

The Walker Of Voids

Chapter 61: Eternal Autumn [3]

"What do you mean broken?" Lloyd asked with curiosity in his voice, causing both Hima and Roderick to feel slightly surprised. In their eyes, Lloyd was just a kid who was going through the steps of becoming a warrior.

He was green behind the ears, so why was he not scared?

That question went through their minds before they quickly rationalized their thoughts.

'Maybe he's in shock?' Hime thought.

'Maybe he doesn't understand what's happening?' Roderick thought.

"Why are you both looking at me like that. You said the portal is broken, but how is that the case if I can still see it? Does it simply not work anymore? Would it vaporize everything that touches it?" Lloyd asked, causing their confusion to rise a little before Roderick sighed and nodded at Hime.

"To explain as quickly as possible, the portal has become one way. People can enter, but they can't leave. Anyway, while I analyze this portal to find out more, Hime will call the rest of our group to check if our portal is going through the same." Roderick spoke before nodding at Hime who was already beginning to dial a code onto her wristband's projection.

The minutes passed quite quickly as Lloyd sat on one of the taller branches of one of the only trees that hadn't broken down yet. Despite the mountains in the distance blocking most of the view, Lloyd tried to his best to watch the sunset from where he lay.

As the sky darkened further, Lloyd turned his attention towards his watch and simply watched as the time ticked down by the second.

[23D:16H:53M:21S till next Void Walk]

"What are you looking at?" A feminine voice entered Lloyd's ears, yet since he knew that no one other than him could see the screen before him, he simply smiled and sighed-

"Nothing. I'm just reminiscing a little." Lloyd smiled.

"Don't worry; we'll get out of here. I'll make sure of that, okay?" Hime smiled while placing her hand on Lloyd's head, brushing his hair slightly before also looking at the darkening sky.

"It's about to get real dangerous here... I suggest that we start moving." Hime suggested before jumping down and calling for Roderick.

After a few minutes of preparing for departure, they all set off for the distance, trying to regroup with Hime and Roderick's group.

"Don't think I've forgotten about you entering an unauthorized dungeon, by the way. When we are out of here, I will make sure to punish you myself." Roderick complained.

"What planet did you say you were from?" Hime asked out of curiosity as all three of them jumped over an especially large fallen tree.

"I'm from planet Deroxa." Lloyd replied, not used to stating what planet he was from since he hadn't left Deroxa that many times in his life.

"Oh, Deroxa? That's where that one prestigious school is located, correct? The one where that all the higher family children go to, or at least the ones in that live in that star system." Roderick asked while taking a side glance to see Lloyd's expression, yet to his dismay, he saw that Lloyd wore a neutral expression the entire time.

"Yeah, I know a couple." Lloyd replied.

"You go there?" The man asked.

"Just graduated. I took part in the entrance ceremony just a week ago now." Lloyd shrugged nonchalantly.

"Where are you thinking of going?" Hime asked out of kindness rather than curiosity. She didn't care much for human politics and standards, but she always made sure to respect them even if she didn't understand them.

"Well, while it would make sense to join the military academy because both my parents were in it, I've gotten a few sweet offers from other academies so I'm not too sure anymore." Lloyd sighed.

"Your parents were in the military? What did you say your name was?" Roderick asked, a tinge of surprise in his voice since he expected Lloyd to be from a higher family.

Of course, his parents attending the military academy didn't automatically mean they weren't from a higher family. Still, it was also very unlikely to find higher-family

individuals in a military academy, where all were treated equally and only given special treatment for their hard work or amazing power.

"Lloyd Elrod?" Lloyd tilted his head slightly.

"Elrod?" Hime raised a brow.

"You mean, like, Noah Elrod?" Roderick asked with widened eyes.

"Yeah, why?" Lloyd felt even more confused.

"What do you mean 'why.' Noah Elrod is a 4-star general who married a 3-star general and basically retired despite having the ability to possibly become a 5-star general!"

Raising a brow, Lloyd let Roderick speak without being interrupted, but he felt a little shocked on the inside.

While generals, in general, were considered extremely powerful in the past, especially in times of crisis like the Void Walker attack, their power slowly dwindled over the passing centuries, eventually making it. Hence, their position dropped below the status of a higher family individual.

