

The Walker Of Voids

- Chapter 33: Volcanic Waste [1] - Magma Lake

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Standing before Lloyd was a crowd of adventurers wearing all kinds of armor and wielding weapons that ranged from staves and bows to gauntlets and knuckle dusters.

He didn't really understand why they didn't just keep it in their storage devices, but who was he to judge? He was probably the least normal out of all of them.

Without thinking about the people around him too much, he simply pushed past them to get to the front desk. Some of them got angry at him, yet when they saw his mask and how he was dressed, they instantly became quiet.

"He's a fake, right?" A man whispered.

"Probably just a fan or something." A woman whispered back.

"I mean, real or fake, I'm not taking that risk." A burly man laughed, causing everyone to glare at him with dagger-like eyes before looking toward's Lloyd again.

"You think he heard us?"

"No way, right?"

"Haha. It's not like he has super hearing an ability."

Ignoring the sounds coming from the humans behind him, Llo-... Null simply shook his head before speeding up.

He found the reception desk in less than 30 seconds before joining the line.

While the people in front of him did not recognize him, those behind him did, while those who worked there also seemed to recognize him. Most of those who worked in the booth were those who worked for the army, yet there were still a few who looked like they worked for the local police.

"Mr. Null?" A man no older than 40 called out from Null's right.

'Peak second commandment?' Null thought to himself with a slight frown.

People in the second commandment were not common, especially not in an area like this.

While entering the first commandment was particularly easy, less than 20% of humans reach the second commandment, and even if they do, most are usually stuck in the initial stages of it.

Only the elite can reach the peak of the second commandment, and while it might not seem like much, they are still considered powerhouses of society, especially on a planet like Deroxa, where there are close to no third commandments actively living there.

"Yes?" Null simply replied, making the man smile before gesturing to Null to come with him.

Since Null didn't feel anything weird about the man before him, he simply replied-

"Lead the way."

The man's smile broadened before he finally began to walk towards the receptionist sitting on a table covered with gold cloth. Everything about it felt fancy, and Null was not complaining.

'Hmm? How did I know how strong he was from one look?' Null asked himself, yet since he wouldn't be getting an answer any time soon, he simply threw the thought to the back of his mind.

"Mr. Null, please register yourself with this man over here." The greying man pointed at the receptionist, who simply gave Null a welcoming smile like they were supposed to.

"Why take me here?" Null asked.

"Its a procedure for those who become famous."

"Who said I'm famous?" Null asked, knowing fully well what the man was talking about.

"Hahaha. Nice one Mr. Null." The greying man laughed before walking away.

"So you've got to meet the lieutenant? Can't say You're lucky." The receptionist laughed.

"..."

"Anyways, name?"

"Null."

"Real name?"

"I don't have to tell you that." Null replied, his eyes growing brighter for a moment and making the man before him shudder for a moment.

"O-Okay Uhm... Emergency number?" The man stuttered.

"No need."

"Sir, I'm going to give you this form, and you can complete anything you want to complete. Is that fair?" The man asked, yet he did not wait for a reply as he instantly slid the paper over to Null.

Reading over it, Null only put in everything he needed, like the number on his adventurer card, the number of supplies he had, and the ones he would need.

The rest of the contract stated that the army and the association could not be sued if he died, and even though he was 16, he could still sign this since anyone awakened would be considered an adult.

Of course, while they are viewed as adults no matter what age they awaken, the age of consent is still 16; however, even that varies depending on the planet or solar system.

"25%?" Null looked up at the man, who simply nodded.

"Why?"

"Sir... I'm not the one who makes that number. The association is." The man replied with a shaky voice.

"Understandable." Null simply sighed before signing the agreement and giving it to the man.

"Anything else?" Null asked,

"N-No, sir. Have a great day." The man stuttered while Null walked into the crowd and waited like everyone else.

Half an hour passed in the blink of an eye, and by the time the dungeon was about to open, almost 50 people were waiting outside it.

"The dungeon is going to open in less than a minute. Please have all your equipment ready. Do not rush in, and do not run. Fighting each other is strictly prohibited."

"Try to move in groups to minimize casualties, and finally, 4 hours in, there is only 1 hour out here. This dungeon is particularly weak, so we have about 48 hours out here to complete the dungeon. You guys have 4 times that, but try to be a little quick on your feet. We are trying to break a record here!" The announcer shouted before a roar of warcries washed over the entire area.

Seconds seemed like hours to those who were here for their first time. For others, the seconds felt too short.

'It's opening...' Null thought to himself, and without thinking twice, he sunk into his own shadow and began manoeuvring around people's feet.

3

2

1...

The woman looked at her watch, which started pinging her, and when she finally saw the message, she roared-

"The dungeon is open!"

ROOOOAAAAR

Despite the earlier warning, everyone charged forward with everything they had, yet Null was way ahead of them.

Leaving his shadow, Null immediately entered the dungeon, yet the instant he stepped inside, he felt his entire world turn upside down.

Thud

Flung out of a portal, Null fell onto the ground and tumbled towards a tree, yet just when he was about to hit it, he used his arms to fling him upwards, allowing him to do a small backflip before landing comfortably onto one of its branches.

It was only then that Null realized something. The trees had no leaves on them, and the branch he was standing on was extremely weak... Almost too weak...

The sky above had an ashy grey tint to it, yet at the same time, Null felt like behind those ashy clouds was an orange sky stuck in an endless sunset that dyed the entire sky the same color.

Looking down, he saw that the ground he had stepped on was grey sand, yet the ground right under the trees seemed to be dry mud that had cracked and shrunk.

The air felt poisonous, and despite Lloyd being a void walker and knowing that he could literally live in the vacuum of space if he wanted to, he still had the urge to close his nose and hold his breath.

"What is this dungeon called?" Null asked.

[Volcanic Waste]

Null squinted his eyes at the answer, yet instead of dwelling on it any further, he simply jumped off the branch and entered his shadow.

3 hours later

"I still can't believe I met Null in person!" A girl shrieked while the rest of her group clicked their tongues.

"Why don't you just go and ask him out then." A boy no older than 16 chuckled.

"You know what, I will!" She replied, causing the boy to widen his eyes in shock while the rest laughed at him.

It was a solid group of 5 with two melee's, two range, and one healer.

"You will?" The boy sniffled before looking away as if he was about to cry.

"I'm kidding babe!" The girl laughed, causing the boy to also chuckle despite trying to stifle it.

"2 o'clock." A man with a magnificent black mustache pointed out, causing the rest to look in that direction with squinting eyes.

"Is that... A magma bat?" The archer at the back asked.

"Yes, it is." The boy at the front replied before taking out his sword and shielding his girlfriend, who happened to be the healer.

Screech

"How strong do you reckon it is?" The boy asked the man with the mustache.

"It's a half-step first commandment... I think." The man replied.

"I'll try to shoot it down. Flynn, protect me. John, protect Lea." The archer stated.

Without thinking twice, they both did as they were told while the archer knocked an arrow onto his bow. Yet, before he could even launch his first arrow, they all froze before their attention shifted slightly to the right.

The sound of a low sizzle entered their ears, and by the time it had reached their line of view, it was already too late.

Swoosh

Seemingly melting through its head, a small flame shot right through the bat's head, killing it instantly before leaving it to slowly fall to the ground.

Scenes like this continued to occur over and over again all over the dungeon, and despite most of these monsters being accustomed to the heat, these flame-like bullets seemed to pass right through their skulls as if they were made of butter.

Magma bats rained from the skies, and since no one associated Null with flames, no one recognized that it might be him causing this.

Looking into the distance, Null landed upon a tree branch just a few meters away from a gargantuan lake created purely out of bubbling magma.

However, despite the beauty of the scene before him, Null's eyes were locked onto a single point in the magma, and after looking at it for a bit longer, he could not help but take in a sharp and cold breath despite that being near impossible due to how close he was to the lake.

Null instantly created a fireball in his hand, and without thinking twice, he threw it to the center of the lake where-

Boom!

A loud explosion echoed throughout the dead forest while a strong gust of hot winds short in every direction, causing them to catch fire and burn down in less than a minute, a fate that Null barely avoided by running away and shielding himself with several trees.

It did not take long for a reaction to stir the forest awake, and when it finally came, it swept the grounds and sent a shiver down the spines of whoever heard it.

ROOOOOOOOAAAAAAR

A booming roar entered Null's ears, yet unlike those who were shuddering in their boots, Null stopped in his tracks, turned around, and launched himself in the direction of the creature without a second thought.

With red scales covering its body from head to toe, as well as two large horns protruding out of its head, simply put, the creature was beautifully terrifying. A fire drake capable of destruction far beyond the normal human's understanding.

Yet, despite everything from its color to aura telling Null to run away, for the first time since he had taken on the identity of Null, he felt something.

A burning anticipation?

A driving excitement?

Bubbling rage?

No, that wasn't it...

What he felt was something else...

A feeling that humans had forgotten a long, long time ago.

A desire that made them who they are today...

Yet, as a void walker, it was as if this desire was second nature.

