

The Walker Of Voids

Chapter 101: Death's Door [3] - Secrets [2]

"18 to 20-year-old male flying toward spatial tear. Second commandment or higher, carrying an injured female. His main affinity is shadow or darkness. I'm not too sure. He has purple eyes and black hair. We couldn't get a good look at the female; all we know is that she is injured."

The moment they the 5 heard the description, they instantly thought of Lloyd, yet one thing didn't make sense. How could he be in the second commandment when he left home as a half-step first commandment? Did time move so slowly in the dungeon that he grew that much?

Of course, there was also a chance that this person was not Lloyd, yet void walkers were almost as rare as phoenixes, if not rarer, while people with purple eyes weren't that common either.

They all moved immediately to see if it was really Lloyd; however, as they flew in that direction, Ava couldn't help but ask the question on all their minds.

"Did Lloyd really spend four years in this dungeon?"

Of course, the scout had said 18-20 years old, yet their mind instantly went to the worst-case scenario. Did they just miss out on four years of Lloyd's life? Did the boy they've known since he was a child, really spend 4 years away from them in a hell hole like this?

Looking into the distance, they could see an individual coming toward them, yet due to them being covered in shadows, they couldn't see if it was actually Lloyd or not.

Lloyd had instinctually chosen to cover himself in shadows meeting with the other weaker soldiers. He didn't know why he did it, but it almost felt like instinct.

Once the army surrounded the individual from all sides, they felt the individual's powerful killing intent surge in every direction and causing all the soldiers around them to freeze for a moment.

They hadn't gotten much information out of the last two who had come through since one was in a coma, and the other didn't speak a word, possibly due to trauma.

All they knew was that there were people from other planets in the dungeon too. Of course, they were not the ones to find out about this information, as by the time Lloyd's clone had dissipated, the dungeon had already broken, and by the time they got to the spatial tear, Hime and Rex had already shown up.

They were shocked when they finally got close enough to see who the person was. Of course, despite not recognizing it at first, Lloyd looked a little older after breaking through, and at the same time, his expression changed after having taken a life for the first time.

His aura and killing intent were that of a battle-hardened warrior. His voice was deep and eerie, and his eyes shone with killing intent, which you would only see in a person who had lost someone they considered important to them.

At the same time, Lloyd's physical state only amplified their shock. He was covered with blood from head to toe, yet it was clearly not his own. Blue blood from the monarch of the autumn forest still is seen in traces. Veronica's blood had practically been sprayed on him, yet he did not seem to notice.

He was covered in blood, dirt, and grime, to the point where Olivia almost didn't recognize him, if not for his violet eyes.

"Lloyd?" Olivia cried, her heart unable to handle seeing her son in such a state.

They all felt the killing intent lessen dramatically, and since The Elrods and Glades were here, there was no need for the soldiers to do anything, so they all stood back and simply watched.

"My son." Olivia cried while running toward Lloyd; however, instead of accepting her hug, Lloyd smiled wryly before dropping into his shadow with Tina in his hands.

Lloyd's shadow shrunk once more before it shot toward the spatial tear, yet instead of anyone stopping it, this time, they simply let it pass after Noah ordered them to.

They all quickly followed Lloyd's shadow and watched him leave it when he neared the spatial tear.

Creating his wings again, Lloyd flapped them and swiftly passed through before landing on the ground and looking around momentarily.

The humans had done what they usually do when it comes to threats. They contained it in a facility made out of a metal that Lloyd couldn't identify at first glance.

Lloyd's eyes briefly stopped on Rex. His expression was relieved after seeing Tina, yet when he looked up to see Lloyd, he could not help but show outward hostility.

'We should definitely kill him.' Null suggested.

'Not now.' Lloyd ignored Rex and ran to one of the men that was looking at him strangely.

"Where is the medical ward?" Lloyd asked.

"What?" The man asked, but with a little bit of killing intent, the man found sense and pointed Lloyd in the general direction.

By the time Lloyd had found the ward, the others had gone through the tear before being directed to where Lloyd was.

And by the time they had reached Lloyd, Tina had been placed in a medical bed with some of the best doctors surrounding her from all sides, each one of them trying their best to stabilize her condition.

While they would have usually kicked Lloyd out of the room, they let him be after seeing him calmly walk to a chair moderately far away from the bed. The other 5 chose to not enter the room despite wanting to do so. They had so many questions for Lloyd, yet in the condition that he was in, none of them dared walk any closer.

Hours passed, yet for Lloyd, they felt like and dreadful. Every second felt like minutes, and every minute felt like an excruciating hour. So when the doctors finally walked toward him to tell him the news, it felt like they were finally putting him out of his misery.

"Mr. Elrod?" A doctor asked.

"Yes?" Lloyd replied.

"The young lady's condition has stabilized. Her life force is no longer withering away, and she is on her way to recovering well." They explained, yet Lloyd did not react and simply asked.

"How many years?"

All the healers remained silent momentarily, while the nurses looked down slightly.

"I am sure you are aware of the consequences and long-term problems that come with using a final spell. I'd just like to say that she was lucky to-"

"How many years." Lloyd cut him off, yet he spoke normally instead of using killing intent or his magical aura to amplify his words. After all, the words themselves were heavy enough.

"She lost about half... Half of her life." The main doctor replied while holding a few abilities at the ready. However, Lloyd didn't do anything. Lloyd didn't get angry or scream or shout at them. He simply nodded.

Humans were unlike other races. Their lifespans were short, yet their reproductive rates were off the charts compared to most of the sentient races, or at least the humanoid ones.

Over the years, the lifespan of a human increased from about 150 in the year 2098, to almost 300-400 now, 500 if they were lucky. The aging cycle remained mostly the same throughout the years, however. Children would grow at roughly the same rate, reaching their peak at 30 years old and remaining the same physically throughout the years, or at least until they reach their elderly years.

Awakening helped increase the life span, yet their lifespans would not extend beyond that 500-year limit even when breaking through.

The only way to break past that limit would be to either buy break through to the 5th commandment, double your years, or use a treasure capable of expanding one's life, like the cup of immortality only the king owns.

Lloyd slowly stood up from his seat and walked past the healers; however, before he sat down at Tina's bedside, Lloyd made sure to turn around and thank the healers for doing their best.

'I suggest we execute the boy. He may run his mouth to the military.' Null suggested once more.

'We can talk about that later. But we should first deal with this.' Lloyd replied while turning toward his family and friends.

While Zack, Elena, Alice, Josh, and Delly had come a little after their parents since they were escorted by Rubert, Lloyd wasn't really surprised to see them there.

However, his surprise was almost noticeable when he saw Transcendent and Grisha from the Reapers squad.

"I think we all deserve an explanation, don't we." Olivia spoke for the group after glancing at the unconscious Tina, making Lloyd sigh as he could feel a headache coming onto him.

Chapter 102: Grief [1]

Rubbing the bridge of his nose, Lloyd felt a headache coming. His family, as well as Zack's, have been quite suspicious of him from the moment he had awakened. Too many things had been happening around him, so it was only normal for such a thing to happen.

'Wait... Why are they still living with us? Shouldn't they have gone back to their mansion?' Lloyd thought, yet he had to throw the thought to the back of his mind since he had more important things to contemplate.

On the other hand, his mother was nervous for a different reason.

She had held herself back this whole time, yet even though she wanted to throw herself after him and suffocate him under a million kisses and hugs, she had to do what was right, and that was to ask him the questions that they, as parents needed to know the answers to.

Transcendent and Grisha hadn't explained much of why they were there, yet all the adults quickly recognized them as part of the Starforger family, and since they seemed to know Lloyd, they let them in with them.

"What is there to say?" Lloyd replied, his expression not changing at all throughout saying those words. While Lloyd was no longer filthy since one of the healers had offered to use a cleansing spell on him, it did not mean that his grief and anger had also been erased.

While he thought that his facial expression had remained neutral, the slight permanent furrow in his brows spoke a thousand words, while his eyes spoke a million.

"Lloyd." Transcendent, aka Arthur Starforger, cleared his throat, then, cast the attention upon him for a moment, and took it off Lloyd simultaneously.

"My sister and I would like to talk to you; however, since this seems to be more of a family thing, we are going to take our leave and wait for when your mind is clearer." Arthur explained.

However, instead of waiting for everyone's approval, he simply turned around and left the room with Grisha following right behind him.

'Sister?' Lloyd thought briefly before shaking his head lightly.

While he saw the similarities between his repair smith- *Cough Cough*. Between Grisha and Transcendent, he never thought that she was also a Starforger, yet when he looked back at it, it made sense.

