarrassment before leaving.

...

Meanwhile, not bothering to pay attention to his surroundings in the least, Virus proceeded to closely study this heaven-defying progress happening within his body.

8%, 9%, 10%...

And...

11%!

When the fusion rate touched eleven percent, the odd fuel seemed to have been finally depleted as the process stopped and 'Origin' seemed to have blinked out of existence again.

Chapter 413 Just What is "It"?

As his eyes snapped wide open, Virus rose to his feet while numerous thoughts stormed in his head, 'Hmm, does this mean Origin will increase the synthesis of my Pathways every time I kill a monster? Or was it a one-time thing? Or perhaps it's something that happens only when I kill butterflies?'

'Why now though? I'm quite confident I had killed other such monsters before, but nothing of the sort happened...' As this notion popped into his consciousness, many theories went through his head until the answer that was the most likely possibility revealed itself to him, 'Oh, right. This is the first monster I've killed since my completion of the first synthesized pathway and the subsequent chain reaction from the Origin. I believe Origin must've somewhat connected itself to my pathway in a mysterious way. It's either this or I'm totally lost.'

Not dwelling further on the matter, wanting to check and confirm something else, still in his standing position, he briefly closed both his eyes before opening them again. 'Magnificent! Unlike taking drugs, medicinal potions, elixirs, or other types of heavenly materials, this kind of fusion doesn't harm my foundation in any way.'

His body trembled slightly at this point as he promptly understood what that signified. Therefore, full of joy, he knew, 'This means I can continuously slaughter monsters utilizing this method without fearing any kind of drawbacks or detrimental consequences! No risk of harming my foundation, no risk of harming my pathways, and no risk of destabilizing my cultivation! None! It's the most perfect method for me to keep breaking through with a terrifying speed!'

"As long as there are enough monsters around for me to annihilate, I can advance nonstop." Murmuring this, Virus was full of unbridled excitement. He was now looking forward to how things would progress from this point onward.

Still, soon, his excitement seemed to have been suppressed as uncertainty flickered within his pupils. 'But... how can such a good thing exist? It's almost too good to be true. Wait, I still don't know if this will keep happening every time I kill a monstrous beast. Maybe it was indeed a one-time event.'

For a dozen seconds after that, Virus remained motionless before finally deciding with a shake of his head. "There's no way to confirm or deny this theory without fighting more monsters."

'Well, guess I'll naturally get my answer to that by finishing what I truly came here for. The four-starred Rift.' Taking his phone out of his pocket next, he entered the Guardian Application without any delay.

The first course of action he took next, however, was to check the Guardian License section.

『GUARDIAN LICENSE』

\u003cIDENTITY: Victor Goodwin (Show/Hide)\u003e

\u003cGUARDIAN TITLE: DS (Abbreviation)\u003e

\u003cTRAIT: Body Enhancement\u003e

[POWER]: ★★★★★☆ (4)

[SPEED]: ★★★★★☆ (4)

[DEFENSE]: ★★★★★☆ (4)

[EXPERIENCE]: ★★★☆☆ (3)

'Indeed, they've already updated my experience attribute.' Following that, he raised his head upwardly as he gazed upon the several hidden cameras and the flying drones everywhere.

Of course, the Abnormals Association wasn't stupid enough to simply trust the Guardians and leave them alone without any supervision whatsoever.

They believed doing that was outright idiotic as it will come with many risks. For one, the Guardians may hire other Abnormals to hunt for them for the sole purpose of increasing their attributes. They might even lie about the monsters they've hunted in order to lessen the tax-rate they are supposed to pay for each monster.

Last but not least, there was even the possibility that the dispatched Guardians may fail in handling the Rift and result in irredeemable damages, which in this case, the Association would be quick enough to send a stronger group of Guardians to annihilate the catastrophic beasts.

These were only a few of the more significant reasons as to why the Abnormals Association was adamant about surveilling and watching over every Rift around the country and naturally, there were others too.

'I like how fast they are.' Next, he directly moved on to another segment of the application, the section for reservation, before trying to reserve the only four-star Rift in Chicago which was going to activate tomorrow.

Needless to say, now that he had three-stars in the experience attribute of his License, it was naturally possible for him to reserve four-star Rifts.

\u003cThis rift has been already reserved.\u003e

Unfortunately, even though his attribute was sufficient enough for reservation, he was still faced with another obstacle in his path. Being late in getting the Rift for himself.

Of course, having already anticipated this, Virus didn't hesitate to proceed and try to do a forceful buyout of that particular four stars fracture in space.

\u003cYou can forcefully buyout this Rift for the price of: \$72,000,000\u003e

\u003cDo you wish to proceed?\u003e

'Meh, go on.'

\u003cYes.\u003e

Thereafter, \$72 million was instantly subtracted from his bound bank account. Virus was now responsible for the relevant Rift as whoever that had previously reserved it was also notified that it was no longer under their jurisdiction.

After being done booking the Rift, Virus didn't rush to leave the area, instead, walking beside the carcass of the long-dead butterfly, with the sole purpose of trying to extract its bead, he started cutting the beast's various body parts using his energy finger.

Soon, however, a frown found its way to Virus' forehead.

There was no bead within the butterfly!

'Wait a minute... could it be, that weird energy was its bead?' Full of disbelief, he went on, 'B-But that's impossible! I-I can absorb their beads now? I've never heard of anything like this!'

Indeed, a situation where a human being would be capable of directly consuming or absorbing beads within a monstrous beast was simply unheard of throughout history.

True, human cultivators could utilize and make use of the beads through many indirect methods such as alchemy and smithing, however, they were never able to straightforwardly absorb or consume the core of these beasts in such a preposterous manner.