The desire to devour-

And an endless hunger for strength.

Chapter 34: Volcanic Waste [2] - Black Hole Eclipse

Boom

Without a second of Thought, Null used all the power in his legs to launch himself toward the fiery drake.

His eyes glowed more violet than ever, and despite the stoic expression under his mask, killing intent seemed to spew out of him like water out of a broken dam.

He hadn't even realized it, but he had triggered the passive ability, [Monarch's Aura].

Purple and black ethereal energies left his body, flooded the surroundings, and began encapsulating the lava lake.

'I need to get close without burning to death; to do that, I need to have a way of traveling above the lava without touching it...' Null thought to himself, yet despite not knowing the answer yet, he did not stop moving at full speed.

But it was about time he started to think at full speed too-

[4-Dimensional thought]

In an instant, everything around Null seemed to slow down, as he was in a camera that was putting a piece of footage into slow motion.

The once-vibrant colors of the magma bubbling and rocks sizzling all seemed to dull down even more than when he put the mask in.

Everything became black and white at that moment, while grid-like patterns appeared all over his vision, sectioning the entire area into chunks as if he was looking at schematics rather than real objects and beings.

From his perspective, everything changed... Everything except the one thing he had his concentration on this whole time.

'The drake looks the same...' He inwardly thought, yet the rest of his brain was working on something else.

[Conservation+efficiency+precision]

Stepping onto the lava, Null surprisingly didn't sink and seemed to have stepped on solid ground instead. The fumes and heat also seemed to completely avoid Null, traveling around him as if he had a bubble that encapsulated him inside, making any heat unable to enter this bubble.

'Gotcha...'

Boom

With another deafening explosion, Null stepped forward once again before disappearing from where he stood while uplifting hundreds of gallons of lava into the air.

The scene of lava flying into the air could be seen for several miles, causing many to go green in envy and green before shooting off in the direction of whoever's fighting the boss.

"I can't believe someone found the boss already!" A bald man with a goatee shouted while fixing his glasses. He wore a yellow fully-body hazmat suit, excluding the helmet.

The man held several of what seemed to be recently concocted potions on his belt.

"C'mon, Mr. Black! Do you actually think that a person has actually found the boss?" A younger boy, no older than 23, asked perplexingly.

"Listen here, Jamie! We need those scales to cook! You understand that, Jamie! We have to cook!" The man replied before gulping down a cyan potion tagged 'Blue Sky.'

The man's speed tripled in an instant, allowing him to far outpace the boy behind him.

"Mr. Black! Wait!"

Scenes like these happened all over the dungeon. However, at the same time as this, Null was fighting with everything he had.

Taking a step back, Null closed his eyes and flipped several times, allowing him to completely avoid the incoming lava spikes, followed by a giant red tail that slammed right in front of him, sending him flying several meters back.

Skidding and sliding on the lava below him, Null waved his hand and created 20 fire bullets made purely out of pale blue flames.

Without skipping a beat, Null shot every one of them toward the drake, hitting it in several spots and creating several explosions.

As the smoke began to disappear, Null narrowed his eyes to see for any damage, yet-

'Completely unscathed... But that's what I was hoping for...'

[Void Step]

Within a moment, Null's body shone purple before it disappeared, yet not a second passed before it appeared again as he could be seen floating right above the drake's open maw, ready to consume him the moment he came to close...

And he didn't resist.

Instead, it looked like he was welcoming to the fact he was being consumed, yet just when the drake thought it had him, the unexpected happened.

Crack

Crack Crack

Crack Crack Crack

Without warning, fiery red cracks began to appear on Null's skin.

For the first time in a long time, the drake not only felt danger but also danger from an element it thought it was the king of.

Flames burst out of the cracks in Null's skin, while the eye holes in Null's mask shone brighter than ever as.

In an instant, the flames seemed to freeze at the moment, yet in the next-

BOOOOOOOOOM

The entirety of the lake's center disappeared in a mushroom cloud of an explosion. Lava rained out of the sky and scorched the earth around the lake, destroying all the nearby trees while turning a lot of the rocks into grey sand.

"Aww! Is it over already?" A man who had gotten there on time to barely see the explosion winced, yet everyone else was too preoccupied with the scene before them to care about what he was saying.

"That's one hell of an explosion, though. It's something you would probably see from a peak first commandment mage." A girl thought out loud.

"Hey. I've seen artificers of the same level create an explosion twice as big." Another girl smugly replied.

Seconds felt like minutes as everyone waited for the lava to fall down and reveal the creature in the middle, yet after a while, instead of seeing a dead creature...

"Hey, I think I see movement in there..." A man pointed out with his boy aimed towards the area just in case he would have to finish the creature off.

"Hahaha! I think you're going senile, Robin. No way in hell anyone can survive a blast like that, especially not anyone from the excursion team nor that dungeon boss you keep yapping about. Unless its a peak first commandment-"

Boom

Cut off in the middle of his sentence, the man was forced to watch as a person cloaked in shadows blasted out of the magma pillar before skidding along lava and slamming into several trees to stop his momentum.

At the same time, a loud, ear-shredding roar entered their ears, causing them to look back at the source just to see a drake with fiery red scales and a burnt face look at the person covered in shadows with pure hate in its topaz eyes glaring daggers at him.

"Oi! Over here" A void sounded from behind it, causing it to look back just to see-

"You hit the wrong one... Clearly..." Null sighed before shaking his head in disappointment.

On the other hand, the drake did not waste a second as it instantly gathered flame into its maw before shooting it toward Null, but instead of dodging like a normal person would have, Null extended his hand forward and simply waited as the fireball came even closer.

Snap

Boom

With a snap of his fingers, Null caused the fireball to instantly explode just a few meters in front of him.

Null quickly activated [Presence Concealment] before disappearing into the smoke that had covered him as if he was never there in the first place.

ROAR

The drake waited a few seconds as it frantically looked around, yet just when it was about to give up and try to escape, it felt danger surround it... As if it had been doomed to death, unable to move, its bones and muscles frozen stiff out of pure fear.

"Over here." Null muttered.

Clang!

Just as Null swung, the drake gathered all its courage and whipped its tail toward his blade, deflecting it in the process.

Gritting his teeth, Null slid back a few meters before concealing himself again, attacking another spot on its body to kill it, just to be blocked again.

This scene carried on for minutes as the spectators recorded everything.

Clang *Clang* *Clang*

Null looked like he was a phantom... A literal shadow appearing and disappearing. There, but also not there.

Clang *Clang* *Clang*

It was as if the human eye did not register his existence until he attacked.

Clang *Clang* *Clang*

It was like he was the perfect assassin.

'Enough with this.' Null finally thought, and in the last act of determination, Null jumped back several meters, allowing the creature to look at him head-on.

[Shadow Enhancement]

Covering himself in shadows, Lloyd quickly put two fingers on the base of his katana before tracing up it until he reached the tip.

Purple runes slowly engraved themselves into it, and before anyone could understand what was happening, the once silver blade became completely black, to the point where even light could not be reflected onto it anymore.

[Aspect of Void]

On the other hand, the drake gathered a flame in its mouth. It began as a deep red flame before slowly becoming orange. After orange came bright orange, orange and blue, and then white before the flame finally became a beautiful pale blue.

"A drake huh?" Null spoke aloud for the first time ever since fighting the drake.

This caused it to freeze up for a moment, yet instead of waiting for him to finish his sentence, it simply blasted its attack and waited for its prey to cry out in pain.

Yet, that cry would never reach its ears since its fate had already been sealed.

"...How disappointing"

Swoosh

Appearing before the ball of flames in an instant, Null sliced at it, yet instead of it exploding into his face, something else happened.

"Is that sword..." A man pointed with an agape mouth.

"It isn't it..." another cried out.

"It-"

[Aspect of Void - Elemental Absorption]

The flames slowly seeped into the blade while the rest followed it like a light trail, illuminating everything in sight as it moved.

[Void + Flames]

The flames burst into a bright purple before a shadow cast over it to make it seem like it had turned black.

[Void Walker Style-]

And as if a black hole had appeared in the middle of the dungeon, it happened.

Just like that, the lights disappeared, and everything turned black.

[Black Hole Eclipse]

Chapter 35: Volcanic Waste [3] - Void Walker Style

While most of those who watched the battle between the mighty drake and Null wouldn't believe it, Null was struggling more than ever.

Every time he disappeared from sight, he felt his mana plummet and strain every muscle, cord, and cell in his body. While he was not low on mana by any means, the drake's mana pool simply outclassed his in every way.

Not to mention that using large amounts of mana in a short amount of time has a chance of damaging the mana channels permanently.

After having fought the drake for several minutes, he thought that the clone suicide explosion tactic would be the end of the drake, yet he had underestimated the defense of a creature who lived in the very element he was attacking with.

At that point, Null had run out of [4-Dimensional thought] and therefore was consciously using flame control to ensure a bubble around him at all times.

This not only stressed his mana channels but also his mind, making it hard for him to think logically about anything other than the flames and magma below him.