When the two left the room, everyone looked back at Lloyd while Layla thoroughly examined his emotional state.

Of course, she wasn't quick to overlook that his emotional state was a complete mess, but saying it out loud would have most definitely stressed Olivia out much more than needed.

"Before you answer any real questions, who were those two?" Ava asked.

"Dungeon friends." Lloyd replied as simply as he could.

"Dungeon friends? So you've-" However, before Ava could continue, Lloyd shot her a deadly glance when he remembered something Veronica had told him.

"Before you ask anything... Ava, do you know who Veronica Everdale is?" Lloyd asked, causing all of them to either raise a brow or widen their eyes in shock.

"How do you know-"

"Just answer my question." Lloyd cut them off, finding it difficult to keep his disgust, anger, and grief from seething into his voice the moment Veronica's name left his mouth, yet no matter how hard he tried to hide it, even a blind man would be able to notice it.

"Yeah, I've known her since we were kids. Dad and I go to visit them every now and then. Why, what's the problem?" Ava asked with signs of worry in her voice.

The moment Lloyd had mentioned her, they all assumed the worst. From the way it seemed Lloyd spoke, it seemed like he was holding back a torrent of emotions when he said her name, and since she hadn't come out of the dungeon yet, to their ears, it only meant one two things.

Either she was dead, or that she had to remain behind to fight the boss while the others escaped.

"That... That bitch." Lloyd gritted his teeth and clenched his fists so hard that his fingernails dug into his skin, yet since he wasn't a human, no blood came out while the skin healed the moment Lloyd took his fingernails out of them.

Yet, it was not Lloyd who completed his own sentence.

"That vampiric bitch tried to kill all of us."

Everyone turned around to see a moderately tall man with red hair standing at the entrance of the room with a deep scowl on his face.

Silence percolated in the room for a few moments, yet when it all registered in their minds, they turned to Lloyd to confirm if what the man said was correct.

A single glance was enough for them to understand that the man was not lying, yet they couldn't believe such a thing so easily.

"That's not possible! We've known Veronica and her family for decades. They even knew Ben's grandfather when they fought in the war. Are you sure it was her? It might have just been someone acting like they were her." Noah argued.

"Are you sure she knew who you were? Maybe she didn't know who your were and was on a mission." Ava tried to reason, yet Lloyd simply pulled up a group photo from his birthday instead of answering their questions.

The hologram showed the entire team smiling radiantly, with Lloyd standing in the middle of them wearing a party hat and hugging both Tina and Felix closely.

If you were to look past their different races, they looked more like a family in that photo than most families out there. They had been bonded through thick and thin. They were bonded through blood and war, yet such a photo only brought a horrible feeling to the stomachs of Lloyd and Rex.

While Rex still held signs of anger and resentment toward Lloyd, the moment he saw him holding Tina in his arms with extreme care, he put all his feelings aside and saw Lloyd for who he used to be rather than seeing him as just a Void Walker.

It was hard, yet he had hours to think of what to do. While he knew that Lloyd saw him as a liability for his secret, he chose to run past him.

Anyone else would have killed him before they could even reach the spatial tear, yet even when Lloyd came so close to him, his attention was not directed toward him; it was directed to making sure that Tina was alright as if nothing else mattered in his eyes.

Not wanting to look at the full photo any longer, Lloyd zoomed in on Veronica, who was casually sitting on Rodrick's shoulders with a soft drink in her hand and the biggest smile on her face that radiated warmth akin to that of a mother.

"That's... That's her." Ava couldn't believe her eyes, simply stepping back and waiting for Lloyd's explanation.

"She gave the boss something to boost its commandment, moving it from a topaz seal to a mid-stage amethyst seal." Lloyd explained, making all the adults gasp in shock.

Chapter 103: Grief [2]

"She gave the boss something to boost its commandment, moving it from a topaz seal to a mid-stage amethyst seal." Lloyd explained, making all the adults gasp in shock.

Such a power gap would have been complete suicide to fight against, yet even the non-adults in the room understood that moving up a seal was no easy feat, and for Veronica to use such a thing on a monster only meant that she had a hand in the dungeon break.

"Then... How did you kill it? How do you survive? Lloyd, you aren't exactly in the second commandment, how did you not die?" A was a cruel question coming from Zack, but it was one that everyone had in mind.

Well, everyone except the adults who hadn't actually checked Lloyd's commandment yet.

They had assumed his strength after feeling his aura before, yet when checking his commandment now, they were completely flabbergasted; yet, at the same time, it answered Zack's question.

'Noah... Your kid is a real monster.' Benjamin couldn't help but think to himself. Not only had Lloyd created a clone that tricked all of them into thinking it was real, but it seemed like he also had the power to fight one commandment above his own.

The questions kept on coming, and while Lloyd tried his best to answer them as half honestly as he could, Layla did not hesitate to call him out when he did, causing him to reveal a little more than he would have liked.

As this continued, Rex left the room briefly to talk to one of the soldiers, yet no one paid him any heed since most of them didn't really care about him all that much.

"How did you escape it then?" Elana opened her mouth for the first time since entering the room.

"?" Lloyd tilted his head a little.

"The monster thing. How did you escape?" She repeated.

"We didn't... Two died..." Lloyd paused for a moment before regaining his bearing.

"Two of us died, I broke through and held the monster back a little, but it initiated the dungeon break and tried to kill me. Veronica showed up and killed the monster with a single attack." Lloyd explained, not wanting to get into more detail since recalling the event would only make him more angry.

While his family had seen glimpses of it, his angry side was not a side he wanted to them to see, yet no matter how hard he tried, it seemed like he couldn't avoid it forever.

"Lloyd?" Rex called out, his voice filled with pain.

Despite everything that had happened between them, when Lloyd looked into Rex's eyes, he knew that the pain that filled them only meant one thing.

Rex was mortified, yet he knew the news would be much harder on Lloyd, yet before telling him, he made sure to remind him of something.

"Don't use it, okay?" He asked, yet he didn't get a reply from Lloyd. Instead, Lloyd just looked at him with a pleading stare, one that he had not seen throughout the entire 3 month period they had essentially lived together.

"They found... They found Felix's body. He's dead... He was stabbed by a spear made of his own blood." Rex explained.

The silence in the room was deafening. At this point, the adults quickly pushed all the kids out of the room, including Delly and Elana, despite them technically being adults.

No one said a word. Olivia and Noah silently hugged their child, something they hoped would lessen the blow of such strong news, yet to Lloyd, their hugs didn't mean anything.

He knew that Felix's death was a possibility, yet he didn't want to believe it. They had gone through so much together. Felix was one of his closest friends, yet he died.

To make it worse, he died feeling betrayed. He died feeling anger toward Lloyd for keeping such a secret and for lying to them the whole time. Lloyd could only imagine how he felt in his last moments.

Feeling tricked. Tricked by a void walker into becoming a close friend of his. Tricking him to drop his walls, and now possibly even killing him.

And now Lloyd had to carry those feelings.

The feelings of regret, guilt, and shame. He could have changed this outcome. He could have activated [Void Channel] early and ensured no one had to die.

He could have told them of his secret...

Of course, these things were unrealistic. There was no way of knowing whether or not Veronica would have slaughtered all of them when they knew of Lloyd's secret.

If he had used [Void Channel] early, chances were that he would have died against Veronica.

Yet he could not help but blame himself, and Layla could sense that.

All he could do was look down at the ground and feel an overwhelming sense of dread.

"Lloyd... Please, I beg you to not use it. Its not healthy. You have to experience these emotions; otherwise..."

"Otherwise, what?" Lloyd asked, yet instead of hearing a seething rage within his voice, they heard nothing.

To be precise, they heard nothing but a cold and monotone voice, speaking a set of words without even the smallest semblance of emotion. As if they were coming right out of the mouth of a robot.

Lloyd gently pushed his parents off him while standing up, his face as void of emotions as his voice.

Layla couldn't help but step back slightly. One moment, he felt a cluster of emotions that would have made most go into a severe depression, yet in the next, he was completely fine...

No, calling it "fine" would be complimenting it. He was not fine. His mind was silent. His emotions had flatlined. His aura was cold and distant.

At first, she thought his mind had snapped, yet she knew what a snapped mind looked felt like, and Lloyd's was not that.

It was far from snapped... It was almost... Enlightened.

'I'd like you to stop reading my emotions. Its quite invasive.' Layla felt a cold shiver go through her back, a feeling that she hadn't felt in years. It was not like there were many who could scare her, yet what she felt was not fear.