'J-Just... what is Origin?' In the end, this was the only line he could think of while many mixed emotions continued to flicker through his head as he felt speechless at how heaven-defying Origin was proving itself to be.

Chapter 414 A Reunion

Regardless, throwing one last glance at the corpse of the butterfly monster, Virus turned around before taking his leave. He didn't even bother trying to sell its carcass for some meager profit, because honestly, he didn't value that amount of money in the least.

Frankly, not even billions of dollars attracted his attention to itself these days because to him, money was merely just that. Money. Countless pieces of worthless paper. Something completely worthless when you had too much of it.

After that, coming to Chicago city, he spent the night in a luxurious hotel until the following day.

...

Siiip~

Drinking one last mouthful of his tea, standing up, Virus went into motion as he left the hotel toward the four-star Rift. He was having great expectations for this particular day of importance.

...

'Hmm, the Rift should be activating in around ten minutes...' While standing before the Rift which was still irresponsive, Virus quietly calculated the rough amount of time before its anticipated eruption.

'If my hypothesis is proven to be true after this, in order to experience a fast rise in my cultivation, I will have three optimum options to pick from. But prior to that-'

Before he could even finish his train of thought, however, a loud alarm interrupted his peace. "GUILD MASTER REIGN, HE'S HERE."

Looking in the direction of the source of the noise, Virus eyes met with a man who was screaming toward a seemingly expensive van at the far distance.

And indeed, as a result of his shouting, the door of the huge van was pushed open as another man, followed by two ladies, exited it as they began walking toward him in a leisurely manner.

Soon, led by the man, the trio was standing in some distance very close to Virus.

Meanwhile, after a brief examination of the face of this 26 or 27 years looking man, Virus's line of sight moved on to the two women.

However, that immediately kindled some flickers of surprise in his expression. That was because he recognized the faces of both women.

He was somewhat disturbed because one of them was the 'Thread-mistress' while the other one was 'her'... Ella.

At the same time, the two women also clearly flinched as if they had just recalled or realized something.

"Are you the one who bought out our Rift, young man?" Taking on a cold tone which was screaming arrogance, the man in the lead questioned next.

Withdrawing his focus from the face of the two women due to the interruption by this arrogant man, while pointing at the Rift behind himself, Virus finally opened his mouth, "If you're talking about this bad boy right here... then yes. It was me."

Having already expected that answer, the man nodded his head. "Well, you probably didn't know who we are, so that's understandable. Anyway, I'm Reign, the leader of the famous [Dominators] guild. And this is a Rift me and my fellow compatriots had personally reserved."

Finished introducing himself, as if he could already see Virus's hilarious reaction of escaping with his tail between his legs, while gesturing 'you are dismissed' with his fingers, he declared, "Now that you know me, you can go away. The Dominators will take it from here on. And don't worry by the way, I'll be the bigger man here and let it slide this time around. So... just know that no offense was taken. You can leave totally relaxed."

By this point, Virus wasn't even listening to the nonsensical gibberish of this so-called leader of the Dominators guild who had named himself Reign. This was because he felt like his IQ would drop if he listened to this man's crap any longer. Instead, his eyes were once again focused on the face of the woman on the right, aka Thread-mistress, as he said with a wide grin, "It's been a while, how have you been, I wonder?"

This, however, instantly forced the Thread-mistress to flinch as she recalled a certain unpleasant memory. "So it is really you! I thought my mind was playing games with me after seeing you... but it really is you! You crazy pervert bastard!"

"Haha... nice to meet you too. I've been great as well, thanks for asking." Feeling amused, Virus responded with a burst of loud laughter.

Meanwhile, the other woman's expression seemed to have long gone pale as she could only stare at Virus's face without taking them off, not even for a second. She was frozen still in that position.

'It's really him! I had my doubts at first... b-but that face, those dark eyes, and dark hair... it's that face from that time, i-it's definitely... him.' She pondered simultaneously while great waves were wreaking havoc inside her.

'W-What should I say to him now? B-but why isn't he even looking at me? His eyes only lingered on my figure just for a second before he retracted them entirely. He hasn't even spared me a single glance since then...'

'Could it be... he feels like I don't even deserve his mere glance anymore?'

Indeed, just as the woman on the left, Ella, had noticed, Virus's eyes had merely grazed past her face for the briefest of time before he no longer looked her way anymore. It was as if she no longer existed there at all.

This was because after catching the sight of those mesmerizing green eyes and long hair of hers, Virus had promptly shed light on her identity. And having already identified her, for some unknown reasons, his eyesight began avoiding her entirely.

"Why are you still here, lad? Quit bullshitting my companion and leave instead, do you hear me?" Being ignored once, Reign didn't feel much and instead assumed that he must've behaved like that due to spotting the Thread-mistress, therefore, he urged him to leave once again.

Unfortunately, however, he was ignored once more as Virus talked to the Thread-mistress again.

"So you've joined the Dominators, huh?" There was a shallow smirk being exhibited from the corner of his lips too.

"Yeah! But so what! What does that have to do with you exactly?!" Came her rude reply immediately.

"Y-You! Are you fucking ignoring me, lad?" In the meantime, being ignored not only once, but twice, Reign's facial expression was contorting so much that it had an odd resemblance to the face of an angered wolf by this point. The thought of being ignored like that was making him so enraged that he was even considering attacking him directly.

This was because watching Virus's body language and tone, he had now confirmed that he was intentionally disregarding him as an act of rejecting his offer of leaving the area peacefully.