Of course, 5-star generals and above were still considered to be either equal or superior to higher families, yet even that opinion was beginning to shrink.

The problem was that the difference between a 4-star general and a 5-star general was like the difference between heaven and earth, so the fact that Lloyd's father had a chance to become one only served to shock Lloyd while questioning a lot of things he knew about his father.

"The sun had completely set..." Yet before they could finish their conversation, Hime's voice echoed in their ears, and before Lloyd could process her words, another sound entered his ears as it seemingly closed in at lightning speed.

At that moment, Lloyd felt as if his body had moved on its own since, before he knew it, a blade lay in his hands, barely leaving his watch's storage space in time to slash outwards toward the incoming creature.

[Shadow Enhancement]

Shadows enveloped Lloyd's arm, and with a flick of his wrist, his katana clashed against a rusty sickle.

Looking to his side, Lloyd stared into the flaring eyes of a man with a pumpkin head, yet instead of freezing up in shock like most people would have done after looking into its terrifying eyes, Lloyd narrowed his eyes and put more strength behind his blade by turning his body rather than just his wrist.

This sudden movement pushed the pumpkin man back by several meters, allowing Lloyd to get a good look at it before choosing to attack it again.

It was wearing ragged and dirty clothes that a scarecrow would have worn, and while its sickle seemed rusty and only, at a second glance, even a person who hadn't seen a sword could tell you that it was extremely sharp.

Clang *Clang* *Clang* *Clang* *Clang* *Clang*

Clashing blades with the pumpkin scarecrow thing, Lloyd quickly gritted his teeth before submerging himself into his own shadow, something that was much quicker than usual due to the fact that, for once, Lloyd was completely surrounded by darkness.

Instead of appearing behind it and risking a direct attack from it, Lloyd chose to leave his shadow from one of the branches, allowing him to flip above the creature while soaking himself in complete darkness.

[Shadow Sustenance]

A rare burst of energy traveled through Lloyd's body, and as if his mana had veins, a cool energy moved through his body and made him feel full again.

Everything in his body increased, from his mana pool, to the rate at which the energy he had gained from the rabbits was being digested.

However, like there was a block between him and the first commandment, the energy struggled to further his strength.

As if the energy in his body was sentient, it moved to other places in his body that needed help, hastening his mana recovery by several folds while, at the same time, seemingly increasing his mana pool slowly but surely despite it seeming as if his current amount was the limit.

With a new source of mana, the shadow around Lloyd's arm flickered and moved wildly as if it was an entity of its own, yet at the same moment, it seemed to have calmed down and reinforced itself to completing a single task, and that was to empower Lloyd's arm and make his strikes as powerful as ever.

The shadow moved on its own, crawling down Lloyd's back and enhancing all the muscles necessary to keep balance and strike as hard as possible.

As Lloyd was beginning to descend, the creature opened looked up and opened its maw wide while flames gathered within it, yet before it could unleash it-

[Flame Control]

The flames within its maw disappeared as another flame simultaneously appeared on Lloyd's blade.

Lloyd shot toward the pumpkin creature like a meteor from the sky and sliced down with everything he had.

The creature tried its best to block with its sickle, yet after less than a second of struggle, Lloyd's katana had completely cut through the sickle before cleaving the creature's body in half as easily as a hot knife through butter.

Left in two pieces, both pieces began to fall down, yet before they could touch the floor, they had already been engulfed in Lloyd's red and blue flames, turning its body into ashes in a matter of moments and leaving it to blow away with the wind.

"Phew." Lloyd sighed while returning his shadow to its correct place and turning around, but when he did so, his eye couldn't help but twitch.

Before him stood both Roderick and Hime, both of them standing in front of a pile of dead scarecrow pumpkin creatures, all burning on their own flames.

"Damn..." Lloyd muttered, but due to Hime's sensitive hearing, she could not help but giggle at his reaction.

"Don't get too depressed. It's impressive enough that you were able to kill a Mid-stage first commandment creature on your own,, so you shouldn't compare us to you." She chuckled.

"We're both second commandments so don't worry, you did well." Roderick boasted, making a vein bulge on Lloyd's forehead before he finally turned away from the infuriating duo and began walking in the general direction they were walking before they were attacked.