Unsettlement. That's the feeling she felt as those words echoed in her mind.

'Did he just use my ability to talk to me telepathically?' She asked herself, quickly finding herself covered in a cold sweat.

Yet Lloyd didn't pay her any heed. Walking past her, Lloyd expanded his shadow slightly and used some of it to create a trenchcoat made from his own shadow.

Lloyd finally stopped walking when he reached Rex, yet despite Rex's size, he could not help but feel small in front of Lloyd's cold and merciless gaze.

"Otherwise, what?" Lloyd repeated, his eyes shining slightly when he spoke those words.

"Otherwise, you might turn into a monster, just like Veronica." Rex replied, looking into right into Lloyd's eyes while speaking despite his body screaming at him to look away.

"Like Veronica you say?" Lloyd asked with a tilt of his head.

"Even if you are correct in your assumption..."

I do not remember asking for your opinion on this matter."

Chapter 104: Grief [3]

"Even if you are correct in your assumption..."

I do not remember asking for your opinion on this matter."

Lloyd's voice was cold and cutting, and so were his words. The coldness in his eyes as he stared down the physically larger Rex made the entire room drop by several degrees.

The room grew darker by the second, yet when Rex finally stepped aside, the room returned to its prior lighting, no longer influenced by Lloyd's [Shadow Manipulation] ability.

As Lloyd left the room, he halted his steps and took a long side glance at Rex. It was not one of acknowledgment, nor was it one of curiosity... The action itself was a threat.

Turning around one last time, Lloyd silently walked out of the room.

"What was that?" Benjamin couldn't help but ask while turning to his wife, who seemed just as equally shocked as Lloyd's parents.

"It's one of his abilities. It's called 4-dimensional thought." Rex explained with a worried expression. He was not worried for Lloyd per se; he was just worried for whoever meets him while he's in this state.

"I thought that the ability increased his intelligence! He changed into... I don't know. He just changed!" Ava shouted, but she was quickly held back by Layla, who was just as equally shaken, but for another reason.

"His mind... His emotions. Everything about him went completely silent. He was manipulating his emotions so well... It was as if he became disassociated from his own mind." Layla frowned deeply, causing everyone else's worries to only increase.

"From everything he told us, 4-dimensional thought isn't just an intelligence booster.

It quite literally changed his point of view from a three-dimensional one to a four-dimensional one. He can perceive everything in the fourth dimension, if that makes any sense.

A side effect of it is that he loses the ability to feel emotion." Rex explained, yet instead of calming them down, understanding the situation only seemed to worsen it in their eyes.

"Lloyd, we'd like to talk." A voice echoed through the ward's hallway."

However, instead of responding, Lloyd halted his steps and glanced back, making Transcendent and Grisha quicken their pace to catch up to him.

Zack and the rest didn't see Lloyd leaving so quickly after them, yet when they heard Transcendent call for him, they were also alerted of his presence.

"What?" Lloyd asked.

"First off-"

"Let's keep walking." Lloyd cut him off and walked toward's the ward's exit with the two following right behind him.

"I'd like to pay my respects to you. Such a tragedy occurred and you must be under-"

"Transcendent... Please... Get to the point." Lloyd sneered despite there being a lack of emotion within the sneer itself.

"Oh, call me Arthur. What I was going to ask you was, what academy have you considered choosing?" He asked, making Lloyd think momentarily, yet it wasn't much of a contest.

The Raven academy board would most likely dislike him due to Lachlan's demise. The Caraxes academy is run by the Quinn family.

The crimson academy is run by a bunch of incompetent fools.

The Royal Elizabeth academy would be like walking into a volcano. You see it, it's quite large, it's bursting with fumes, but you're not really there for the view, yet you've still fallen into it like a moron. That's what normal people call suicide.

Relworth is cool and all, but even with the promise of keeping secrets, Lloyd truly doubted anyone would keep the secret of him being a void walker after one meeting.

'Should I tell my parents? I mean, they would most likely support me, right?' Lloyd asked himself before answering Arthur's question.

"Military Academy."

"Oh... Really? I could help you get into a better-"

"No need." Lloyd cut him off while slowly opening the double doors leading out of the ward and into the main area.

"You do know most of the people who go to the military academy are from low statuses, right? Your family is no higher family, but you are still considered highly amongst most families. Plus, you are already well-versed in combat. You only go to the military academy when you don't really know how to fight." Grisha, aka Grace Starforger, pointed out.

"I am well aware. Yet the military academy will give me the most freedom. While you guys have nothing to live for other than to take over for your family members once you reach a certain age, I have goals to achieve outside of this planet. Now if you are done, I'd like to have a moment alone." Lloyd replied, making the two look at each other momentarily before bidding farewell.

"Hey you." Turning around, Lloyd, quickly pointed at one of the soldiers, waving him over in more of a commanding voice than an asking one.

"What do you want?" The soldier asked, a little agitated by Lloyd's rudeness, yet Lloyd did not seem to care.

"I heard you found a young man's body out there?" Lloyd asked.

"Yes we did, however, I do not believe you are authorized to see the-" The man's words got stuck in his throat as a cold and sinister killing intent seeped out of the man in front of him.

"I suggest you show me to the body, or this just might not end well for you." Lloyd whispered, yet his whispers were like a booming voice to the ears of the soldier standing before him.

The man was quick to direct Lloyd to the man they found, and once Lloyd found Felix's body, he was quick to wave the man off.

It was covered in a white blanket alongside two other bodies. Lloyd assumed that the man took him to the three bodies they found, assuming one of them was who Lloyd was talking about.

Thinking back to what Rex said, Lloyd closed his eyes and took in a deep breath to calm himself. Of course, he didn't actually have lungs to put the air in, but doing things that he did when he was human made him calm down, so he did it before deactivating [4-dimensional thought] and taking the blanket off to see their faces one last time...

Chapter 105: A New Home [1]

It had been a week since Lloyd had left the dungeon, yet despite it being the only thing they talked about when they were in the dungeon, he could not have felt more alone when leaving it.

Three of his friends had died, two were in a coma, one betrayed all of them and was the cause of this mess, and the last... Well...

"Hmm. I never thought Void Walkers could be created that way." Rex chuckled to himself while taking a puff from his cigarette.

They were both sitting on the roof's edge, looking down at the people below them, living their lives happily and without a care in the world.

While Rex had bags under his that could have only come from

After everything that happened, Lloyd had decided to tell Rex the whole truth. He was the only one conscious that knew his secrets.

Of course, Hime and Tina would most likely wake up any day now, but while Lloyd knew Tina would never rat on him, Null and he were still contemplating what to do with Hime.

"I never knew you smoked." Lloyd commented while taking a side glance at Rex.

"I just started. It's quite relaxing; wanna try?" Rex tried to hand his cigarette to Lloyd, yet Lloyd quickly pushed it back.

"I think I'm good." Lloyd sighed.

"What are you worrying about? It's not like you have lungs anymore. Even if you didn't, I'm sure you can afford a lung restoration."

"True, but I think it smells terrible." Lloyd shrugged, causing Rex to chuckle.

They didn't say anything for a while, yet the silence between the two of them was comforting, while all the background noise from the cars and people on the streets didn't make it feel that silent.

"Lloyd, I understand why you kept such a secret from us. I would have done the same. But, call me a hypocrite, but no matter how hard I try, I don't think I can forgive you."

"..."

"..."

"I understand." Lloyd sighed before leaning back and laying on the roof of the building. Silence again, yet it felt a little more melancholic than the first one.

"I think I'm going to travel." Rex closed his eyes and leaned back too.

"Where?" Lloyd asked, his eyes darting between the stars and planets in the sky.

"Anywhere. I'm going to take some time off from the army. I've never been on a mission for as long as the one we went to, nor have I failed a mission as badly we did. I just want to go around this galaxy." Rex sighed.

"When do you think you're going to go?" Lloyd asked.

"Probably tomorrow. We've already gotten the whole funeral thing out of the way, and the Raven Family hasn't killed us yet so I think we're good on that end too." Rex chuckled.

"I'll make sure to call you when Tina wakes up. Maybe you can try finding a way to fix her life force." Lloyd said.

"Unlikely, but I'm going to try. That's the least I can do... She held off Veronica for us; hell, we owe our lives to her." Rex smiled while Lloyd nodded.

"I guess we still have to worry about Veronica, though." Rex continued.

"Man, if only she had killed her," Lloyd replied almost coldly, the image of her splattered brains making a smile tuck at the corners of his lips.