Meanwhile, the body of the woman on the left, Ella, was shuddering somewhat while she wondered, 'Why is he ignoring me like that?'

'B-But, p-perhaps, could it be... every question he asked the Thread-mistress was in fact directed at me?'

'Although it sounds crazy of me to say this, it really felt that way, I-I can feel it.'
Unconsciously putting her hand on her aching heart, Ella assumed.

Today, once again, the lovers of yesterday were finally going through another reunion. A reunion followed by possibly many undefined connotations and undertoned feelings.

Chapter 415 Fros

"I'll give you one last chance, kid. Are you going to leave or not?" With the hostile glint intensifying even further, Reign questioned again.

Of course, Virus didn't need to even think before finally responding, "Not."

He had only chosen to reply due to his increasing sensation of annoyance at the arrogance and idiocy of Reign.

"You!"

"Will please shut up now? You're annoying."

"I'll fucking kill you!" With even more veins showing up around his neck, Reign had, at last, lost control. Therefore, he was just about to start utilizing his special Trait when he was suddenly stopped by the grasp of a hand belonging to one of the two women beside him.

And then, having already stopped him in his tracks, the owner of the hand, Thread Mistress, uttered, "Calm down, Reign, a lot of eyes are watching us. If you attack, you'll be held accountable by the Abnormals Association."

Indeed, assaulting someone around the vicinity of Rift, which was equipped with many surveillance cameras, was forbidden and in case such an incident ever happened, the person who started the fight first would be gravely punished since the Abnormals Association didn't take matters regarding the Rifts and their respective rules lightly at all.

After a brief glance into Thread Mistress's pupils in return, understanding she was right, full of irritation, he said, "What's your name, kid?"

"Me? I'm DS."

"And what does DS stand for?" Several new ticks also formed on his temple while he inquired.

"Hmm, it stands for you're in Deep Shit, Reign." Casually putting one hand beneath his chin, a contemplative shine showed up over Virus's face as he answered without holding back.

"You bastard motherfucker! Just you wait, you'll regret ever offending the Dominators! I'll get back at you for this." Turning around with that, he was just about to leave, when he was interrupted by a cracking noise.

SHATTER~

'Oh, finally, the Rift's about to open up at last.' Retracting his focus from Reign who he considered nothing but a pathetic clown, Virus patiently began to anticipate the prospect of the incoming beasts from within the Rift.

'Hope it spits some Six-Eyed Bears at me.'

Very quickly, one beast after another was discharged from the Rift.

One monster...

Two monsters...

Seven Monsters...

Only when the figure hit eleven was the Rift done with the process as it quickly disappeared from their line of sight.

'Hmm, nine among them are full-fledged bears,' Thought Virus while throwing a deep look at each and every one of the bears, 'but... unfortunately, I can't seem to be able to find a Six-Eyed Bear among any of them. All of them are peak Five-Eyed Bears which are probably on the very verge of evolving into a Six-Eyed Bear.'

'Moreover, those two seem to be...' With his gaze landing on the last remaining creatures whose eyes were burning in red-flame like substances, he concluded, 'they should possess Red-Crystals within themselves.'

Examining the physique of those two humanoid creatures which had great similarities to bees, he pondered with further interest, 'Their heads and antennae resemble those of bees too, and their yellow and black trunks and those bee-wings behind them are also clearly screaming bee. This should be somewhat entertaining.'

'Well, I'm lucky I guess since I can also test if Origin can suck the energy out of them too. Good.' Following that, he was just about to charge into the middle of the horde of

monsters, when a feminine voice attracted his attention to itself, "There are too many monsters here. If you want to handle them all by yourself, a few of them will inevitably escape and that might even cause a lot of casualties and harm upon other people. Later on, you would be even punished if that happened, so how about we help you? You just need to give us half of every beast we kill."

Simultaneously, she flicked her fingers as numerous nearly invisible threads began to surround and cover the eleven creatures, forcefully binding and trapping them in their standing stop for the moment.

Turning toward the Thread-Mistress who had just offered her aid while temporarily helping him confine the beasts, a grin found its way on Virus's face. Afterward, he was just about to open his mouth and say something when Reign beat him to it.

"What are you saying, Thread-Mistress! Why do you want to help him? Did you even ask me if you can do that?!" Without any pause in between, he went on, "Furthermore, didn't you see how he treated me just now? We should just leave the area and let him handle his own shit!"

'That's what you get for treating me like that, motherfucker.' Exuding clear signs of malice and ill will, Reign was fast to prevent the Thread-Mistress from interfering. All he wanted to witness now was to see Virus failing in successfully dealing with the Rift on his own before being dragged to the Abnormal Association so as to be gravely punished.

However, just as Reign assumed he had successfully stopped the Thread-Mistress, it was Ella's turn this time to jump into the middle of the conversation. Therefore, while her head was still somewhat lowered and even quivering due to some unknown notions, she stutteringly suggested, "I-I'm w-willing t-to help too... Ai- DS. Please let me assist you." At the beginning of her sentence, she was clearly stuttering, however by the end of it, she was reeking of unshakeable determination. She was finally facing the man she wanted to come across and meet both day and night, hence, she wasn't willing to let go of this chance that easily.

She also couldn't prevent dumb notions from passing through her head, 'I wonder, will he feel moved, impressed, or perhaps even emotional after seeing how strong I've become?'

'Will he look at me again after seeing that I can take care of myself now?'

Seeing Ella offering her assistance, however, Reign felt shocked. He had never expected Ella to insist even after he had just forbidden Thread-Mistress from lending a helping hand.

"F-Frost, what are you doing, damn it? Didn't you just hear me say we're not going to assist the bastard?"