He struggled for a while, yet after vanishing and appearing several times to the point where his mana was almost non-existent, he chose to do something reckless.

A final move of sorts. One that would quench the thirst for battle that burned inside his heart while ensuring that he would win and survive this battle, no matter what.

Generally speaking, it was the thinking of a madman. Yet Null did it anyway, because, unlike Lloyd, Null was the kind of person to believe that the ends justify the means.

Because Null was not like Lloyd...

Because Null was different...

Because deep down, Null is just Lloyd with the mask on.

Yet, a person with a mask can avoid the consequences of his actions.

A person with a mask is like a loser behind a keyboard and a screen without a real name or face to point at.

As a wise man once said, "A man with a mask is two entirely different men."

...

[Void Walker Style]

And as if a black hole had appeared in the middle of the dungeon, it happened.

Just like that, the lights disappeared, and everything turned black.

[Black Hole Eclipse]

The drake's eyes slowly widened in shock as it realized what was happening, yet it was already too late.

It slowly tried to move its body, yet it was like its body had been frozen in time.

Just as it was about to give up, it felt something wrap around it.

It was as if the darkness was alive and had come to consume it.

Suddenly, everything around it disappeared as it felt itself being dragged into a deep and endless abyss...

As if it were being dragged into the void itself.

* ... *

Silence prevailed as not a single sound could be heard. Not a single light could be seen. Not a single scent could be smelled.

Yet, every single person felt the same thing.

The tingle up their arm.

The shudders down their spines.

The itch behind their ears.

The cold sweat running down the back of their necks.

And the feeling of doom sinking its fangs into their heart, followed by the fear that would have made their legs buckle if they had not been frozen in place.

Not a single one of them dared let out a peep, yet despite that, they all had a feeling that they wouldn't be able to even if they tried.

"What the hell do you think you are doing?" Asked a woman with long black hair and ivory-purple eyes.

Opening his eyes, Lloyd looked around in confusion, unable to understand the situation he was in. Yet, when his eyes landed on the woman's hourglass figure in front of him, he could not help but frown while taking several steps back.

Images of him lying on the floor gasping for breath entered his mind, yet before those could corrupt his train of thought, he asked the question he was thinking of from the start.

"Why couldn't I remember you when I left?"

"I ask the questions here." She replied arrogantly.

"Too bad, 'cause I ain't answering sh*t until you tell me why the hell I didn't remember you after leaving." Lloyd crossed his arms and sat down on his stop, unwilling to move unless she were to physically force him.

"Ugh... Long story short, if I let you leave this place and you were to accumulate the karma of knowing my existence, you would almost instantly have you and your entire family fall into a great calamity. Chances are, you will instantly die as your luck would hit rock bottom." She explained before looking Lloyd in the eyes again and asking.

"So, what the hell were you thinking?"

"What the hell was I thinking? To survive, I guess?" Lloyd replied, not too sure about what he was doing either.

Normally he would have simply retreated, especially when he is going against a peak first-grade monster, yet instead of running away and going as far as possible, he fought it head-on without a care in the world.

"Well, you are welcome to kill yourself in whatever way you want, just don't do that." She shook her head.

"Don't do what?" Lloyd looked at Eris with a confused expression.

"Don't do what you just did."

"What did I do?"

"You're telling me you don't know what you did?" Her flabbergasted expression seemed to worsen.

"No! That's why I'm asking you!" Lloyd shouted back.

"No point in telling you. You won't remember this anyway." She explained.

"Then put it in my subconscious or something. As if it is something I instinctually found out the moment I used it."

"..."

"..."

"You are more intelligent than I give you credit for."

"..."

"Anyway, what you did over there is what most void walkers call a Void Walker Style/Technique. To put it simply, the Void Walker Style is the main martial art that we Void

Walkers use. I'm very proud to say that I created it alongside some martial arts masters of my time, and Aries, who seemed to be around at the time." She explained.

"What you used is what I named the 'Black Hole Eclipse.' A horizontal slash symbolizing a horizon, followed by the power of the void that just burns and sucks everything around it."

"I don't see a problem here." Lloyd complained.

"The problem is that I didn't think someone below the 3rd commandment could gain [Aspect of Void], let alone f*cking [Void Channel] that is 4th commandment at least! Hell, if these are your starter abilities, I'm really looking forward to seeing whatever you get a unique ability." Eris laughed.

"What? Unique ability? 3rd and 4th commandment!? What the hell are you talking about?"

"That's besides that matter." Eris laughed again before continuing-

"What really matters is what we are going to do from here on out. Your little stunt would have eradicated the entire dungeon alongside yourself if I had not stopped it." She explained.

"Now, to make sure you don't get any karma, I'm simply going to reduce the area of effect to the lava lake alone, killing the drake in an instant, giving you the ability, and destroying all the recording devices.

Those not within the range will be automatically corrupted with a little bit of void turbulence, and the rest should be fine as long as you don't do anything stupid." She finally sighed before crossing her legs and placing her hands on the throne that looked like it had been carved out of a black crystal.

"Understood, I guess. What is karma, by the way? I think I have an idea, but-"

"No need for you to know that. Knowing about karma and how it works usually results in the person inducing more karma than before. Anyway, have a safe trip back." She waved her hand, and before Lloyd could mutter another word, he felt as if his emotions had become slightly repressed while the world around him faded into a dimmer color palette.

Before Lloyd knew it, he was Null again and was looking forward.

SWOOOoooosh

The winds howled one last time before darkness collapsed into itself, disappearing in an instant alongside all the lava in the lake, most of the flying cameras, and the drake itself.

It was as if they had disappeared out of existence, and while most would not believe such a story since there was no proper footage of it, what else could it be?

Null simply looked at where the drake once stood. Tall and strong. Powerful and majestic.

Yet it still fell to his blade.

He didn't know what he was feeling anymore. Guilt? Angry? Happy?

There was a feeling at the back of his neck that told him what he did was dangerous and that the technique he just used was deadly, yet he knew he would do it all again if he had to.

He felt a thrill more than ever before in his life.

The drake's ability surged through his veins while its power entered his mana channels and began to strengthen him further and further.

Once again, he was one step closer to becoming the first commandment.

"Percentage?"

[96.21%]

"New ability?"

[Heat Resistance]

"Good... Good..." Null muttered to himself as he stood motionless on the empty lava lake.

Everyone around looked at him as if he was some kind of monster even more terrifying than the drake that stood before him a few seconds ago, and who could blame them? They just watched a man erase a large lava lake out of existence, and on top of that, the person who did so is an assassin!

Not a mage or artificer... An assassin.

However, instead of paying heed to the dozens of people watching him, Null grabbed the red core off the floor before turning around and leaving without looking back.

The policy in the association is people get to keep boss drops such as cores or its body while having to share the rest. This makes it much easier for the adventurers while also making it easy for the association to keep their member's complaints to a minimum.

Rumble

And with the sound of a rumble, the fastest 1st commandment dungeon raid had been recorded into the history books with the name "Null" solidly burnt into those pages as the tales of his erasure of a drake would be told for generations.

Chapter 36: The Offer [1]

"How long do you think these guys are gonna take? I have a feeling that they might just break the record this time." A man exclaimed with excitement.

"Break the record? Don't be ridiculous. If any group is about to break the world record, it will not be those guys. Did you see them? A bunch of nerds, narcs, and wimps who can barely carry their weapons!

Instead of wasting their time here, they should go to the military to do some combat training and make themselves useful!" The lieutenant cried out in annoyance and anger, forcing the man next to him to quiet down and hope that the lieutenant would calm down.

"What about Null?" A voice came from behind and made both individuals look back, yet when they saw who it was, they could not help but widen their eyes in surprise.

"Principal Relworth! What are you doing here?" The lieutenant asked, his voice now calm without a semblance of anger in his eyes.

Principal Relworth was a tall man, towering over the lieutenant at the height of 6ft 5. If his size was not enough for anyone to spot him, even from a mile away, his snow-white hair and silver-cyan eyes were simply the cherries on top.

"I was told by one of my associates that someone I am looking to recruit into my academy could be found here. I am simply waiting for that person to show up." The principal chuckled while the other two tensed up.

"You mean, you're looking for Null?" The lieutenant asked.

"Yes, precisely." The principal let out a welcoming smile, yet the lieutenant could not help but feel like he was being taunted.

One of the main reasons the military 'hosted' these events alongside the adventurer's association was because it helped them recruit individuals that would usually overlook.

Now that Null had shown up, the lieutenant was planning on recruiting him after the raid, but it seemed like he now had competition.

"Well, either way, they won't be coming out for at least a few more hours at least. If we are unlucky, we might have a dungeon break on our hands- Huh?" The man standing to the lieutenant's side frowned before looking at the dungeon gate that was beginning to shift and morph.

"What is it?" The principal asked with narrowed eyes.

"It just felt like the dungeon was about to-."

FWOOOOOHHM

As if on queue with the man's words, the dungeon imploded into itself before the sound of faint cracks entered the ears of everyone in ears. Instantly, they all panicked, thinking it was a dungeon break of some kind and that they had miscalculated, yet their fear quickly turned into awe.