"Tina did more than enough already. We can only thank the gods that the bitch demon didn't choose to pursue us further."

"Mhm..."

"Are you going to tell your family?"

"About what?" Lloyd raised a brow.

"You being a void walker."

"I don't think I should tell them?"

"The longer you keep it from them, the more they'll be hurt when they find out. Look at me... Look at Tina."

Tina was willing to sacrifice her life for you, and even though I'm angry at you, I'm still more than willing to keep your secret. We've only known you for 3 months, and most of us have been quite accepting.

Your family has known you for your entire life; do you not think they would be accepting too?" Rex asked.

"It's not just that. I'm a part of a race people use in curses. I'm considered a demon in the eyes of quite literally everyone. My parents, and even Ben and Layla, they are all military people. They have a duty to serve their race, and I am the very incarnation of everything they are protecting humanity from.

I know it would hurt them if they found out the wrong way, but I can't do that to them right now. So much is changing in my life and in theirs. They constantly worry about me, and I don't understand the smallest thing about myself.

Telling them would only burden them, which is not something I want my parents to deal with so early into my awakening." Lloyd explained, making their conversation go completely silent again.

Another week had passed, and not much of importance had occurred... Well, except for a few things.

Over the week, Lloyd's survival story had gotten out, and the news did not waste another second to capitalize on such a big story. Lloyd's story was quickly known throughout the planet.

He was on the cover of every newspaper, known as the kid who survived an interplanetary dungeon.

Every day Lloyd would get thousands of emails asking him to come onto a news broadcast and talk about his experience and how he had survived something that most would not have.

While he would usually mark them under spam, eventually, he got too tired of dealing with them and switched to using his adventurer's association email.

Lloyd told his family about all his abilities and affinities, shocking them again despite thinking that nothing could ever surprise them again after hearing about how Lloyd faced an amethyst seal boss monster for several minutes without dying.

Lloyd's mother almost fainted throughout Rex telling her the story, of course, with a few key details taken out. While they didn't understand how such a thing was possible, when Lloyd told them of his different affinities and abilities, it was as if it all clicked in their heads.

However, it was not all flowers, sunshine, and rainbows. Despite the army fighting against the dungeon break, they couldn't keep it locked any longer.

The interplanetary dungeon was connected to five planets. Only two planets discovered the spatial tear, and while no one knew why this was the case, Lloyd had a feeling that Veronica had something to do with it.

Anyway, despite the army's efforts, they were only capable of cutting the damage in half.

At the same time, they were barely holding the dungeon break back. It was estimated that within the next few weeks, all the cities in the expected area of damage had to evacuate.

The evacuation method was simple. The cities would either rearrange themselves around the planet, or they would simply create a forcefield around themselves before launching the city into outer space.

The interplanetary dungeon was expected to cover around 40-45% of the planet. Benjamin and Layla asked Lloyd's family to live with them.

Lloyd's older brother already had a family of his own and lived on another planet, so it didn't really affect him, yet after finding out about what happened to Lloyd, he made sure to spend at least a week with them before returning home.

"So... What do you think of your new home." Layla asked while grabbing Lloyd's shoulders from behind.

Hearing her words, Lloyd could not help but think of the floating palace in the lightning world, so he said the first thing that came to his head.

"Eh... I've seen bigger." Lloyd replied, getting a hard smack from Elana to the back of his head the moment he said those words.

"That's what she said." Zach casually strolled by, making Lloyd want to face-palm while making Layla and Olivia laugh.

"I think he means he appreciates his temporary home. Thank you, Aunty Layla." Elana smiled while pinching Lloyd's ear with enough force to make it feel like she was trying to rip it off.

'Well... I do start the academy next week, don't I.' Lloyd thought to himself, happy to finally get a chance to take some time away from his family.

Chapter 106: Eris's Origins [1]

The days seemed to pass quite quickly for Lloyd, and that was probably because he had his entire daily schedule planned for him.

After spending the last three months training and doing nothing else, he had grown used to such a routine. However, while grief took his mind off training for a little while after Rex left, Lloyd quickly became more restless by the day.

Every day Lloyd went without training made him feel more empty on the inside. So when he finally got to do it again, it was as if he had become whole again...

Lloyd had trained a week before coming to the Glade manor. While it may seem like he had become whole again from his perspective to everyone else, it looked like Lloyd was trying to hold himself together, training being the only clutch for him to hold his sanity on.

His family grew more worried by the day, as Lloyd's training did not seem to lower in intensity but instead only increased.

Once they reached the Glade manor, Lloyd holed himself in a training room and trained without stop, his new first commandment vitality allowing him to train for 24 hours without feeling even moderately fatigued, forcing him to only increase the intensity of his training every time he felt that way.

Whenever he finished his day's training, he would leave the training room to visit Tina's. After seeing how close Tina and Lloyd were, Benjamin decided that she should also come with them.

Of course, he would have usually asked her parents if he could take her with them, yet after seeing that her parents hadn't shown up even after being on the news several times, he saw that it was probably for the best if he didn't involve them.

As per usual, Lloyd's family was worried about him. At a certain point, they thought that he might have slept inside the training room. Yet, after seeing him go for hours without a break, they were worried for a completely different reason, finally choosing to intervene, ruling his training schedule too unhealthy and too dangerous for anyone his age.

The council of parents ruled him to 8 hours of slumber behind bars (his room), yet when he did finally sleep, slumber was far from what happened.

[Eris's Palace]

"Welcome to the void."

"We have been expecting you."

Lloyd opened his eyes, the dark abyss around him suddenly being replaced by a bright void that spanned for as far as the eye could see.

To any normal man, it would have looked like they were in a white box, yet Lloyd resonated with this area. He could feel its power channeling into him and invigorating him far more than any sleep could.

Lloyd was so intoxicated with the power that surrounded him that he could not help but close his eyes and channel some of the energy into his void rune, yet a moment before he could allow the power to touch the purple rune inside him, it paused.

"I wouldn't do that if I was you." A melodic voice echoed throughout the infinite space, but while it might have caused anyone in its presence to relax into the soft, warm chimes of her voice, to Lloyd, it felt like the voice of the grim reaper.

"Eris..." Lloyd instantly got into a fighting stance, his flashing for a moment as he readied [Void Step]

"Is that how you thank me for keeping you alive?" She asked with a chuckle, making Lloyd raise a brow.

"What do you mean?"

"Did you just 'What do you mean?' me? I gave you my blessing, that's what!" Eris pouted before standing up from her chair that seemed to have been carved out of an enormous purple and black crystal.

While there was nothing but her, Lloyd, and the chair in this infinite white void, with a snap of her fingers, she quickly changed that, making the entire area around them change in an instant as several pillars came out of the "ground."

Walls lines in gold appeared out of thin air, in within an instant, a golden palace was formed around them, Eris's black and purple crystal chair cementing the room they were in as the throne room.

Of course, the chair looked quite out of place in a palace made of gold and the whitest marble, yet at the same time, it added a sense of gloom to the place, as if there was a light, yet permanent shadow hung over the entire palace.

"Oh yeah... Wait, was that the reason why I could use Terraigne?" Lloyd asked, making Eris raise a brow momentarily before widening her eyes and nodding.

"It also reset all your cooldowns while giving you a little boost in the strength whenever you used you manipulated the void element." She explained, making Lloyd's heart soften in appreciation and completely eliminating his previous hostility toward her.

"Wait, why can't I remember you when I leave this place... And why am I in this place? Shouldn't this be a void walk?" Lloyd asked, making Eris sigh in disappointment and flop back into her throne.

Eris was a beautiful woman who looked like she was in her late 20s or early 30s. She had waist-long black hair with a tinge of purple whenever the lighting was right.

She had a pair of beautiful violet eyes, yet one look into them would inform the person looking into them that the person before them was not a young woman in her 20s, but rather an ancient being as old as time itself.

She wore a long modest black dress that hid most of her body, as well as a pair of black heels that clicked every time she took a step.

Her natural expression was a mischievous one, as her lips coated in black lipstick would always curl into a smile that would send shudders down the spines of any man who saw them. That, combined with her unnaturally pale skin, would have made the minds of most men scream crazy, yet to Lloyd, she seemed quite normal... No... She seemed attractive.

'Should I propose.' Lloyd thought to himself jokingly, yet when he saw a look of panic appear on Eris's face, he quickly understood that she had heard him.

So he did the only thing a gentleman like himself would.

Lloyd put on a wry smile and walked up to Eris's throne before taking her hand and getting onto one knee.