Chapter 416 Please...

"SHUT UP! He's not a bastard, you are! Don't curse him again! And I'm going to help, whether you allow me to or not, I don't care!" By the end of her sentence, she was obviously clenching both of her fists as she continued staring at Reign like a cat that had been just greatly offended.

This forced Reign's eyes to go wide open in utter disbelief since he truly hadn't envisioned Ella to not only be so headstrong about it but also curse him along the way too.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that Reign had never seen her act this way before. And considering that, his startlement was frankly well-justified.

In the past few years since he had recruited and known Ella, Ella had always kept a professional distance from him while obeying every single one of his guild-related orders to the best of her capabilities without undermining his authority in the least, not even once.

But now, all of a sudden, she was behaving in this odd manner, which only made Reign feel speechless and lost.

On the other hand, even Thread-Mistress was slightly startled by this decision from Frost because she hadn't anticipated her to react this way either.

Nonetheless, this resulted in an amused smirk forming on the corner of her lips as she also found even more courage to disobey their leader. "We're going to help, Reign. Whether you help us or not, that's your decision. But whether we help him or not is also up to us, so please don't be so naïve to think you can interfere with our will."

Following that, turning toward Virus again, she opened her mouth again, "We just need you to give us your verbal consent to assist you, that would make our interference legal. What do you say, DS?" With that, she impassively waited for Virus's response.

Of course, following that, it also didn't take long for Virus to provide them with the reply they were seeking. To be honest, he wanted to reject her offer at first since he didn't need it in the first place, furthermore, every bear was going to increase the unification percentage of his Pathways even higher, so why would he even consider accepting the offer?

However, after seeing how unwilling and hurt Reign looked at the concept of them disobeying him and going against his orders so as to aid him, he decided to change his mind.

Moreover, there was something else he wanted to check for himself from a closer distance. Hence, he agreed. "Alright, you two can kill those four Five-Eyed Bears for the

moment, leave the rest to me until I tell you otherwise. Oh, by the way, you can carry on with keeping them restrained since I'm trying to do a little experiment here."

The moment he was finished with his words, before anyone could even react to it, his figure vanished from the trio's eyesight as it seemed to come into existence once again right beside one of the Five-Eyed Bears.

"Shall we begin?" Directing this question at the Five-Eyed Bear, the only answer he received was the angry growls of the beast.

"Will take that as a yes." Having no thoughts about wanting to delay this any further, directly grabbing the bear's head under the watchful eyes of the trio, using his two palms, he directly went ahead to squeeze it with all his might pushed behind it.

ROAAR-

P-TAFF~

A popping sound of watermelon bursting open reverberated around the area next. That was the gruesome noise of the bear's head as it directly exploded and shattered into many pieces.

Watching this gory scene of the now headless bear and the disgusting brain matter splattered all around, the trio became dumbfounded since none of them had seen this coming. This was their first time seeing someone actually killing a monster in this way.

Still, knowing this was not the time, Frost and Thread-Mistress were quick to go in motion as they rushed at their own portion of responsibility.

'H-He's that strong?' On the other hand, a quiver went down Reign's spine at the mere imagination of his head being in Virus's grasp instead of the bear's. He couldn't stop himself from swallowing hard either.

In the meantime, still frozen up in his previous location, several lines of deliberation were storming through Virus's anxious mind.

'Hmm, why am I not feeling anything yet? Something should've happened by now.' Narrowing his eyes, Virus truly felt confused by the entire situation. Too much time had passed but he was perceiving no reaction from the Origin whatsoever.

He had been pretty confident that Origin would definitely suck the monster's energy into him, however, the next moment, he was proven otherwise. 'Could it be that I was wrong about the entire thing? Could this only happen when I'm murdering butterfly-type monstrous beasts? Or perhaps it was indeed a one-time thing?'

Every possibility that was passing through his brain now could only add to the feeling of disappointment growing within Virus. In fact, he had been so excited about this entire situation last night that he could hardly sleep.

But now, it looked like that had been just wishful thinking from his part, which honestly made him sad. 'As they say, the higher the expectation, the greater the disappointment.'

'But... I feel like something's wrong and I'm still missing a detail. Origin should've reacted the same way as yesterday... but why?' At the same time, increasing his calculative speed many times over, he tried coming up with the possible reasons as to why this was happening.

'What variable changed since yesterday?'

'Hmm, the only different variables from yesterday should be respectively the type and grade of the Rifts, the type of monstrous beast I just killed, and,' his eyes quietly landed on the almost invisible threads restraining the corpse of the dead beast as he completed his train of thought, 'outside help.'

This promptly sent a shiver of possible comprehension down his spine as he didn't hesitate to request the Thread-Mistress while pointing at another bear, "Free this bear for me."

Although it was a long shot, it had been successful in flaming up some hope within Virus. 'As long as there's some tiny hope...'

Thereafter, as the next bear was finally released from its confinement, letting out a roar of rage, it charged at it's the closest target, Virus.

Of course, having already expected this, Virus didn't falter in rushing at the bear beast as he grabbed its head once again before squeezing it into countless bits.

POP!!!

'Please... please... react.' Afterward, without even noticing, he found himself pleading the Origin to react the same way as yesterday.

Hua~

Abruptly, as if his pleas have been heard by it, the same strange energy started to be sucked into his physique as it then stormed into his still separated third and fourth pathways.

12%, 13%, 14%...

Subsequently, as the absorbed energy began to assimilate itself into the connecting bridge between the 3rd and 4th passages, the fusion rate began to shoot up once more.