Men and women of different sizes and ages began to appear where the dungeon used to be.

Every single one of them seemed to carry a different armor style and equipment, yet despite how different they all were, there was one thing that united them.

"Hey, why are they out so early?" The lieutenant asked, yet no one answered, as if the answer was obvious from the very start.

After all, the people's expressions already said it all.

Fear and confusion. That's the feeling that every single of them exuded.

"I'd like my payment?" A man draped in black clothing from top to bottom asked, his voice muffled by the mask he wore, yet his eyes seemed to shine even brighter despite being suppressed by a mask.

"Y-Yes! Of course sir." The receptionist stuttered before taking out a small sum and pushing it forward towards Null.

"I have a few bodies too. Where should I put them?" Null asked.

"J-Just transfer them to this storage ring if you don't mind." The receptionist replied before handing over a pitch-black ring that Null promptly used to store all the bodies of the creatures he killed.

"The money will be transferred to you within the next 3 minutes." The receptionist bowed before leaving as quickly as he could.

Without skipping a beat, Null ignored everyone around him and created a pathway by releasing his killing intent and forcing everyone to move out of his way.

Yet, before he could completely leave-

"Mr. Null. I would like to give you the privilege of joining the military-"

"Not interested." Null cut off the lieutenant before he could get another word out, and despite the lieutenant's large body blocking his way, Null simply used [Presence Concealment] to move around him instantly.

Before the lieutenant could turn around and retrieve back whatever was left of his broken pride, Null was completely gone, and as if that wasn't bad enough, Principal Relworth seemed to have disappeared as well.

Null continued walking for a few minutes, yet instead of removing his mask in a random alleyway and going straight home, he decided to take a wrong turn.

Null continued to walk like this for over 15 minutes, continuously taking wrong turns left, right and center.

Eventually, Null finally turned into a dark alleyway and walked a few meters before his Presence disappeared.

"What do you want?" Null asked in a deep and spine-chilling voice.

"Impressive. I can count on one hand the number of times I had been found out while tailing someone." The man with snow-white hair chuckled with his hands up.

"Why are you following me?" Null asked.

"Well, I want to recruit you to my academy. You would be a great addition, and I am almost certain you would acclimate well with your classmates. Don't you think so, Mr. Elrod?"

"..."

"..."

"Mr. Elrod?" Null asked with confusion in his voice.

"I'm sorry, Lloyd, but while your genuine confusion might have made anyone else rethink their points, I am certain my sources are correct." Principal Relworth explained, yet instead of being bombarded with questions like he had expected, he found a blade resting upon his neck.

"You do know that I am in the third commandment, correct?" He chuckled.

"I am aware." Null replied.

"Then why bother?"

"..."

"You're lucky that lieutenant let you run off like that. If he really wanted to, he could have caught you in an instant." The principal explained.

"And am I correct to assume that you stopped him?"

"Correct."

"How did you get my real name?" Null finally asked.

"Ugh! Finally, you're asking some real questions." The principal sighed before continuing-

"You don't really put much effort into hiding your true identity. Had my right-hand woman follow you around for a bit." He explained.

"And now you're blackmailing me into joining your academy?" Null tilted his head to the right in genuine curiosity.

"No, no! Of course not. I just had to ensure I wasn't recruiting a complete stranger. Anyway, I am saying that if you do happen to join an academy, you might as well join ours.

We have several celebrity students who would rather keep their identities secret, and if you join, you might just be one of them!" The principal explained with a fervor that made Null feel like this was an .

"Okay? Is that all?" Null asked with a voice much colder than before.

"Just, consider my offer. We have facilities for people just like you who do not want the government watching their every move. We have facilities that would hide your abilities from the public while encouraging you to become stronger."

"Sure, sure. I'll think about it. Now leave before I throw a harassment lawsuit at your academy." Null sneered, making the principal sigh in disappointment.

"I really hope you consider it properly." He muttered before disappearing in the blink of an eye.

Null took his mask off without skipping a beat before entering his shadow and leaving the area.

Returning home, Null had immediately gone upstairs to get some sleep before waking up and training under Zack's father.

No one saw him as he entered the house, nor did they feel his Presence. Of course, they might have felt his Presence if they were specifically looking for him, but since they weren't, he had nothing to worry about as the combination of his Void Walker physique, as well as his [Presence Concealment] ability, made it extremely hard for most to even spot him walking across the street, let alone entering their house.

The next day, Lloyd and Zack trained with Benjamin before they came out to have dinner, just to train to the point where Zack was puking his guts out, and Lloyd was sweating buckets.

Lloyd never really understood why; as a void walker, he still felt like vomiting. He also never understood why his body did things that were so human-like. An example is sneezing, coughing, and sweating, followed closely by the sound of his heartbeat and the need to breathe.

Lloyd knew he could hold his breath for an infinite amount of time, yet despite his lack of lungs, it always felt right to breathe. As if it was the right thing to do.

Maybe it's the final bits of humanity left him that tried their hardest to stay attached; Lloyd would tell himself, but in reality, not even he knew.

Lloyd and Zack continued training together while the rest of the family chose to use this week to spend more time together.

Lloyd's father, Noah, also chipped into the training wherever he saw necessary, something that only served to make the exercise harder, but at the same time, it was to carve Lloyd and Zack into the best shape they could be before the entrance ceremony of all the different academies.

2 hours in the training room was equal to 1 hour on the outside, so before Lloyd and Zack knew it, they had spent a little under a week training.

Of course, Lloyd continued to go into different dungeons while making a name for himself, yet he did that in the hours they weren't in the training room.

"Remind me, will you. Why can't we just sleep in the training room?"

"For the hundredth time, Zack, because it has been strictly advised against by the company who made the damn thing." Lloyd sighed before sitting down at the dinner table with Zack doing the same right beside him.

"I mean... It can't be that bad, right?" Zack replied with a chuckle.

"They say those who spend a night in there start to go crazy. They lose it by night 2, and their minds turn to mush by night three." Elana whispered with a sense of terror in her voice that caused Zack to shiver to his core while Lloyd and Delly laughed to his dismay.

Before long, The two families ate their breakfast, and washed their dishes before packing their things and heading for the door, yet just before they could leave, everyone looked towards Lloyd and Zack with longing eyes of worry and pride.

"What?" Lloyd asked with a confused tilt of the head.

"Make sure to take care of yourselves, okay. I know you two might not get into the same academies, but if you do, make sure to take care of each other, too, okay? Don't worry us too much." Layla gave a warm smile to both of them.

"Show 'em who their fighting and make sure they remember your names, alright?" Noah asked, making Zack agree with a burst of laughter in between his words.

"Sure." Lloyd replied with an almost stoic tone.

"Nervous much?" Elana asked with a smug grin on her face, causing Lloyd to scratch his cheek in embarrassment. Yet, despite his seemingly embarrassed and nervous state, Lloyd's "heartbeat" stayed the same throughout the entire conversation while his mind played static as if he was thinking of nothing at all... As if his mind was completely empty of any thoughts.

His "heart" felt cold, while his emotions didn't show a single spark. It was as if his mindscape was completely empty. As if he was hollow from the inside out.

And Layla felt every minute detail of it as it slowly ate at her mind, heart, and very soul.

As if Lloyd's darker emotions were poison to those who felt them. An interior that should never be uncovered.

Chapter 37: Battle Royal [1]

"Ladies and gentlemen. Boys, girls, and whatever you specify as, I'd like to welcome you to the Entraaaaance Ceremony!" A man with a floating microphone announced, causing the crowd of millions to cheer simultaneously throughout the star system.

"Today, we have over 300,000 contestants participating from all over the star system. They will be divided into 30 groups of 10,000 contestants based on their talent and class.

Those who have already gotten several invitation letters do not have to participate. However, we do have a few that chose to participate anyway, so stay tuned for their challenges to see the best of the best from the new generation."

Cheers erupted once again before dying instantly as the man raised his hand to silence them all.

Everyone watched in anticipation as the man broke out into a grin.

"However, 300,000 is a number much higher than the number that we wanted, so we'll just have to filter them out with a mini-challenge of our own. Call it challenge number 0, the filtration system." The man shouted with excitement and vigor in his voice.

"We will be placing all thirty groups in different unconquered planets and waiting to see how and if they will survive. If they do happen to 'die', they will be sent back here and disqualified." The presenter explained while having his hands to create a dramatic effect.

Fireworks and different spells seemed to explode behind him to add to the effect, yet it was as if no contestant saw them as they were too focused on what he was saying.

On the other hand, the audience felt thrilled as they cheered once more as, vigor filled them to the brim and excitement washed over their being.

"You nervous?" A boy no older than 16 turned to his right and asked a specific black-haired boy wearing sunglasses despite being indoors.

The sunglasses were tinted purple, matching the rest of his clothing varied from black to dark grey. The interior of his jacket also seemed to be made out of a bright halo violet that shone whenever the boy moved.