"Lady Eris, thou art a fine mistress who has caught mine own eye.

Thou art the star that shines brighter than any other. I'd liketh to asketh for thy handeth in marriage. "

"..."

"..."

Lloyd raised a brow, thinking that maybe she didn't understand his Shakespearean linguistic ability.

"Lady Eris, you are a fine woman-"

"Wait, no, stop! I understood you!" She cried before slapping his hand away with a little too much force, causing him to be shot back several meters before he could regain his balance.

"Ugh. Thou art's rejection hurts mine, own heart!" Lloyd cried out dramatically before grasping the general area of where his heart would have been.

Eris, on the other hand, cried into her own hands as cringe overcame her. Never in a million years did she think that she would feel embarrassed by the actions of someone of Lloyd's status, but that lack of socialization over the last few thousand years had come to create a situation like this.

Lloyd's dramatic act lasted a few more minutes before he finally had enough fun embarrassing her and decided to get back on track.

"What were your questions again?" Eris asked with a small blush on her face that was a huge contrast to her abnormally pale self.

"Why can't I remember you when I leave this place... And why am I in this place? Shouldn't this be a void walk?" Lloyd asked again, this time smiling from ear to ear while looking at Eris, who couldn't keep proper eye contact with him.

'Serves her right for killing me last time.'

"You remembering this place, and especially me, would not bid well for you. No matter what form I take, the image of me in your mind is like signing your death warrant. Think of the memory of me as a signature that will alert anyone strong enough to feel it or even see it." She explained.

"Then what is the point of meeting you if I'm going to simply forget it the moment I reach the outside world?" Lloyd questioned her logic.

"Because, while I'm not allowed show up in your mind as a memory, the things I tell you here are ingrained into you like a talent or an instinct, the same way a baby horse

knows how to walk the moment they leave the womb." She explained, a little annoyed at the fact that Lloyd was questioning her logic, but she understood it.

Humans tend to question everything, and Lloyd used to be human, so it made sense.

"Wouldn't that also leave a mark?"

"It would, but I've gotten the void walker thing down pretty well. Have you ever asked yourself why you weren't discovered during the awakening ceremony?" She asked, making Lloyd raise a brow but allowing her to continue.

"Void walkers are the fastest evolving species in the universe... Well, the fastest evolving humanoid species. Slimes are terrifyingly efficient as evolving." She shuddered before continuing.

"There's no real point in telling you since you'll forget it the moment you leave this place, so I'll summarize it. Void walkers, before becoming void walkers, we a completely different species."

"What species were-"

"Don't interrupt me." She snapped her fingers, forcefully shutting Lloyd up.

"Millions of years ago, a group of people got stranded in a bubble of space that happened to be in the void. The bubble was small, barely pluto-sized, but it was lush to the brim.

However, no matter how lush it was or how little aggressive wildlife there was, the bubble adapted to the void, while the stranded people didn't.

Many of them died due to being poisoned by the void's radiation within the food and the air itself... However, there was a woman among them who survived.

While the rest died within a few days of eating the fruits of this place, this didn't. Her body adapted to the area, and before she knew it... she awakened, becoming the first of her species to awaken, and the first of her species to mutate.

She did her best to keep the others alive with her newfound abilities, yet no matter what she did, she failed to keep them from dying, so she did the second best thing she could.

She was a scientist, so she experimented and did everything she could. Within a few years, there were only two others left, and the mother was about to have a baby, and that's when it happened.

The couple hated her for what she did but were far too weak to fight back. The woman experimented on the unborn fetus, and when the baby was finally birthed, despite the mother's death, the woman had achieved her final goal.

She had finally created a being capable of surviving the void radiation, just like her...

That woman was my grandmother, Zingra Khaos Erelm."

Chapter 107: Eris's Origins [2]

"After that, my grandmother experimented with the first generation of this new species she was creating. She even had a few children of her own who she experimented on without thinking twice. Every child she had was completely different from the last, yet while a normal mother would have taken care of her children, she let only nursed them until they reached 12 months old before forcing them to fend for themselves.

Yet even then, she did not keep around the weaker children. She only kept around the strongest ones, with the hope that one day, she would be the creator of a powerful species capable of rivaling the higher races." Eris explained.

"What does any of this have to do with my question? And secondly, why was she so obsessed with creating a new race? I'm sure if she spent that as much time trying to get out of the bubble as she did trying to make a new species, they would have left already." Lloyd questioned after not making sense of Eris's grandmother's logic.

"To your first question, I'm getting to it. To your second question, it doesn't really matter if I tell you, but before entering the bubble, her race had gone mostly extinct.

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is that through all this experimentation, my grandmother had created a race capable of adapting and evolving to suit their situation and make sure their lineage lives on.

You are from the latest batch of void walkers, and since most of the newer generation of void walkers have been dying instantly the moment they awaken, I'm assuming the gene had evolved enough to ensure that you would not be found out by the humans.

While all void walkers are basically split into several factions, each with their unique racial ability passed down from generation to generation. Every faction had a trace of my grandmother's DNA. Hence, no matter how different their unique racial abilities are, they still hold the same characteristics." Eris finished explaining with a sigh.

"Wait, if there are factions, which faction am I-"

"Enough questions now. You won't remember this until you come back here again, or you become strong enough to remember me without becoming a target of everyone and everything that sees you." She cut Lloyd off, and while Lloyd knew it was just another excuse so she wouldn't have to explain any more about void walker's history, he also knew there was a lot of truth behind her words.

"Alright, what do I do now? Do I just go home or..." Lloyd asked, yet when Eris heard his words, she could not help but burst into a fit of laughter.

"Go home? No, no, no. You will not be going home for about-." Eris looked down at her wrist and continued- "Week."

"Yeah, uhm, even if I wanted to spend a week in this... Whatever you want to call it... I can't. Military academy begins next week, and If I miss it, I'm pretty sure my parents will reach a breaking point. Plus, no point in training since I won't remember any of it." Lloyd shrugged.

"I can control time and space in this realm. I'll just extend the time in here to make a week in my realm equal to 6 hours in the outside world." She smiled proudly.

"Doesn't fix the second problem."

"Oh, it's fine. I'll just ingrain the training into every fiber of your being. It's called muscle memory for a reason, you know." She waved Lloyd off.

"Yeah, you'd be making a really good point if I actually had muscles." Lloyd felt like facepalming.

"Can you just assume that I know what I'm talking about? I've lived for thousands of years, the least you can do is take my word for it when I say something." Eris felt like punching Lloyd in the face, but she held herself back. Punching him in the face should be kept for later activities.

"Fine."

The first few days were quite normal, well, at least it seemed that way from Lloyd's point of view.

Since Eris couldn't train him in using any of her techniques, she instead did the next best thing.

Train him to dodge.

He already had a lot of experience when it came to dodging, for example, when he trained with Felix (god rest his soul) to hone his senses, Hime to hone his beast fighting abilities, Veronica (May she end up in hell) when he learned to strengthen his pain tolerance through fighting in close combat, and Rex whenever they chose to spar with one another.

However, despite all his previous experiences, all of them combined, multiplied by a hundred, did not compare to Eris.

Eris was not just old and wise, she was ancient, and while such a thought would have usually gotten him an extra ass beating, he was already getting his ass beaten enough that extra ass beating felt like normal ass beating.

Eris's battle experience trumped all the people he knew combined. Even who is considered a martial art prodigy would not hold a candle to Veronica.

After all, there was a saying in the 21st century. You can master any skill if you practice it for 10000 hours.

Well, in this situation, Eris had her entire life, plus her afterlife, to master her abilities and techniques, to the point that even after she reduced her strength to an unawakened individual, Lloyd was still getting his ass handed to him, unable to land a single finger on her since she seemed to see all his attacks coming from a mile away.

However, despite how much his ass was getting handed to him, he was improving at a rate that was beyond his wildest dreams. The only thing he hoped for was that his improvement would carry into the real world, but for now, he was content with what he had.

After 4 days of continued beatings and healings, Eris finally decided to change up the schedule.

"Since you've already reached the first commandment, it would probably be for the best if we try to develop your mana channels and core." Eris thought out loud, making Lloyd raise a brow in confusion.

"You must be wondering-"

"Please, no point of explaining it at this point. Just, what's the plan?" Lloyd sighed.

"Well, since nothing that happens to your body here can affect your actual body, I'm going to have to teach you how to develop your very own cultivation technique. First, you have to create a mana core as well as a few channels too.