In fact, Virus was literally seeing a percentage bar getting filled up at every passing second. This was because he had configured his consciousness in a way so that the unification degree of his next pathways would be reported and displayed visually.

20%, 21%, 22%...

Even as the synthesis rate hit a solid 22 percent which was twice the amount as the previous time, it seemed the process of fusion had no intention of wanting to stop as it continued soaring.

Chapter 417: Frost

23%, 24%....

And finally...

25%!

Only when the bar displayed 25 percent did the odd energy disperse as the Origin went quiet again.

"YES!" Clenching both fists, Virus loudly exclaimed, instantly drawing Ella's and the Thread-Mistress's focus on himself.

"Eh, why does he seem so excited?" Asked the Thread-mistress while feeling goosebumps under her skin. All she had witnessed was Virus shattering the skull of the bear apart like a savage and then shouting in utter joy as if he had done something that was making his blood boil in elation. 'Could he be a psychopath who enjoys slaughtering?'

"Well, he said he wanted to experiment something, so he probably discovered something which is making him happy." While on the other hand, Frost who knew Virus better responded calmly.

'I wonder what you're experimenting Ai... but whatever it is, I'm sure no one can even dream about imagining it.' Recalling all of the insane tools and stuff she had seen Virus randomly take out during the times of them being together forced a shine of curiosity to be lit up within Ella's pupils.

Meanwhile, staring at the remaining three bears in front of him, licking the corner of his lips in anticipation, he commanded, "Free my three teddy-bears."

Watching his psychotic act of licking the corner of his mouth while saying 'release my teddy bears' promptly sent a cold shiver down the Thread-mistress's spine as she confirmed, 'HE'S DEFINITELY A PSYCHO!'

Still, not having any intentions of wanting to bar this crazy psychopath's path, she went ahead and liberated the bear monsters with a simple flick of her fingers.

Thereafter, the moment the bears were set free, even before the beasts themselves had the chance of charging in his direction, beating them to it, Virus rushed at them with apparently very hungry eyes.

CRACK!

BAM!

PUFF!

Following that, three respective noises of skulls cracking, blowing up, and exploding traveled through the ears of the trio who gazed at him with some traces of sweat running down their foreheads.

'He's batshit crazy. H-He's d-drooling!' Thought Reign to himself while feeling his blood run cold.

"HAHAHAHA!" At the same time, as if to confirm their hypothesis, spreading both his arms, looking upwardly, he suddenly started to laugh like a true maniac while feeling the amazing transformations within himself.

25%, 26%, 27%...

'He's truly a Dark Savior...' Feeling enlightened all of a sudden, the Thread-mistress pondered to herself in some anxiety. She felt like she had truly come to understand why he titled himself as the Dark Savior.

31%, 32%, 33%...

Beside her, Ella was also feeling somewhat shocked since this wasn't how 'Aizen' behaved usually. 'Is he... perhaps... acting this way so no one suspects his true identity?' This was the only reason she could think of which could maybe justify the strange way he was acting.

45%, 46%, 47%!

When the percentage bar shot up to 47%, the increasing process finally halted.

This, however, abruptly stopped Virus's unbridled laughter as a sharp glint went through his eyes while he analyzed, 'Eh, I killed three bears, so I was at least expecting the percentage bar to break through 60%... but it only increased to 47%...'

'I see, this could either mean that it gets harder to surge the fusion rate as it goes higher... or that my pathways gradually get immune to the energy from the same type of monster. Or perhaps it's both. I need to examine this further in order to make sure.'

'Well, whatever. As long as I can use this method to level up, it doesn't matter by much really.' With his conclusion, his eyeballs suddenly turned toward the two humanoid bees, forcing a quiver of terror down their spine much to their disbelief.

"Now... let's see if you guys are delicious." As the same crazed glimmer flickered through his eyes, Virus announced in delight. Both Thread-mistress and Reign were now certain he was a mad man indeed.

"Free that one." He demanded next while pointing at one of the bees.

BZZZZ!

Subsequently, as the bee was liberated, he stormed at it before grabbing its head and neck with each hand before detaching the two from each other with a simple pull.

BZzz...!

As the bee's buzzing stopped at last, Virus closed both his eyes, patiently waiting for what was to come.

However, no matter how long he awaited the gratifying boost, it didn't come.

'Eh... nothing?'

Then, staring at the other bee with some resentment within his pupils, he said, "You taste the worst. Boring and disappointing." Seeing the humanoid bees not having lived up to his great expectations of them, he truly felt let down now. 'So... this means Origin does not react or absorb energy from the Red-Crystals.'

Thereafter, no longer wanting to bother himself regarding the subject, he vanished and appeared before the other bee and casually separated its head too.

Next, as he was, at last, over with his own share of monsters, his attention was finally drawn on the stunned figure of Thread-mistress who was still looking at him with her mouth fully agape.

"Eh, why haven't you killed your own share of bears yet?" Indeed, all four bears were still alive and kicking in their restrained spots.

"Eh... w-we just wanted to watch you first. We'll kill them now." Unwilling to reveal her true thoughts on the matter, with a little stutter, the Thread-Mistress responded.

"Frost, I'll restrain them, you finish them off."

'Finally! I have a chance to show Aizen how strong I've become.' Pondering in elation, Ella said, "Alright, please keep them still."

At the same time, seeing the two about to make their move at last, barely able to maintain his fading interest, he remained standing in a corner. Temporarily.

Meanwhile, under the watchful gazes of the three, Frost then raised her hands while aiming them toward one of the bears.

SCHWALTTZZZ~

Immediately, small crystals of ice started to take shape all around her as they grew bigger and bigger by every passing second.