"Why do you ask?" The black-haired boy questioned while looking up at the other.

"Sitting there all silent and gloomy. I know that most of here are rogues, assassins and what not, but we're all in this together, you know?" The boy scratched the back of his head while Lloyd simply sighed at the stupidity of the child before him.

Lloyd saw through almost everyone in the waiting area. Everyone was trying to find out more about their opponents by acting like each other's friends while manipulating one another into doing what the other wants.

However, Lloyd could tell that the boy before him was not trying to deceive him but was just oblivious to these happenings.

'How naive...!' Lloyd thought to himself, yet he did nothing to help the boy. This was a world where the weak and innocent were eaten alive, and he must be ready for that before committing to an academy filled with other students who simply wanted to be better than the person next to them.

'If he goes to the academy at this state, he'll be eaten alive.' Lloyd thought to himself before looking away.

"Hey man, if you don't wanna talk, it's cool. Just tell me to go away-"

"Go away." Lloyd cut him off without a shred of sympathy.

"Whatever suits you." The boy shrugged and moved on to the next set of people. However, unlike all the other people he had talked to, they looked rich from their outfits alone.

Looking away from the scene, Lloyd continued to daydream for another 45 minutes before he finally looked at the TV screen when a certain announcement hit his ears.

[Top 25 Warriors Division 2]

[1. Zack Varlen Glade Berserker 1992 Points]

[2. Jane Fisher White Knight 959 Points]

[3. Felix Alemio Lancer 687 Points]

[...]

[...]

[25. Tuco Salamanca Arcane Monk 314 Points]

The moment the results hit the screen, everyone in the waiting hall burst out in a fit of chatter.

"Holy shit! 2000?! That guy doesn't even have to do any of the challenges. Anyone will have him!"

"Zack Varlen Glade... Where have I heard that from?"

"Oh crap! That guy is a glade! A f*cking glade!"

"Glade? Of course, he is. That entire family is filled with monsters from the start to now."

On the other hand, Lloyd simply smiled before looking down again and waiting for his group to be called up.

20 minutes of silence passed in the blink of an eye

"Oi, you!" A voice entered Lloyd's ears again, yet he felt that the words said had been directed at him this time.

Looking up, he looked into the eyes of the 5 boys looking at him before replying-

"Yes?"

"What's your name?" The boy at the front asked with what seemed like a genuine smile, on the surface at least.

"You'll know my name when you look at the top of the leaderboards. Now if you don't mind, leave me alone." Lloyd replied, his eyes flashing purple with a tinge of coldness within them.

If the human race was scared of anything, there would be three things that would take the top spots.

One: Humans are terrified of extinction. As if it's in their genes to avoid it at all costs.

Two: Being controlled. No one likes to be told that they are manipulated, and humans seem to be the most terrified when it comes to being controlled.

Three: Void walkers.

Seeing Lloyd's eyes flash purple, the boys could not help but flinch and take a step back, as if it was in their genes to be terrified of the color purple.

Due to the Void Walker attacks all those years ago, not only have people with purple eyes been discriminated against and outcasted, but the color purple itself has become taboo in nature.

No one would wear purple, and no planet's flags would have purple, and no houses would have even a tinge of purple. Of course, as generations went on, people began to forget the meaning of the color, and therefore the taboo on it had weakened.

Yet the feeling of despair still held on, going from generation to generation in the form of bedtime stories and films. Purple was almost like the new red. It meant danger to everyone who saw it, and multiple planets had already begun using it in traffic lights and signs.

Lloyd knew this. It was how he was brought up and what he was taught, so he chose to take advantage of it. He knew he couldn't change the color of his abilities nor the color of his eyes, so why not embrace it as it is?

"Is that understood?" Lloyd asked in a low and monotone voice. The boys before him felt as if the hall had dropped in temperature by several degrees, while the minute amounts of killing intent that Lloyd had released caused the hair on the back of their heads to perk up.

Their instincts told them to run. Run! Run as fast as they can. Their instincts screamed out in fear and told them to bow to the monster before them. Kneel and beg for forgiveness. Yet, right before they could do so-

"Is there a problem here?" A mature feminine voice struck their ears like thunder and snapped them out of their condition.

"W-What?" One of them muttered.

"Is there a problem here?!" The woman asked again, frowning deeply as she rested a hand on her hip while tilting her head to the side.

"No, ma'am, Not trouble here. These guys were just leaving." Lloyd replied with a genuine smile as the coldness in his eyes disappeared in an instant.

The woman, however, did not seem totally pleased as she turned toward the boys, who nodded their heads.

She could see fear in their eyes and was slightly surprised since she knew they were pretty rich and arrogant, yet she could do nothing in a situation like this, where it was obvious that the victimized party were the ones to engage the assailant.

Looking at Lloyd one more time, she sighed and walked off. Once she had left for more than 10 seconds, the rest of the boys also turned around and left the scene.

"Rogue Class Types Division 1, please ready yourselves to be transported to unexplored planet 195CH 11. The challenge shall begin in T-300."

'So, 5 minutes?' Lloyd thought to himself before standing up and checking his gear.

Since his katana had been damaged beyond repair when he used the void-walker-style technique, he was forced to buy a new one. Despite that, the new blade was much better than the old one, which was to be expected.

After all, Grisha might be an arcane mage with knowledge about runes that far surpassed Lloyd's, but she was still a beginner when it came to fixing or enchanting gear.

Taking out his blade, Lloyd held it tightly within it hands since he didn't have a sheath to put in.

Looking at his clothes, he could not help but smirk at the workmanship done to create such a masterpiece.

He had asked his parents to make him some gear that would easily disguise himself as normal clothes.

The clothes he was currently wearing could be considered first commandment armor, yet they also had some additional features that made them so much more powerful than the regular first commandment armor.

It was a known fact that you could not use weapons or gear 2 or more commandments above the user, so there was no need to make any rules against it since whoever does such a thing did it at their own risk.

Lloyd waited a few more minutes before finally-

"3"

"2"

"1"

"Teleportation shall commence"

When Lloyd heard those words, a bright flash of light seemed to surround him while a warm, almost tranquil energy wrapped around him and submerged him within it.

The feeling of bliss lasted for what felt like less than a dozen minutes, but eventually, Lloyd and the rest of the Rogues found themselves on a flying ship above an enormous forest that spanned out for what felt like miles.

Looking at his watch, Lloyd raised a brow in surprise before looking at everyone else, staring at the same thing he was.

A large screen floated above their watches with the display of a map showing an island the size of England... Well, the old England, to be precise.

*"Looking at your maps, you can click anywhere on the screen to be transported to the exact location. There are three ways to earn points.

You can complete the missions personally associated with you and the area you decide to land. You can kill monsters and send their bodies back to us. The better shape they are, the more points you will get. A core will get you 10x the amount of points of the corpse.

Finally, you can hunt your fellow competitors for their accumulated points. Those in the top 10 will have their locations shown at all times."*

The voice explained through the intercom.

However, since it didn't say anything else, everyone froze for 10 seconds before they first chose to tap onto their screen before disappearing into a bright flash of light.

Flashes of light continued to illuminate the ship as several hundred disappeared simultaneously.

While some chose to go on their own, others found someone to go with, making a group in order to be most efficient.

Before long, there were fewer than 50 left, including Lloyd himself, yet despite the emptiness in the room, they all looked like they knew exactly what they were doing.

Looking at the map, Lloyd narrowed his eyes at a certain point on the map before a smile stretched across his face.

Strolling to one of the windows, Lloyd looked at the direction of the location he was looking at on the map, and after a few seconds, he confirmed his suspicions.

Tap

The instant his finger touched the screen, a voice only he could hear entered his ears.

"Would you like to be transported to [Central City]?"

Tap

"You will now be transported. "

Zoom

Chapter 38: Battle Royal [2] - Mosquito Madness [1]

Zoom

As the bright flash of light disappeared, Lloyd opened his eyes and allowed them to shower themselves under the scene of destroyed and abandoned buildings.

While Lloyd might not be a tracker or a navigator, he still had senses far surpassing any other in his class group unless they were scouts since they had abilities to aid them with a skill like searching.

While there were many reasons as to why Lloyd had chosen the abandoned city at the center of the map, one of the most important reasons was because of the mana signatures he felt hiding inside the city.

'Monsters living in an abandoned city... They will most likely not be herbivores.' Lloyd thought to himself before looking at the buildings around him and narrowing his eyes.

'They can most likely fly or climb. However, house cats would thrive in an environment like this because rats and flies would likely thrive here too. So felines, insects, and rodents. There is always the chance of mutated humanoid species, but there is also a chance of lizards living here too.'

'The possibilities are narrow but endless. Hey, there might even be some creatures that no one had ever seen before.' Lloyd thought to himself as a smile pulled up on the corner of his lips.

Screeeeech

"And it looks like my first victim has offered itself to me. Honestly, how charitable." Lloyd chuckled before turning around and locking his eyes upon a creature zooming around in the skies.