'To be fair, whenever I fight creatures of a higher commandment, I usually rely on my Void Walker abilities, mainly [Aspect of Void]... I guess it feels good to kill a mid-stage first commandment all on my own.' Lloyd smiled to himself.

They continued walking for another hour or two, where they encountered all types of monsters ranging from undead abominations, creatures that looked like they had been

experimented on, and even ethereal-like monsters, like ghosts or wraiths that would attack every now and then.

While Hime and Roderick could have easily killed all monsters encountered, a small part of them was curious enough to allow a monster by for Lloyd to fight. They had seen him use both flames and darkness, and despite not understanding why, they felt like they had barely unearthed the giant question mark that was Lloyd Elrod...

The son of two generals, yet has the eyes, affinities, and class of neither...

A few more minutes passed before they finally saw something in the distance.

"I can smell Felix all the way from here." Hime scrunched her nose in disgust while Roderick chuckled at his comrade.

When they finally came close enough to see the place properly, Lloyd widened his eyes in shock as the view finally entered his eyes.

Mountains of corpses numbering possibly in the thousands lay before him, and on top of this mountain sat a pale, dark-haired beauty, elegantly looking down from her throne of carcasses with her deep red eyes staring deep into Lloyd's very soul.

Despite not having met her or any of her kind before, Lloyd instantly knew what she was, and it was not long before she understood that too.

Lloyd's steps halted, causing the two beside him to turn toward him just in time to see a smile stretch across his face.

"A vampire..."

[Official Artwork for the vampire and Hime in the comments.]

Chapter 62: Eternal Autumn [4]

[Huge thank you to Master_Atlest for his generous gifts]

Lloyd's steps halted, causing the two beside him to turn toward him just in time to see a smile stretch across his face.

"A vampire..." Lloyd muttered, making the two instantly flashback to his reaction when he met a beastkin for the first time. Sighing, they simply stepped aside and chose to let

him get it all out before he went into the camp, where his reaction would definitely be much more intense.

Looking down, the vampire looked into Lloyd's eyes with her deep crimson ones, yet after a moment's pause, a sweet smile stretched across her face, making the two beside Lloyd feel a shiver go down their spines.

"And who are you?" She asked while appearing before Lloyd in the blink of an eye. Her eyes narrowed dangerously while her aura exploded, making even the likes of Lloyd to freeze in her presence.

"L-Lloyd E-Elrod at your service." Lloyd stuttered while trying his best to look into the woman's eyes.

She was tall, standing around 6 feet tall, yet Lloyd suspected that an extra inch or two might have come from her heeled boots.

Despite not being taller than Lloyd, he could not help but hunch a little as his body tried its best to make him look small while still remaining standing, making her seem much taller than she actually was.

It would not have been an exaggeration to say that she was a Gartia-shattering beauty, and to an extent, she quite literally was.

When it came to her, the saying was no longer a saying since Lloyd did not that she might have caused a few wars by just being alive.

"Elrod?" Her fake yet sweet smile disappeared and was quickly replaced by a more inquisitive one, yet despite everything changing, her aura remained dominant like a tiger in the middle of a pack of bunnies, while her stare remained like that of a serpent's, ready to strike at a moment's notice.

"Do you happen to know Noah Elrod?" She asked.

"Y-Yeah... That's my f-father." Lloyd stuttered back.

"Oh my... Ana will definitely kill you if she finds out that you came here alone." The woman chuckled, yet Lloyd only raised a brow as he quickly unwound, returning to his untense self.

"You know my sister?" He asked.

"Yeah, I met her a few years back. I believe I am just a little older than you in human years." She smiled as her serpent-like eyes faded, and her aura gradually collapsed into her, yet her presence still remained with enough vigor to probably keep away most creatures under the first commandment.

"My name is Veronica Everdale. Nice to meet you." She stretched out her hand and clasped Lloyd's despite him not having stretched out his own.

Veronica's smile disappeared once again without skipping a beat before she turned around and walked towards the camp, or at least that's what Lloyd assumed since the other two followed her without thinking twice.

"We moved the camp up a little due to uhm... You know." She pointed with her thumb towards the right, and while it was hard to decipher what exactly she was pointing towards, it quickly became obvious to Lloyd.