Very soon, as the clock had hit its third second, many fist-sized ice shards with extremely razor-sharp edges were pointing at the bear.

Subsequently, she swiped both her arms toward the beast as they all shot at it without any delay whatsoever.

Chapter 418: WAIT!

Woosh! Whoosh~

THUCK~ THUNK~... ROAAAR~

Several ice shards instantly pierced through the targeted bear's flesh, successfully injuring it as a result while its fur began bleeding on those particular areas in a nonstop and fatal manner.

Next, a new set of hovering ice took shape around her as she swung her arms once more, forcing them into the roaring bear-in-pain.

Coincidentally, one of the shards sank into the bear's eyes as it went ahead and penetrated its brain, resulting in the instant death of the creature.

Meanwhile, watching the sweat-filled foreheads of Thread-Mistress and the so-called Frost, Virus merely continued observing them. 'They seem to be fatigued and depleted already... the Thread-Mistress due to restraining the monsters until now, and Ella due to her own special trait... hmm.'

Simultaneously, producing a new group of ice, Frost started attacking his second target. And by the time she had launched her second attack, the second bear was already dead.

"F-Frost, I've been constraining them all for far too long, you'd have to deal with the other two by yourself." After seeing the second bear dead, the Thread-Mistress's nigh-invisible threads seemed to have lost their might as they disappeared gradually and that freed the monsters.

"N-No problem!" Exclaimed Ella in determination, however, seeing her breathing with some difficulty, it was clear she was also somewhat struggling with the situation.

Nonetheless, raising her arms, she was just about to put the third bear to eternal rest, when abruptly, Virus took shape between the two remaining bears as he went ahead and shattered their skulls one after another.

"Eh... didn't you say you'll leave those four bears to us, you perverted bastard! What's the meaning of this!?" Annoyed, exclaimed the Thread-Mistress immediately as she jumped to conclude the possible connotations behind this act of this man which she still deemed nothing but a pervert that would take advantage of a lady at any chance he got.

"Haha, see? I knew something like this would happen! As expected of a loser like him. He didn't deserve your assistance from the beginning, that's why I told you not to help!" In the meantime, Reign, who had been watching everything quietly until now, as if he had finally found his chance, started talking as he ridiculed and branded Virus as a loser.

Deciding to ignore Reign for now, however, the Thread-Mistress patiently waited for Virus's anticipated justification as she felt like he was at least entitled to that. However, no matter how long she waited, no such a thing happened as Virus simply closed both his eyelids as a satisfied expression took shape over his face. He seemed to be even enjoying the entire development.

Seeing his satisfied look, however, made the Thread-Mistress misunderstand the situation even further as she yelled in anger, "You perverted bastard! You're enjoying this, aren't you? You enjoy abusing others, right?! Just like when you kiss-" When she reached the final part of her sentence though, a blush formed on her cheeks as she was no longer capable of continuing with her words.

On the other hand, a rueful glimmer was clear on Ella's face as she also recalled that particular scene she had witnessed over the television years ago, the scene of Dark Savior kissing the Thread-Mistress before the eyes of the entire world.

Of course, going back to Virus, obviously, he wasn't feeling pleasure due to stealing the bears, but because the fusion rate within his second currently-forming synthesized passage had started reacting and rising once again.

48%, 49%, 50%...

Finally, only when the bar hit 58% did the increment stop.

'Hmm, I'm now in the intermediate phase of the 2nd level of Liberation. Regrettably though, just as I thought, it seems to be getting harder and harder to progress...' Unfortunately, just as this notion passed through his mind as he continued trying to order his discoveries together, a feminine voice which was clearly extremely angered forced him out of his contemplation.

"Are you ignoring me, perverted bastard! Is this your way of dealing with any situation that proves unfavorable to you!?" This vexed voice of interruption obviously belonged to the Thread-Mistress who kept lashing at the quiet Virus.

"Ahhh, you're so loud and fucking annoying, woman! You just won't let me concentrate for a single moment, will ya!?" Helpless, the dark-haired youth, DS, mouthed at last.

"W-What... I-I'm a-annoying? Y-Y-You!" Greatly exasperated at this point, the Thread-Mistress was truly speechless.

First, he had stolen the shares and monsters they were promised with. Then, when she had demanded an explanation, he had just gone silent entirely!

Not only that, he even had the audacity of showing a happy face as he was clearly enjoying the entire situation while ignoring her.

But now, when she at least wanted him to try justifying himself, he called her 'annoying'. All of this was now making the Thread-Mistress feel very wronged.

"Yes, you! If you had just shut up and stayed quiet for a while until I'm finished thinking, I would've informed you that all of the carcasses, even those that were killed by me, are yours to do as you desire... but you just wouldn't shut up and let me think in peace." Answered the Dark Savior with a flustered frown still apparent on his forehead.

This answer made the Thread-Mistress a little stunned as she was feeling even more confused and wronged now. "How do you expect someone to not misunderstand a situation like that! Moreover, why would you need to think for so long! It was clearly a case where anyone would come to misunderstand naturally!" However, although her mouth was uttering those words as she still sounded upset, unconsciously, she began seeing Virus in a more positive light as her tone was also clearly much softer compared to the past.

"Forget it..." Shaking his head, however, not wanting to argue any further, Virus simply ended the topic before vanishing from their sight in flash.

Appearing beside the motionless corpses of the two humanoid bees next, without any delay whatsoever, he went ahead and extracted the two Red-Crystals from within their bodies.

"Since you two were helpful indeed, everything else here other than these two Red-Crystals belongs to you now, do with them as you see fit. Goodbye." Having already said everything that needs to be said, his figure... disappeared.