'Nothing on this planet should go above the initial stages of the first commandment. This makes the entire thing a little boring, but I guess I have to settle for boring if I want to enter the academy.' Lloyd mused, and with that thought, the sound of a gunshot echoed throughout the better portion of the city as Lloyd turned into a blur, destroying the ground below his feet as he jumped towards the screeching insect in the sky.

"First Blood: Lloyd Elrod"

As the announcement rang throughout the island, Lloyd simply dropped to the ground with a giant mosquito following right behind him.

Slamming into the ground, it left a dust cloud in its wake at a nearby radius that was barely outside Lloyd's location.

'Wow... After killing all those first commandments, the amount of energy that just entered me feels so abysmal. Maybe it's because I've almost reached the threshold to becoming a half-step first commandment threshold.' Lloyd thought to himself, but he did not linger on it for too long.

Squeek

"Hmm?" Lloyd raised a brow, turned around, and stared into the darkness of the shadow between two buildings. Due to his night vision, he could see everything, but to anyone else, it would have looked like nothing more than a pair of red eyes staring at him with utmost ferocity.

Sching

The rat hiding in the shadows didn't know what had hit it, yet before it could truly understand its situation, its vision became black, with the last thing it saw being a pair of black boots walking away from it.

Screeches, roars, and screams echoed throughout the city, and even though Lloyd was no longer in the top 10, he was very close to it despite having only killed monsters so far.

[Mosquito Madness (Part 1/3) - Find the mosquito nest: 50 Points]

[Mosquito Madness (Part 2/3) - Kill 100 mosquitoes: 200 Points]

[Mosquito Madness (Part 3/3) - Kill the mosquito queen: 500 Points]

"Hmm... That would easily put me in the top 10. Their bodies aren't worth much, but through this mission, I could earn 2 points through 1 mosquito. It is easily a much better use of my time." Lloyd mused aloud before opening up his map again.

'Mosquitos don't really build nests. They find undisturbed water and lay eggs in there. So, they are most likely going to be... Here.' Lloyd let out a smile as he pointed his finger at the largest lake within the city itself. It happened to be in the middle of a park that had chosen to surround the lake with trees.

'It's hot, meaning that place will most likely be humid. It is perfect for mosquito infestation.' Lloyd concluded, and without skipping a beat, he launched himself in a certain direction.

[18. Lloyd Elrod: 134 Points]

As Lloyd glided merely a few inches from the ground, he did not hesitate to cut down any living creature in his way, whether they were feline or rodent. To him, they were all the same.

It took him no more than 10 minutes to reach his destination, and when he finally did, he could not help but suck in a cold breath.

Hundreds. No... Thousands. Thousands of mosquitos, every single one of them being between the size of a human or double that. The scene before Lloyd could have been described as an entomophobia's worst nightmare.

Mosquitos spiraling upwards and reaching for the heavens. A sky turned dark from their presence alone, as well as an aura that could have been defined as truly terrifying in its own sense.

It wasn't powerful per se, yet it gave off such a lingering feeling of dread and despair that people would feel when facing an unstoppable enemy...

'What a useful defense mechanism. If the sight alone doesn't make them run away, it just makes them feel dread and despair, revealing the fear within them. It's almost genius.' Lloyd inwardly complimented.

Of course, he could have simply activated flame control and burned every single one of them to cinders, but of course, that would not be the correct decision unless he planned on exposing the fact that he, a shadow assassin, had somehow gotten even more abilities, from a different element at that.

'Think... THINK!'

Holding his temples, Lloyd paced backward and forwards, yet despite all his thinking, he could not come up with a solid plan that would take less than 30 minutes to execute.

However, that's when it hit him.

'I don't need to use my flames, [Shadow Clone]s or [Presence Concealment]. I don't even need 30 minutes to do it. It doesn't matter if it takes more or less time. I don't need to beat Zack; I just need to put my name on the leaderboards so I can have the eyes of both the recruiters and other students on me.' He thought with particular excitement in his voice.

"There may be thousands of you, but I only need to kill 100 regulars and that boss of yours. What do you think, a good plan?" He asked no one in particular, but despite that, his voice was loud enough for many of the mosquitos to hear him.

He could already imagine his family's reaction to such a stupid action on his part, yet he didn't care.

BBZZZZZZZZ

As if enraged, the buzzing seemed to multiply in strength as the flapping of the mosquito's wings vibrated the very air they beat on to stay afloat.

Their eyes had become bright red while their bloodlust seemed to coat the sky and city in a dark crimson hue.

This only alerted the rest of the storm as hundreds, if not thousands, of steel-like needles pointed themselves toward Lloyd. Some of the stronger and larger ones even pointed their sword-like front legs at Lloyd, yet he stood unperturbed by anything they threw at him.

"Are you done yet? I would have loved to handle this with blades, yet since you see that intimidation is the way to go, who am I to stop you?" Lloyd asked with a genuine curiosity in his voice, yet before the mosquitoes could act upon their threats, Lloyd spoke again, but this time his voice felt a thousand times colder.

Cold enough to turn the Sahara into an icy desert. To make the very grains of sand turn into pebbles of reflective glass, shining the very moon back upon itself with equal vibrance.

"However, since you've already gone down the route of intimidation-" Lloyd paused, with the silence between his words feeling like an eternity for all those who watched.

There Lloyd was, standing tall with his bright violet eyes, shining with luminance equal to only the stars above, being watched by millions as they looked upon their screens.

His face and name are broadcasted throughout the entire star system and live-streamed to several other star systems all over the galaxy, and being called a fool by every single one of them.

"-Why shouldn't I return the gesture?" Lloyd asked, his foot finally landing upon the mud as he took his first step forward.

And that's where it began.

DOOOOOOM

A dark cloud enveloped the park, yet this one was not like the last. It was dark with flashes of purple and just thick enough to make the crimson color of the world around him disappear.

The sky seemed to shift into the color of an ivory purple, yet the ground was not spared.

A bubble expanded out of Lloyd's body and reached the ends of the swarm. As the bubble moved, it seemed like space itself shifted around it while a power beyond anything the mosquitos had seen began to bubble within Lloyd.

The clouds wept and thundered while the winds howled like a mourning pack of wolves.

It felt like the gravity in the area had multiplied, while anything in it felt like several hands had gripped onto their throats, waiting and waiting to hear the sound of a snap. A snap that would never come.

"Let's see how you survive this, then. I hope you're not going to try and intimidate me again. It was quite pathetic the last time you tried."

Chapter 39: Battle Royal [3] - Mosquito Madness [2]

[Void Gaze + Killing Intent + Monarch's Aura]

Unable to move a muscle, the mosquitoes began to fall out of the sky. Their wings no longer worked, so they simply fell.

As they dropped into the waters below them, bubbles rose to the top as they struggled to breathe, yet despite their best efforts, it took about 2 minutes for the life to leave their bodies.

Their bodies simply floated upwards right after, as if life was the only thing weighing them down and forcing them to drown.

Lloyd used these floating corpses to walk across the lake, insects still falling out of the sky while he did so, yet the scene did not seem to affect him in the least.

His eyes remained the same cold violet color, while his sovereign-like demeanor never left him for a second.

To all those who watched the scene occur, they felt as if they were watching an emperor walk amongst the lowest of peasants, yet only the dead ones dared even lay a hair on him.

[Mosquito Madness (2/3) - Kill 100 mosquitoes: 200 Points]

[854/100]

[Complete]

Lloyd continued to watch as the number rose and rose without any stop. He felt like screaming out in excitement, yet he knew he would need to put on a cold persona to be taken seriously. He wanted to intimidate everyone else, not make them think he was a muscle brain with no real intelligence.

Boom

SCREEEECH

Just when Lloyd thought of provoking the mosquito queen in other ways, the sound of water splashing entered his ears before the shrill shriek of the mosquito queen made him scrunch his nose in discomfort.

"You've finally come out?" Lloyd asked, yet instead of waiting for an answer, he immediately activated [Void Gaze] as he locked eyes with the creature before him.

Unlike the other mosquitoes, the mosquito queen's weaponry looked much deadlier than the rest of her children.

It had a long needle-like stinger coming out of its back that looked like it could puncture through almost anything. Its front legs looked like two blades ready to cut through anything at a moment's notice, while its eyes shone red with a ferocity that Lloyd had not seen in many monsters.

"A humanoid mosquito?" Lloyd asked with a slightly dazed and even confused expression. He was almost mesmerized by the crystal-like membrane wings, but he held himself together.

The mosquito woman before him looked beautiful in her own right. Her beastly characteristics and her razor-sharp claws, hands, and feet went nicely with the vicious yet lustful demeanor she put on.

Her pale white skin looked like it had been made out of marble, yet it was still as soft as a baby's bottom to the touch.

Despite [Void Gaze] still being active on her, her soft lips parted, and clarity returned to her eyes. A low yet soft sigh left her mouth, before a voice finally left it, too, entering Lloyd's ears in the form of melodious rings and bells that would have entranced most of those who heard it.

"Human? Why have you chosen to murder my children?" The mosquito queen asked, her voice breaking over what Lloyd could only guess was heartbreak.