After teaching you everything, I will ingrain everything you learned here into your mind and soul as an epiphany or vision. It won't last long, but it should be long enough for you to remember them and short enough that no powerful individual can detect your signature or locate you before the signature fades." She explained.

"Oh? well, we can get started then since I already have a core. Where do you think I've been storing my mana?" Lloyd asked.

"You don't have a core. You have runes that you have been channeling your energy to so you can increase in strength and power. You're a void walker, so you're different from the humans, but there is still something that makes you similar. No one can get a core before reaching the first commandment.

Making a core is pretty simple. You just have to compress your mana into a sphere, the smaller you make it, the better.

Anyway, making is core for a void walker is very important. While humans have organs in the way, so their mana doesn't really run wild inside their bodies, void walkers since we are basically empty

Due to that reason mana fills every inch of our bodies rather than staying in certain places. While its still important for humans to get mana cores, its more important for void walkers since your mana usage is much less efficient than most other races when you do not have a core to help you out.

Think of it like this. When humans use their mana without a core, its like trying to pouring water into a bucket with three holes drilled into the bottom of it. However, a void walker using mana without a core, especially in the first commandment, is like trying to pour water into a bottomless bucket in comparison." She explained

"Anyway, I want you to create you're own cultivation technique. Since nothing you do here affects you're real body, that's really the only thing I can help you with, yet even then I would like you to do it independently. I will simply guide you

No matter how much you try to master someone else's cultivation technique, you will never master it to the degree of its creator, and you will never be able to surpass the creator." She explained, making Lloyd sigh again before quickly resigning to his fate of never having anything come easy to him.

Eris explained the fundamentals of making a cultivation technique, something every person should know before actually going through the process of making one.

The next 3 days flew by in the blink of an eye. Eris ensured to implant as much information on cultivation technique creation, as possible into Lloyd's soul and mind before waving him goodbye.

A flash of light illuminated the palace one last time before Lloyd's figure disappeared.

When Lloyd reached the real world once more, he didn't remember a single thing. It felt like he had gone to sleep and woken up the next morning, yet despite having slept for 6 hours, he could not help but feel more tired than when he went to sleep.

However, that's when it happened. The epiphany hit Lloyd like a truck, and despite not actually having one before, Lloyd instantly knew what it was, and exactly what it was showing him.

'How to create a mana core, breathing technique, and mana channels, huh... How interesting.' Lloyd thought, realizing that it was the next step that he needed in the very long journey ahead of him.

Chapter 108: New Home [2] - Creating A Mana Core

Since Lloyd had slept pretty early the day before, most of the family was asleep when he woke up.

While the epiphany faded pretty quickly, the information Lloyd could get out of it was beyond impeccable. Everything from the knowledge to the risks of creating his own cultivation technique. However, it was as if he also instinctually knew that he needed to create a mana core before actually going through with his plan.

While at first, he thought the area his runes were stored in was his mana core, but after checking his body again, he quickly realized that it most likely was not the case.

His runes, while being clumped together in the center of his chest, they were not attached to his chest at all. In fact, they weren't even in the same plane as his body. It simply floated around in the small space it was given, choosing to stay around the chest area for a reason Lloyd still did not understand.

'To create a core, I must first gather all the ambient mana within my body into a single point before trying to compress it. Once I create my own mana core, mana channels will move on their own to create connections all over my body optimized to my class...

But my class says walker of voids, so I have no idea how it will turn out.' Lloyd thought while scratching his chin.

Cultivation techniques come in many forms, and the same could be said about classes. Classes usually come in two forms. Those who use their bodies to fight their battles and those who use mana and elemental abilities.

They both need a mana core in their own sense; however, while one might use their mana to create a spell, the other will use it to enhance their body. Of course, there are some abilities they can use to do such a thing; however, after the creation of cultivation techniques, many realized the true potential hidden before their very eyes.

Martial artists like Hime or Rex had cultivation techniques specialized toward their fighting type, allowing them to pull mana into their cores before using it to permanently strengthen their bodies down to their cells. It's one of the main reasons why their bodies are so much stronger than someone like Tina's since Tina's cultivation technique specializes in strengthening her mana core and magical abilities rather than her physical strength.

Of course, this does not mean that people specializing in body strengthening only use mana to strengthen their bodies, since they still use mana to activate their abilities or use certain martial art techniques during a battle.

'I know my mana pool is larger than the average individual, but I have no idea how big it is since my use of it hasn't been the most efficient. For now, all I know is that its less than Tina's but larger than Rex and Hime's.' Lloyd thought to himself before sitting on the ground and analyzing the mana in his body.

He stayed like that for almost two hours, trying to understand how he was going to create a mana core and stabilize it without anyone else's help.

Modern technology had found a way to make core creation easier for most people.

Many choose to create their cores as they break through to the next commandment, yet in Lloyd's case, that was a luxury he did not have at that moment, not that it mattered too much.

It was just a lot easier to do it while breaking through due to the abundance of mana around the individual at that moment.

"No pain no gain, am I right?" Lloyd sighed before writing, "Do not disturb. Trying to create a mana core here" on his watch and projecting it with enough size that anyone walking into the room would see it.

Closing his eyes again, Lloyd used [4-dimensional thought] and manipulated the mana inside his body.

Using [4-dimensional thought] would allow him to ignore the pain while also accessing enough brain power to make creating a core seem like a breeze.

Of course, he knew he would probably receive the headache of the century after deactivating the ability, but it was a consequence he wouldn't mind bearing for a little while.

His senses washed over every piece of mana in his body before he breathed in and began controlling them.

It was a slow process, but the mana particles had begun moving toward his solar plexus. However, he quickly realized that something was wrong. The mana almost resisted him; however, while he would have usually panicked, [4-dimensional thought] did not allow such a thing.

With a calm mind, Lloyd breathed in again despite not needing to do so, and simply pushed as hard as he could, yet that is when it clicked in his mind.

They weren't all pushing against him. Some of the mana was moving faster than the rest, yet after passing a certain point, they seemed to push back even harder than the rest.

Lloyd took a few minutes trying to locate the where the area of effect was, and when he finally found it, it confused him slightly.

It was common sense for a core to be in the solar plexus. Everyone did it that way, and those who tried differently usually ended up becoming cripples without any magical abilities.

However, when looking at where his mana seemed to want to go, Lloyd felt like there were only two explanations for the situation he was in.

'Why is it also trying to move to the center of my chest. Are the runes changing their trajectory and sucking it in? Maybe my runes are too strong for my current commandment, making it harder to create a mana core?' Lloyd thought to himself, but it didn't make sense.

However, after thinking about it a bit longer, Lloyd realized something.

'What if the runes are there for a reason? Most people only see their runes once they reach the first commandment and already have a core, but what if the runes are trying to tell me where my mana core should be.

Maybe the runes moved to the center of my chest out of instinct.' Lloyd thought to himself, yet after waiting for a moment and trying to think of any other solution, he shrugged and went through with it anyway.

Lloyd's mana suddenly shifted within his body. Their speed has almost quadrupled the instant Lloyd thought of making the core in the center.

After thinking about it for a while, it started to make sense. Lloyd expected the runes to appear inside his core when he was done, but maybe the benefit of having strong elemental runes was the fact that they could guide you to making the right choice.

His mana began to swirl around the runes before coming together in the center and creating a small ball that increased in size the more mana Lloyd poured into it.

The of the mana core began as barely noticeable, before enlarging to the size of a pea, then an olive, then an orange, to finally becoming the size of a soccer ball.

The mana core had already encapsulated the runes when it had become the size of an orange.

Covering the mana core with his aura, Lloyd began to compress it.

The mana began to swirl once more, this time inside the mana core itself, becoming smaller and smaller every minute.

Hours flew by in what felt like minutes to Lloyd, yet despite losing track of time, the fact that his ability was beginning to flicker away had told him that it had been a long time since he started his mana core creation.

Yet it didn't matter since Lloyd was finally done.

Opening his eyes, Lloyd squinted out of habit when the sun blared straight into his eyes. The sun's intensity wasn't nearly as strong as Deroxa's since the planet itself was further from the sun, yet brightness felt all the same, especially after having closed his eyes for more than 9 hours.

Looking around, Lloyd raised a brow after realizing the room was a complete mess. Of course, after deactivating [4-dimensional thought], it took him a moment to comprehend everything around him. Still, after looking at how the ground below him was scorched, he finally understood what had happened.

Scratching the back of his neck awkwardly, Lloyd looked at his new core before smiling.

It had been a success beyond anything Lloyd could imagine.

The core was now the size of his fist and was placed right in the center of his chest, yet that was far from what amazed him.