"WAIT!!!"

THE GOD VIRUS

Chapter 419 - Again

"WAIT!!!" Ella screamed while raising her hand toward the vanishing back of Virus as if she was trying to get a hold of him before he disappears entirely from her own little world.

Albeit, the dark-haired young man was already gone as he was nowhere to be found now. Ella was late to call up to him. It was either that or... perhaps, her shout had been clearly heard, just that Virus didn't bother stopping in his tracks as he left nonetheless.

Frozen still in her standing position with her hand still reached out toward Virus's previous location which was totally empty now, extreme traces of sadness started to flicker inside Ella's pupils as she felt an old wound open up once more. 'He's gone again... he left me... again.'

In the meantime, beside her, seeing Ella's odd way of behavior, many suspicious thoughts were going through both Thread-Mistress and Reign's minds.

'Could it be... she knew him prior to today? In real life? Damn... does that mean... she knows his real identity? The true identity of the famous Dark Savior that no one had been capable of unearthing for many years now?' These lines were currently going through the Thread-Mistress's brain at the moment.

'Hmm, why is she acting so strangely today? First, she disobeyed my order, and now she's acting so sad. Was that bastard someone he knew from before?' Having deliberated on the matter up to this point, a rather savage glint was apparent within Reign's eyes as he questioned the Thread-Mistress next, 'Tell me, Thread-Mistress, you two seemed to be rather privy to that person's real identity... who is he?'

Hearing this, the Thread-Mistress was slightly hesitating at first, but pondering further on the topic, she realized it would be wiser to reveal the true identity of DS to this idiotic leader of hers so he wouldn't go seeking unnecessary trouble for himself. "Him? Didn't he tell you already? He's DS."

"I already heard that dipshit's introduction. I'm asking you who he really is! And don't try to lie by the way, because I know for a fact that you two know about his real name!" Putting on an extremely annoyed tone, he demanded from the Thread-Mistress.

Listening to his demanding tone, the Thread-Mistress was slightly angered to the point of even considering deciding against telling him the truth for a split second. Nonetheless, shaking her head in the end, she mouthed, "He's indeed DS-"

"I told you to stop bullshitting me!!!" Thinking she was still adamant about keeping his identity a secret, Reign interrupted her immediately.

"I'm not done talking yet! So please shut up and listen carefully before talking and interrupting me!!!" Feeling even more irritated now, she went on, "The DS in his name stands for Dark Savior. He's the famous Dark Savior that had vanished for a few years now and had just recently fought against the plant Kraken in Shanghai."

"..." After a few seconds of silence, Reign was finally capable of reacting as he barked with his eyes wide open, "WHAT!"

"Yeah. Do you realize now how stupid you were to treat him like that? He's the person nearly all nations around the globe searched for and tried to actively hire for several years! And you behaved like that before such a person."

"Are you telling the truth?"

"Absolutely."

"Hmm..." Going quiet at this point, for nearly an entire minute, many notions went through Reign's brain. Although some might mistake him for a rash and idiotic person due to his personality, it wasn't the case at all as he hadn't risen to his current position of leading one of the best guilds in America just out of pure luck and only because he was strong.

After a while of contemplation, he finally opened his mouth again, "It doesn't matter if he was greatly sought after a few years ago. A lot has changed since then and humanity and other Abnormals have greatly progressed! He might've been a big deal and maybe even the strongest Abnormal back then... but now, there are other monsters that could probably defeat him in a matter of seconds. So whatever. I don't care who he is since he offended my dignity as the guild leader of Dominators. I only feel a little regretful because you didn't notify me of this before... because I would've tried scouting him from the beginning if you had told me."

As he was finished talking, however, the Thread-Mistress could still spot some glimmers that screamed 'grudge' and 'resentment' within Reign's pupils. And this grudge was naturally aimed at the now gone Dark Savior.

...

After leaving the company of the members of Dominators and returning to his private jet, many notions were now passing through Virus' head.

'Hmm, it's a little regretful I encountered no Six-eyed Bears to get my hand on their hearts. But it doesn't matter really since I probably wouldn't have used it anyway.'

'I mean, why would I risk my foundation and create a paper plane when I can make the real thing? Therefore, from now on, I'll try to absolutely utilize Origin in order to achieve multiple breakthroughs since not only does it provide me with the purest form of energy... but also, it's probably going to help me attain the most solid and perfect foundation in existence. Now that's something I can't say no to.'

'Furthermore, it's both fast and easy. I just need more monsters to slaughter and that's it! So, unless I'm left with no other choice, I will try not to deviate from this choice of mine.'

"Now..." Uttering this single word out loud, he resumed the rest of his sentence internally while gazing outside of the jet's window toward the mesmerizing scene of clouds, 'the question is... how to get my hands on more monsters to slaughter and hunt...'

'Well... as I thought before, there are three viable and realistic options for me. The first one is for me to keep reserving as many Rifts as I can and fight its monstrous beasts when they are activated. However, this is going to be the slowest out of three since I would need to waste most of my time traveling, reserving, and waiting for each of the Rifts to expel its monsters. '

'The second course of action I could pick is for me to... literally enter the Rifts one after another and hunt its monster inside.'

'But... myself included in the list, no one knows for sure what's on the other side of the fractures in space. It could all be a huge trap for all I know and it could even pose a threat to my life. So this option is honestly the most dangerous path which I believe should be avoided at all costs for now. At least

until humanity invests in exploring some of it. Moreover, I would simply draw too much attention to myself if I keep entering one Rift after another.'