"What have they ever done to you?" She asked in an almost pleading voice as if she was begging them to come back... For Lloyd to bring them back to her.

"Since when did monsters have feelings?" Lloyd asked in a sarcastic tone, yet it quickly returned to the stoic, cold one as he asked-

"Since when did monsters know how to speak?"

"Is that all you see me as? A monster? Prey!?" She roared out in rage, yet Lloyd wasn't falling for her fake tears and melodic voice, yet he didn't have to.

Her face seemed to distort into a bloodthirsty grin stretching from ear to ear. Her red eyes seemed to narrow as if Lloyd was the only thing in her vision. Her skin also began to change, turning red, while her claws and stinger seemed to double in size.

They looked sharp enough to cut a wound through time and space itself, yet Lloyd was more than aware that he only thought this way because of the dread-filled aura that seeped out of her like water through a broken dam.

"Shit!" Lloyd cursed and blocked his torso with his arms, forming an X in front of his chest.

He saw it coming. Hell, every hair in his body seemed to stand up as dread filled his consciousness.

Crack

BOOOM

As if he was hit by a truck, Lloyd felt himself being catapulted through the water, passing by several mosquito corpses on the way before finally slamming into the lake bed as the air in his lungs forced itself out.

'Oh wait... I don't have lungs...' Lloyd thought to himself with gritted teeth as he tried his best to suppress the pain that would have usually made him scream out.

'Should have kept low-key...' He complained, yet he knew that complaining wouldn't remove the pain radiating through his entire body, as if every bone in his body had shattered or fractured, despite his not having bones.

Yet, instead of crying out in pain, Lloyd's eyes flared in bright violet as he channeled his pain into the only other thing he could feel at that moment.

Rage.

"To everyone at home... You have just watched the mosquito queen slam Lloyd Elrod into the lake, yet it seems like he is not out just yet as there are no reports of him returning to the ship." A man wearing an ear-mic announced before looking at the woman to his right.

"I believe that was to be expected. We have watched Lloyd kill nearly two thousand mosquitoes without lifting a finger. How can anyone like that be sent out of the battle with a single attack? If he was, I would have to comment on the validity of these challenges. Assuming he is out would also insinuate that the mosquito queen is at least an early first commandment, if not more." The woman explained with a stern voice.

Lloyd's family watched the screen, not a single one of them making a single peep. The tension in the air was so heavy that the casual observer would have worried that the room might accidentally collapse into itself.

"He's fine, right?" Elana finally asked after almost 30 seconds of silence that not even the Glades dared to disturb.

"I'm sure he's fine." Benjamin replied, yet he could not help but lower his voice to a whisper by the end, showing that not even he was certain of the words that came out of his mouth.

Sure, Lloyd was strong. Stronger than most of those pre-first commandments, but that was it. Lloyd might be strong, but fighting someone with an entire commandment above him was another thing on its own.

[Man: Oh? I think I see something in the water. It looks like-]

[Woman: A light? It looks purple. Despite Lloyd wearing sunglasses to hide his eyes, we know for sure that he had bright violet eyes that shone through the sunglasses themselves. Do you think that he is rising from the water-]

Before the woman could finish her sentence, her eyes widened before the man followed right behind her.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that most of those who watched the scene occur held their mouths agape while their eyes seemed to bulge out of their sockets.

BOOM

Water erupted and reached the clouds. Steam covered the battlefield, while mosquito corpses fell from the sky like raindrops.

The bodies were disfigured, mangled, and almost unrecognizable, yet some of them looked like they had been turned into charcoal. As if they had been burned into nothing but a charred corpse, just to turn into ashes as they dropped from the skies.

"You survived?" The mosquito queen asked with genuine surprise. However, despite her eyes being widened in shock, one could easily see that there were hints of amusement shining deep within her eyes which were further implicated by the taunting smirk plastered onto her face.

Lloyd, on the other hand, simply stood in the sky surrounded by falling corpses and an entire body of water.

He was covered in shadows, yet one could easily see the distinct frown on his face as he looked down upon the mosquito queen. His eyes shone like a pair of violet stars while his aura exploded out of his body in the form of a bubble that made everything in its vicinity a shade of grey.

Seeing this, the mosquito let out her aura, too, allowing it to clash with Lloyds and push it back.

DOom

To her surprise, however, despite being the queen of an entire nest of thousands of mosquitoes, she felt her aura only held up for a couple of seconds before she started being pushed back.

"W-What is the meaning of this! I am a queen! A QUEEN!" She roared at the top of her lungs, yet the only thing she seemed to accomplish was to make Lloyd smile. A smile filled with amusement. The same smile she showed him before slamming him to the bottom of the lake.

Without waiting for another second, Lloyd took out his blade and covered it in shadows, and without skipping a beat, Lloyd used [Void Gaze] and shot forward with everything he had.

His sudden speed caused the air to ripple while the water before him separated like the red sea did to Moses.

Any corpse that happened to be in front of him found itself being immediately obliterated, and before the mosquito queen knew it, Lloyd was standing before her, his aura pressing down on her while his [Void Gaze] made her legs feel weak.

Yet, just before her legs buckled, she let out an ear-piercing scream that traveled throughout the entire city and possibly beyond it.

"Calling for backup?" Lloyd chuckled.

"Damn you!" She roared and sliced at Lloyd with all the power she could muster.

Lloyd dodged without much effort, yet the power behind her attack created enough air pressure to send out an arch of wind that shot across the water before shooting upwards and slamming into an abandoned building.

Swoosh

Catch

Lloyd didn't even have to look at the mosquito queen to know what she was doing. Without a second of thought, Lloyd caught a stinger that shot his way.

'It broke the skin,' Lloyd thought to himself as he looked at the cut in his palm while a burst of loud maniacal laughter entered his ears.

"You human fool! It might look like a simple cut, but I have poisoned you with one of the most dangerous venoms on this planet. You will lose the ability to see, hear and smell by the end of the first minute. You'll feel your body shutting down my the second, and You'll be dead by the third!" She burst into another fit of laughter

"Oh really?" Lloyd asked without much emotion in his voice. There was nothing. No pain. No despair. Completely null with emotions, and that seemed to scare the living hell out of the mosquito queen.

She immediately began to sweat while her eyes darted around as if she was trying to find a way out of the situation she had found herself.

The moment she saw Lloyd's expression, she instantly knew that her final trump card had failed her, and the only thing she could do now was run away.

And run away, she did... Or at least tried.

Boom

Boom

Boom

crash

BOOM

The moment Lloyd saw her turn away, he used shadow travel to enter his own shadow before shooting toward her at a velocity far beyond his normal speed.

Despite the fact she was flying, the momentum he had gained from traveling in his shadow alone allowed him to catapult himself far above her before shooting down and slamming his foot into her back and waiting to hear the sound of a crack.

In that instant, her body shot across the city as it slammed itself through several buildings before finally crashing at the bottom of one, just to have it crash upon her, subsequently kicking up a much larger dust cloud than any of the other crashes.

The collapse of one building seemed to create a chain effect, and before Lloyd knew what had happened, he was already watching a large portion of the city turning into dust as they crashed into the ground and killed hundreds of creatures at the same time.

Suddenly, Lloyd appeared before the mosquito queen out of the dust cloud itself. Raising his blade, he was about to go for the strike, but he hesitated.

Was it because she looked human, or was it because she had the intelligence of a human, he didn't know.

"Any last words?" Lloyd asked with a sign of hesitance in his voice.

"Yeah..." She muttered, blood coming out of her mouth and forcing her to cough.

"Go on." Lloyd shrugged, yet his heart beat had begun to speed up while his breath had become ragged. He didn't see killing her as killing a monster. He was it as murder. As if he was killing another of his kind.

Hearing Lloyd's words, she could not help but grin and look him in the eye as if he was the biggest moron in the world.

'Crap.' Lloyd snapped out of it as he wrapped himself in his own shadow and sliced toward the mosquito queen's neck, but it was already far too late.

A circular glow shone through her stomach, and before Lloyd could kill her-

BOOOOOOM

An enormous explosion went off, one that would have evaporated her lake in an instant while incinerating everything and anything around her.

[Mosquito Madness - Kill the mosquito queen: 500 Points]

[1/1 Killed]

[Complete]

[Please vote using your power stones to support this novel if you have enjoyed it so far. You can also use golden tickets if you think that my novel is worthy of it. Thank you]

Chapter 40: Battle Royal [4] - 99.99% [1]

[Thank you, TheWallOfFantasy, for your generous gifts]

BOOOOOOM

A burning wave of flames created out of poison mana exploded outwards in a magnificent explosion that sent a shockwave throughout more than half the city.

However, unlike most of the city, Lloyd took the brunt of the explosion and had it much worse than anyone else.

In an instant, he felt himself being flung through dozens of cement walls, large trees, and even metal doors.

His armor had absorbed a large portion of the attack, and while this usually wouldn't have been enough to allow Lloyd to avoid heat damage, Lloyd had something on his side that almost everyone else did not have.