The core itself seemed to be beating at a rhythmic pace, while the mana channels themselves looked like something that not even humans, with their advanced technologies and minds, could create.

The channels expanded outwards from the core in a web of small and large tubes that wrapped around the entirety of the body's insides. To Lloyd, it felt like the layout was a combination between the human blood circulatory system and the nervous system. It was far more intricate than any mana-channeling system he had ever seen, yet it was a double-edged sword.

'Holy shit, if anyone sees this, I'll definitely be caught. This is next-level shit.' Lloyd thought to himself while playing around with how the mana inside his body worked.

Lloyd only had to think of using his [shadow manipulation] ability before the mana circulating around his body instantly turned black. The mana released from his body in the next moment, quickly creating a shadow claw at twice the speed it usually would have.

'Man... I could get used to this.' Lloyd grinned from ear to ear as endless possibilities ran through his mind like wildfire.

Chapter 109: New Home [3] - The King of Fates

-Unknown Planet within the Gartia Galaxy-

"Hand over the phoenix flame..." A man with piercing golden eyes ordered as he slowly descended toward the ground. He had pale blonde hair that matched the soullessness within his eyes and an unchanging facial expression no matter the situation.

It had always been like that for him... It was as if nothing could surprise him anymore, and in a way, that was true.

He wore a beautiful set of black and gold armor that would put most armor in the galaxy to shame. The sheer forge mastery needed to create the armor he was wearing would have required the best former masters in the galaxy several weeks to create it.

While his power seemed to be sealed behind the cloaking runes of the armor he was wearing, the sheer quality and power within the armor had already sent waves of fear within the crowd. Very few were capable of standing up to the man. However, there was one man who did.

"You would be a fanatical fool to think that we would surrender our sacred treasure just because you ordered us!" One of the men scoffed while hiding his wife behind him.

On the other hand, his wife could not help but stare blankly at the golden-eyed man, as if she had seen an angel for the first time and had become completely incapable of averting her eyes from him.

The man stood over a cliff, looking at the city below with an eerie calmness.

He knew their answer to his order, yet he ordered them anyway. Everything had to go according to a set principle, so while his order was not strictly necessary, he felt like it was an obligation nonetheless.

"Your wife doesn't seem to think so..." The golden-eyed man smirked wryly, yet this only further angered the husband into unsheathing his blade.

"Do not dare come any closer! I am not afraid to kill you." The husband pointed his blade at the golden-eyed blonde man.

"And you should be well aware that such a pathetic blade would not even leave a scratch on my immaculate body, let alone my armor. Don't you think so, Mrs. Dina?" The blonde man taunted, yet despite seeming to have referred to someone, he did not turn to them.

"We are also aware that the King of fates does not kill." Another man interjected, making the King of Fates let out a defeated sigh.

"You are correct. I do not kill people. I don't even kill animals. You know what, since we have the time, how about I let you in on a little secret?" The King of Fates grinned slightly, making a shudder go down everyone's spines.

"I am actually cursed. I usually tell no one but those closest to me, but I guess I can make an exception this time." The King of fates chuckled.

"And you must be asking the question, 'Why are you telling us this in the first place?', am I right?" He asked, his hand slowly going into his pocket before taking out a pair of sunglasses and wearing them.

"Because you guys won't be surviving for much longer, or am I wrong?" The King of Fates asked, making many confused while others questioned his use of words. No one understood why, but when the King of Fates spoke, his words felt awkwardly placed, making his sentences sound worse the more he spoke.

"Enough of your tricks! Guards! Kill him-" However, right before the man could finish his sentence, his words got stuck in his throat before his head slowly turned to the sky; a sky that was gradually turning into a deeper shade of orange as the seconds passed.

"What have you done?" The man asked before falling onto his backside, fear taking over his body and causing his legs to buckle.

"Me? Why accuse me? I have done nothing. It's just simply nature taking its course. You may never understand in this life, but maybe in the next?" The King of fates replied, yet now he was watching from a mountain cliff several hundred meters away.

There was a reason that man was named the King of fates. It wasn't because of his heavenly looks that would throw most women into a trance, nor was it his superior intellect or majestic strength.

He got that name because he was the King of fates... A man capable of bending uncertainties and destinies to his favor. A man capable of dooming an entire civilization before its rise.

He would never take a life with his own hands, yet fate would find a way to reap those lives for him, as if he had a grim reaper sitting on his shoulders, waiting to do his bidding.

And in that very moment, the King of Fates stood at a cliffside and watched as a meteor shower rained upon a city that was once known for its scenery, people, and bustling atmosphere.

"To be fair, this is the best the city has looked ever since its creation." The King of Fates retorted before his companion, Mrs. Dina, could even come up with a thought related to their situation. However, she was used to that already.

Explosions rang out while the people's blood-curdling screams echoed throughout the mountain range.

They could be heard for miles, yet those who heard it and remained alive thought of it as nothing more but the roars of a dying beast as the screams of terror seemed to merge together into a single undying symphony of terror and pain.

"Master, I believe that the meteor shower shall be ending soon. Would you like us to search for the flame?" A woman in a maid's outfit appeared right beside the King of Fates and looked at the destruction before her with the same apathetic eyes as her master.

"I don't believe that would be necessary." The King of Fates chuckled and stepped forward, disappearing instantly and appearing elsewhere.

His robe fluttered as he stood before a furnace brandishing a never-ending flame that burnt with extreme heat.

"So, this is where you've been hiding." The King of Fates let out a silent chuckle before disappearing into the palm of his hand and disappearing once again just to appear next to his maid.

"Is that the Phoenix flame, master?" The maid asked.

"Yes... Yes it is." He replied.

"Then what is the point of the meteor shower?" She asked with a raised brow.

"My maid..." The King of Fates seemed slightly disappointed, but after shaking his head momentarily, he walked up to her and cupped her right cheek with his free hand.

"Do you not know?" He asked.

"Know what, master?" She asked with a tilt of her head, yet she did not show even the smallest spark of emotion while saying those words

"That even destruction can be beautiful." The King of Fates smiled and continued to stare at the flame in the palm of his hand; however, within that moment of peace, he felt something that shattered it.

Looking up into the sky, the King of Fates made a worried expression. It caught his maid off guard since it was the first time she had seen her master create such an expression in the last thousand years in which she had devoted herself to serving him.

"W-What's wrong, master?!" She asked.

"The lines of fate are shifting... The abyss is getting stronger. This isn't supposed to happen... Not now." He thought, his expression becoming deadly serious.

"I felt it... For just a moment, I felt Eris." He muttered.

"Is she returning?" The maid asked, slightly panicked as well by the revelation.

"Not yet... But when she does, fate tells me the universe might get a little darker."

"Are you sure you want to go to the military academy? I can ask the Hope academy to reconsider giving you a place in their academy. With my family's recommendation, they will take you in." Benjamin tried to reason with Lloyd, sitting in the dining room's main chair and talking to Lloyd, who was sitting a few chairs down.

"I think I'm good. I think I'd rather go to the military academy. Yes, I probably won't have as many resources as the Hope academy, but I feel like it's better if I earn those resources rather than get them through connections." Lloyd explained, yet that wasn't the real reason.

There were many perks that made the military academy a much better choice for Lloyd than the Hope academy.

While the Hope academy is considered to be the number 1 academy in their galaxy, it limited Lloyd's freedom the most, keeping all their first years inside the academy until their finals.

The Hope academy was also a prestigious one. While it may have not been on the same level as the Royal Elizabeth Academy in the level of prestigiousness, only the best of the best could go to such an academy and succeed.

After going through the autumn dungeon, Lloyd quickly realizes that he is getting far too much attention, especially when certain people know about his identity as Null, the adventurer. Going into the Hope academy would constantly put attention onto him.

The very fact that he could even enter the academy meant that he had to be the best of the best. Even the top-of-the-line connections could not get you into the Hope academy if one didn't have the talent or strength to prove their worth.

Going to the military academy would take both the pressure and the constant fear of being caught off him.

Of course, being the child of two generals would bring a lot of attention to him, yet he could make sure that only the instructors and professors knew about his identity by having his father pull a few strings.

The final reason to why Lloyd chose to go with the military academy was because of his fallen comrades. He knew he probably shouldn't feel that way, but he felt indebted to them to at least go to the military academy and serve humanity the same way they did.

Chapter 110: New Home [4] - Farewell... For Now

"Man... I was hoping we could go to the same academy." Zack sighed in disappointment, but he couldn't do anything about it.