'And last but not least, for my third alternative, I could go back to the Cultivation Earth and directly hunt monstrous beasts there.' Having already proven in his laboratory that the beads within the monsters were the same as those found within the corpse of the monstrous beasts of those of Cultivation Multiverse of Qi, Virus knew the fastest and quickest way for him to progress would be to visit the Cultivation Earth with the sole purpose of hunting monstrous beasts for their beads.

At this point, he began to murmur unconsciously, "Hmm, now... which one should I pick, I wonder. The first one which is slow but safe, the second one that would be comparatively faster but most likely very dangerous... or the third one that requires me to leave for a while?"

Chapter 420: Acquaintances?

Just as he was finally about to make up his mind regarding his choice of whether to start reserving Rifts, entering them, or leaving to the Cultivation Multiverse altogether, he was distracted by an internal alert. 'Hmm? Someone's trying to establish a direct line to me... is it Lil Belle? Or Amara perhaps?'

Curious about the identity of the caller, Virus straightly connected to the Communication Device on the other side of the line. The next moment, however, a flicker of surprise went through his eyes as he realized the caller was in fact, Ella.

Having just left the company of Ella, Virus had assumed that there was nearly nothing left to discuss between them no more. Alas, that didn't seem to be the case for Ella. 'Maybe something urgent regarding the Rift came up?'

Notwithstanding, after a momentary hesitation, he decided to pick up the call. "Yes? What is it?"

...

After watching Virus disappear without sparing her nearly a single glance, Ella's mood experienced a sharp fall while feeling a squeezing pain in her chest, making it harder and harder for her to breathe.

“So... Frost, DS told us to divide the loots between the two of us, therefore I’ll-” Before Thread-Mistress could even finish, however, Ella interrupted, “Do as you see fit, I’m not feeling well, so I’ll leave. See you at the headquarters.”

Turning around, Ella also vanished among the trees.

Meanwhile, looking at her downcast back, the Thread-Mistress was honestly very curious as to why she seemed to have been greatly saddened after meeting the Dark Savior.

Of course, there were some possible theories she had come up with, unfortunately, there was no way for her to specify the right one.

...

‘This can’t end like this... I’ve waited for years for him to approach me of his own accord, or possibly for us to meet by coincidence and make up. Like today. But... maybe I was wrong all along, he’s too much of an idiot to understand how I’m feeling. He’s so smart in everything else... but when it comes to us, why is he...’ Pondering up to this point, a glimmer of determination became apparent within her pupils as she decided, “We can’t go on like this... It’s time for me to take the lead!”

‘Call Aizen!’ Thereafter, this notion which she had dreamt of having day and night went through her head as the Communication Device, the smallest yet most precious gift she had ever received, established a connecting bridge between the two of them once again!

“Yes? What is it?”

Receiving the familiar voice directly into her brain, Ella froze up entirely. For a while, the awkward silence was all that was transmitted between the two.

Still, it didn’t take long for Ella to finally open her mouth, “Why... why did you ignore me like that just now? Am I no longer even worth talking to?”

Catching this, another bout of silence dominated the line for a while, until at last, a response came to her anxious heart. “It’s not that really. It’s just, you were acting too emotional, therefore, I had no other option but to ignore you.”

“W-What do you mean? That doesn’t make se-” Before she could even end her sentence, however, Virus continued, “Think about it, if you had continued to act emotionally like that, and I had happened to tag along with you and start talking to you, the bystanders and the surveillance cameras would’ve easily inferred that there was something romantic going on between us. They would’ve suspected that we are or were a couple. And connecting the dots, after a bit of investigation as to who was your

boyfriend in the past, there was a very high chance of them discovering that the Dark Savior is, in fact, the Chairman of the Virus Industries.”

“And that will bring a lot of unnecessary troubles and headaches for me which I’m trying to avoid for the moment, temporarily.”

A shine of jovial comprehension burned within Ella’s eyes as she deliberated happily, ‘So that’s why he ignored me! It’s wasn’t something like hating me and thus ignoring me, thank god!’

Just as she was about to express her happiness, unfortunately, Virus beat her to it and stabbed an even more fatal blade right through her heart, “Otherwise, there was no reason for me to deliberately ignore you or anything, I mean, it’s not like I’m trying to avoid talking to you. Just like how I wouldn’t disregard my other acquaintances, I wouldn’t just shrug you off as well.”

Following his words, Ella felt like a bucket of icy cold water had been just poured over her head. ‘A-Acquaintances? Does he consider me a mere acquaintance now, someone he knows but isn’t exactly close with? Is that what I am to him?’

“ ... ”

Showing a painful smile filled with suffering, she pondered, ‘Hating me would’ve been better compared to not caring at all...’

Clenching both her fists as hard as she could, Ella muttered, “Ai, why did you never come looking for me these past few years? Why didn’t you just follow me that day? I-I’ve... sob... I’ve been waiting for you every single day... sob...” Unable to stop her sobbing, at last, tears began running down her face.

After a few seconds of remaining quiet, letting out a helpless sigh, Virus declared, “Sigh... Ella, I don’t think it’ll work out between us anymore.”

With only this sentence, for Ella, time seemed to have frozen still and stopped functioning entirely. She felt as if her entire world was shattering apart... no, a more appropriate term would be... she felt as if her heart had just shattered into countless pieces, promptly snuffing the life out of her.

Regardless, after what felt like an eternity later for her, while shaking nonstop, mustering every bit of energy she had left, she mouthed in a quivering tone. “A-Ai... you c-can’t mean that. I-I... sob... still love you with all my heart. D-Don’t you love me anymore?”