At that moment, his subconscious activated [4-Dimensional Thought] and accelerated Lloyd's thought process by almost 100x. This activation did rip away a large portion of his mana pool but also made him something different.

Time seemed to crawl to a stop, yet Lloyd felt his thoughts speeding just as fast as they usually did, the only difference now being the fact that he could make hundreds of calculations in less than a second.

His mind began to work, and as if he had done it a million times before, Lloyd used [Flame Control] to move the flames around him with the least amount of mana needed.

In the next instant, he covered himself with shadows 3 times thicker than before while using [Heat Resistance] to tank the rest of the flames on its own.

All he could do now was pray, and pray he did.

"Ugh." Lloyd grunted, his vision shifting between black and red as he struggled to stand up. He could feel pain shooting through every inch of his body as if it resounded in his veins, mixing with his blood and transmitting it to his body with every heartbeat.

'Why do I taste iron? I don't even have blood.' Lloyd complained before spitting to the side to remove the taste, yet it remained in his mouth.

With another grunt, Lloyd looked at his side, where he saw a large cut followed by cracks spreading out from it.

"No blood, but it hurts like hell." Lloyd muttered since that was the only thing he could do. Speaking any louder would have made him feel an insurmountable amount of pain that would have definitely crippled him.

'Why am I still here? Shouldn't I have been kicked out of this place when the explosion went off?' Lloyd asked himself, yet since he knew an answer wouldn't be coming anytime soon, all he could do was speculate.

"My parents will definitely kill me after this." Lloyd laughed before getting up while holding his side as if blood was about to spew when he let go.

Most of his clothes were destroyed in the blast, with only his lower body's clothing still being mildly intact.

On the other hand, his watch was completely unscathed despite being at the forefront of the blast, but Lloyd did not complain. He thought that it might have even been a blessing or a miracle, not that he believed in those things.

Taking his clothes off, Lloyd put on a new pair of pants and a jacket that was an exact replica of his old one that became ashes barely a minute ago.

'I don't have a shirt, but this jacket should be enough.' Lloyd thought to himself.

However, right before zipping up the jacket, he could not help but pause to admire his look.

"I believe this is what they call 'peak human physique.' Well, something close to it at least." Lloyd muttered in awe of his new condition.

From what he could tell, he was about 6ft 1, and from what he could tell by just looking down, he looked like he was a greek god carved out of marble to look like an unstoppable force.

His body, from head to toe, was covered in bulging muscles. They weren't too big, yet at the same time, they weren't too small. The body of a martial artist. A body that forms every single muscle with a purpose. Both flexible and agile, yet strong and tough.

The perfect body.

"He's over here!" A voice entered Lloyd's ears, and from how far the sound seemed to have traveled, they were about 5-300 meters away from him and moving fast.

Another grunt left Lloyd's mouth, yet he did not waste time zipping up his jacket and simply took out a pair of weapons from his watch.

These were weapons he had never used in battle before, yet since he couldn't find his katana anywhere, they were the next best things.

Two short words, no longer than an arm yet no shorter than one's forearm.

"Ugh... These bastards have to come at the worst time, don't they?" Lloyd muttered to himself while standing tall. It was only then that he realized that he was on the 7th floor of a building, but he couldn't care less.

Gritting his teeth, Lloyd cursed his luck and jumped out of one of the buildings with two blades in his hands and a pair of violet eyes glowing more violently than ever.

Boom

Landing, Lloyd kicked up a dust cloud that caught the attention of everyone in the area.

"I know I said that I wanted to get your attention-..." Lloyd spoke through gritted teeth, pain shooting through his body more than ever.

"But this many?" Lloyd asked, his tone seemingly flabbergasted by what he was seeing.

More than 4 dozen people looked at him like he was prey, and to make the situation even worse, he was injured to the point that anyone else would have fallen unconscious at this point.

"He's over there!" One of them shouted, his voice filled with so much excitement and fervor that it immediately got on Lloyd's nerves.

"We can see that, you idio-"

Boom

Without warning, the man was forced to stop as he watched his fellow comrade get a foot planted onto his mouth before being launched into a building in the distance.

Silence fell upon the battlefield, yet Lloyd had every intention of it settling that way. At least until the rest come to claim his points.

While Lloyd hesitated for a moment, he snapped back to reality and forced himself to do what he had to. This was the first time he had ever fought humans seriously with the intention to hurt them, and despite still struggling with it, he knew he had to do this no matter what.

'It's okay. just think of them as monsters. Goblins... Yes. These people are goblins. Disgusting and filthy goblins. They are nothing but Goblins, and I can kill goblins. I can kill these people, because-...

They aren't human.'

DOOOOOOOOM

Without any intention of holding back, Lloyd let out all his frustration, anger, and overwhelming pain in the form of unbridled bloodlust. A bubble formed and expanded outward from where Lloyd stood, making everything inside it invert in colors before suddenly becoming black and white with particles of violet energies floating around.

The people around Lloyd were weak, and he knew and was more than willing to take advantage of that fact. Well, at least until the others came.

Suddenly, however, Lloyd's bloodlust disappeared alongside him without leaving a single trace. There was a second where almost everyone breathed a sigh of relief, yet releasing someone from bloodlust is like letting a hostage go.

It's like showing someone a ray of hope at the end of the tunnel.

DOOOOOM

While releasing it just a second later is like shooting the hostage in the head just as they begin to run toward the exit. Killing them the moment they felt hope and crushing it where it stood.

Every single one of them went pale, yet only one dreadful scream could be heard as Lloyd swung his blade horizontally to slash right through one of the men's necks, killing them on the spot.

Well, at least that would have happened if a yellow barrier hadn't suddenly appeared out of thin air, not only blocking Lloyd's blade but also collapsing to teleport the man to safety.

'So the process is painful despite being harmless. I see.' Lloyd thought with a smile crawling up the corner of his lips.

Lloyd's jacket fluttered in the dreadful winds that sent a shiver down the spines of almost everyone in that area. All they could do was watch Lloyd; his silhouette became a blur as it moved around, cutting down everyone in its way.

Those who tried resisting would only scream more in the end, while those who accepted their fates lay on the floor, wailing as the bloodlust entered their minds and made them almost go mad with thoughts they would have never had pass their minds in a million years.

Eventually, there was only one left.

Lloyd didn't bother slicing at his back or trying to decapitate him. Well, to be precise, Lloyd wanted something else.

"W-W-Wait! Please! I beg of you! Spare me! I can be helpful! I can help you! J-Just don't kill me. I have to get into the academy. Please!" The man pleaded while slowly crawling away from Lloyd.

His face was pale, and every inch of his body shuddered in fear.

"Hmm?" Lloyd tilted his head slightly before a chuckle left his mouth.

The pain was no longer as prominent as earlier, so Lloyd was capable of thinking with a little more clarity.

"Who said i need a servant?" Lloyd raised a brow.

"Then I can be-"

Slash

"AHHHHHHHHHHH-"

20 Minutes had passed in the blink of an eye, yet the situation had changed.

"So you guys must be the top 10, right?" Lloyd asked from the middle of a lake where he stood upon one of the many floating dead mosquitoes.

"What is the meaning of this?" One of them asked as he stepped upon the water, yet instead of dropping inside the lake, it seemed like the water supported the weight of his body.

"Killing so many of these monsters on your own is an impossible act. Who are you working with?" Another asked before using the mosquito corpses to cross the lake.

"You do understand that we are all assassins, correct?" A girl with cyan hair asked mockingly as she formed air below her feet and floated a move to the lake.

"I am aware." Lloyd smirked.

"Then you are not only a lousy assassin, but you are also a fool." A British man with a magnificent mustache sneered, yet this only caused Lloyd to look at him with amusement as if they were simply children in his eyes.

"Lousy and a fool? Is that really what you see?" Lloyd chuckled, yet his demeanor took less than a second to drop into a menacing smile.

"You might call me foolish, but what I'm presenting to you, morons is the utmost confidence." Lloyd roared out before taking off his jacket and letting it fly into the wind picking up.

"Are you trying to show off?" One of the girls asked, her voice seemingly unamused by what she saw.

On the other hand, the men could not help but squint their eyes at Lloyd as they saw his upper body in its full glory.

Every male has some kind of appreciation when they see the muscles of another.

It usually comes off in two forms. Either respect or jealousy. And in that very moment, every man who saw Lloyd could not help but feel an ounce of respect towards him, as if they understood the dedication and time it took for him to gain what he has now.

"What are you waiting for?" Lloyd roared as killing intent exploded out of his body and flooded the lake.

"Do you not want to win?" He asked, his arms open wide without a weapon in his hands.

SWOOOOOOSH

The sound of 10 figures ripping through the air entered Lloyd's ears, yet one of them was far faster than the rest, and Lloyd could feel it.

Without skipping a beat, Lloyd turned around and threw a devastating punch just in time for his fist to collide with the dagger coated in lightning.

Yet, despite what it seemed, Lloyd did not lose out in this exchange. After all-

[Commandment: 99.99% - Half-Step First Commandment]