He didn't want to pressure Lloyd into going to the same academy as him, but at the same time, he wasn't allowed to downgrade to a lesser school since almost everyone in his family had gone to the Hope academy.

"It's disappointing to not get to spend a few more years side by side, but I guess it's not meant to be. We had to eventually take our own paths, but that's life." Lloyd shrugged, causing a pensive mood to wash over the dining table.

The parents also didn't want to say anything since they were scared that their words would manipulate their children, but in a way, they all knew that the two boys had already made their own decisions.

"I heard that Lucy might be teaching at the Hope academy." Elana suddenly mentioned, causing the entire table to turn quiet.

"Oh, come on guys, it's been almost a decade since then; I'm sure Lloyd is fine with us talking about it." Elana scoffed before looking at Lloyd, who seemed to be entirely disinterested in the subject on hand, causing her to quickly drop it as quickly as she had brought it up.

Yet despite that, the thought of Lucy teaching still lingered on all their minds, Lloyd's included, yet now that he had new experiences as new things to worry about, he no longer paid too much attention to that incident.

'Hmm. Maybe that's when it all started? I never thought of it that way, but maybe that incident is why I became a void walker?

I don't have nearly enough information on the creation of void walkers, but if that incident has played a part in who I am now, I might have to visit it shortly.' Lloyd thought to himself as the memories of his blood-soaked hands reminded him that the very foundations of his life were built upon the corpses of others.

After finishing dinner, they all went back to doing their respective activities. Lloyd went back to trying to create his own cultivation technique from the information he had, but so far, he had no luck.

His current cultivation method was far from efficient, especially after he reached the first commandment and created his core.

His mana pool was far too large to be filled quickly, and if he were to try to cultivate with what he currently had, he was worried that it might take years for him to complete a single circulation.

Lloyd wanted his cultivation technique to fit who he was. He was both a close combat warrior and a long-range mage capable of casting hundreds of spells instantly with his elemental manipulations.

He wanted to have a technique that allowed him to strengthen his mana channels, his mana core, and his body at the same time. He would have loved to cultivate his aura and killing intent, too, with the same technique, but that needed a completely different process that he was simply not ready to go through.

'I have a little over two days to train or find a cultivation technique. I'm certain I'll get to train a lot during the military academy, for now it's best if I just try to make my cultivation technique in hopes of having it ready by the time I have to leave.' Lloyd thought to himself after the image of him killing a dragon appeared in his mind.

It's funny how needy the mind is sometimes.

Lloyd always thought that the amount of void energy he wasted after killing a monster wasn't much since he didn't really have a reference.

Still, after going through his epiphany and seeing how much void energy could be saved through a cultivation technique, he could not help but feel a pain where his heart would've been whenever he thought of killing a monster and wasting so much energy.

Knock Knock

The sound of Lloyd's door knocking echoed through the room.

Slowly opening his eyes, Lloyd used his aura and magical senses to see who was behind the door before standing up and unlocking it.

"Hey Lloyd, you've been holed up here for a while. Wanna spar?" Zack asked, yet instead of agreeing straight away, Lloyd hesitated.

Zack was quite literally a single good push away from reaching the first commandment, so Lloyd assumed he had come to him to get that push. However, Lloyd himself did not think it was such a good idea.

Lloyd could easily kill half-step second commandments, or at least after a few seconds of struggling. Lloyd knew that Zack was in no way, shape or form close to what Lloyd was capable of, yet after thinking for a while, Lloyd finally accepted.

'I can practice holding my strength back.' Lloyd thought while walking toward one of the fighting arenas they had in their manor.

Zack quickly moved to the other side of the arena before turning around and looking at Lloyd.

Zack had been winning the previous bouts against Lloyd's clone, yet he wanted to know how strong the real thing was, and so did the rest of the family, who, unknown to Lloyd, were all watching them stand off from one of the booths with one-sided glass.

The runes stopped Lloyd from noticing them, but he was not stupid enough to think that there was no one in the room other than him and Zack.

"My sword comes tomorrow so I'll be using my fists." Lloyd informed Zack.

"Oh yeah? Then I'll use nothing but my mana and my fists too." Zack grinned from ear to ear as a powerful battle intent exploded out from his body, covering the entire arena in a thin misty red fog.

A crimson sword appeared above Zack, about the same size and weight as his original.

Grabbing it, Zack shot forward with all the speed he could muster within his legs, yet while he would have seemed like a blur to even most first commandments, to Lloyd, it didn't feel as fast as it should have.

Whenever Lloyd fought anyone, he would instantly compare their prowess to the autumn king's or even to Veronica's (may she suffer in hell).

The sword swung toward Lloyd in an incredible demonstration of speed and power, yet the moment it had come within a certain range of Lloyd, he dodged it smoothly as if he had always known exactly where the place would end up.

Swoosh *Swoosh* *Swoosh*

Zack just continued attacking, his slashing becoming deadlier and sharper every time he swung his blade, making it slightly harder to dodge his attack every time he slashed at him, yet despite the increase in proficiency, it was all the same for Lloyd.

Zack's attacks were nothing compared to that of the monster Lloyd had fought in the dungeon, so instead of directly attacking his friend to win the duel, Lloyd decided that the best course of action was to humor him instead, only attacking when he deemed it necessary.

ROOAR

Zack let out a bestial roar as his eyes became bloodshot, and he charged like a mad bull toward Lloyd, yet unlike before, where he seemed to have zero control over his blood-lusting form, now he seemed to have the smallest semblance of sentience.

His form was also much stronger than it had been in the past. His power was that of a first commandment despite him not having reached that stage, but that was to be expected.

Most talented individuals reached that stage once they reached the half-step, and since Zack was basically a step away from breaking through, that was even more the case in his situation.

Swords made out of Zack's bloodlust and killing intent formed all around him, yet while Lloyd was expecting Zack to hurl the sword projections at him, it was quite the opposite.

Looking at the swords for a moment, Lloyd could not help but think of them as individual limbs all connected to the berserker before him.

They only moved a few meters away from him, and it seemed like Zack had complete control over their form, capable of moving them around without a second thought while also having the power to shrink and increase their sizes when needed.

However, this did not mean Lloyd struggled against the attacks coming at him. They were quite simple and had a pattern to them that Lloyd easily deciphered in less than a dozen attacks.

Lloyd humored his friend for a few minutes. Yet, after seemingly pinpointing all his mistakes and shortcomings, Lloyd finally went on the offensive, pummeling Zack to the ground just enough for him to regain his sanity.

Lloyd made sure to explain everything that Zack did wrong before leaving the room, yet while Zack was surprised that he even lost in the first place, the rest of the family who

were watching behind some one-way glass were more surprised by the fact that Lloyd had become so much stronger than Zack.

They all knew that Lloyd was capable of surviving an attack against a second commandment and possibly even fighting against a half-step second commandment, but hearing and seeing were two different things.

The days passed quickly, and before anyone knew it, it was the day when boys finally became men, going to the academy for the first time and becoming semi-independent from their parents and families.

While Zack had left early in the morning to go to the Hope academy, which was on a different star system than the one the Glade planet was on, Elana and Delly both left in the afternoon while Lloyd was ready to depart in the evening.

Walking through Snow city, Lloyd finally found one of the military outpost branches placed on the Glade planet. It was a large structure clearly built to move around, yet at the same time, Lloyd could tell that the place itself was a high establishment worth a lot of money.

It was a building with green paint instead of the usual white, allowing it to stand out more than the other buildings around. However, despite its murky green color, it still looked pristine, making even the clean white buildings around them feel slightly dirty.

Standing in front of the outpost, Lloyd checked his dimensional storage one more time to see if he had everything on him, and after confirming that he did, he turned to his family and smiled brightly.

"I guess this is where we bid farewell," Lloyd spoke optimistically to keep his mother from crying, yet she did so anyway.

"My baby is going to school!" Olivia cried into her husband's shoulder, making everyone scratch the back of their necks awkwardly.

"Take care son." Noah smiled while shooing Lloyd away so his mother would finally stop crying.

"Take care of yourself, don't over work. You'll burn out." Layla bid farewell with a tone of worry in her voice.

"What she said." Benjamin smiled and waved, yet he got an elbow to the side, causing him to look at his wife with the expression of a falsely accused child.

"Goodbye. See you during the holidays." Lloyd waved before turning around, walking to the outpost, showing a soldier his ID, and entering the room.

He was quickly guided to a teleporter, and when he finally stood on it, the final thought that came to mind before his body flickered away was-

"But for now, I'll try to my best to become as strong as possible."