They were longer walking through a forest... They were walking through a treant's cemetery, every single one of them frozen into the position they were in before death with a clean, almost incomprehensible sword wound going through their midsection.

"Oh, come on, Vee! We can't keep moving camps because you can't keep your hands to yourself." Roderick facepalmed.

"Hey, it's not my fault this forest has a personal space problem." Veronica shrugged unempathetically.

"That's why we ask you to keep your hands to yourself!" Roderick shouted before Hime, her arm around him, and rubbed his shoulder as if she was trying to silence a crying child.

They continued to walk for a while, and while the three seemed to bicker with one another throughout the trip, Lloyd stayed completely silent to the point where they would even forget that he was there.

"You sure are quiet. Hell, I can't even hear you're footsteps, nor do you seem to have a personal scent." Hime commented on drawing Lloyd's attention.

"Oh, thanks?" Lloyd tilted his head, unaware if he was being complimented or ridiculed, yet the latter did not seem to be something Hime would do to him for no reason despite doing it to Veronica without batting an eye.

"A natural assassin if you ask me. Too bad, you're a mage." Roderick laughed while Veronica simply glanced back for a moment to look at Lloyd's reaction

"I'm an assassin type... Don't ask; it's complicated..." Lloyd sighed while the rest descended into an unbreakable silence.

A few minutes later, evidence of human civilization could be seen in the distance, and when they finally reached the group of tents that had been built right next to each other.

"Goddamn it, Vee! What did we say about coming back here!" A masculine voice spoke from within one of the tents before a man with snow-white hair walked through the tent's curtain, his scowl visible for miles as his aura flared without an ounce of it being held back.

The winds quickly picked up, and before Hime could stand in front of Lloyd to protect him from the man's aura-

BOOOM

After hours of watching his every step while being aware of his surroundings, Lloyd found himself on his toes even after being told that he would be protected by Hime and Roderick.

And so, when an unknown figure suddenly lashed out with his aura laced with killing intent, his instincts took over, and within an instant, a powerful, dark, and violet monarchical aura exploded out of his body like a hungry dragon being released from its hell-forged chains for the first time in decades.

His aura was that of an apex predator, and everyone around him felt it, yet not to the extent that people at the same level as Lloyd would have.

Lloyd's eyes glowed violet behind the black and purple fog swirling around him, and despite all of them being much stronger than him, they could not explain the type of dread that washed over their body at the moment.

As if their very instincts had been trained for millions of years to do one thing and one thing only...

To run away from whatever that thing was.

The white-haired man's eyes glowed an ocean blue while his veins moved around below his pale, almost transparent skin, glowing bright red while forming into runes that powered every cell in his body.

"Everyone, stop!" Veronica roared and released her own aura that trumped both Lloyd's and the white-haired man's auras in a matter of seconds.

Hearing Veronica's voice, Lloyd calmed himself down before closing his eyes and allowing them to return to their usual selves.

His aura quickly suppressed itself within him before an apologetic expression replaced his cold and apathetic one, yet before he could bow and ask for forgiveness for his rudeness, the man did not waste a second as he walked up to Lloyd.

In a move that no one expected, the man lifted his foot off the ground and landed a devastating hit on Lloyd's abdomen.

Of course, it wasn't hard enough to kill him or anything, but Lloyd could not help but hear and feel a few cracks spreading through his abdomen while the sharp pain from the hit made him feel a little woozy, yet only for a moment.

'That imbecile. Let's burn him inside out!'

Flipping mid-air, Lloyd got to the appropriate position to land safely, and despite seeing the man line up for another attack, he knew that neither Roderick nor Hime would allow the white-haired man to land another punch. He wasn't so sure about Veronica, but he was sure that she was nice.

'You know we can kill him, right? He is just an Initial Topaz Second Commandment.'

Well, he thought she was nice from the very small and limited interaction he had with her. For all he knew, she might be a serial killer.

Landing on the ground just as they restrained him, Lloyd let out a sigh while rubbing his 'wound,' but after a while of doing so, a thought came to mind.

'Did he just try to attack me with a killing blow, or did he somehow know that someone that hadn't reached the first commandment could take such a hit without turning into a bloody mist.'

Lloyd's anger flared slightly, but after taking a few deep breaths in, he felt a little calmed despite his chest not having moved an inch, simply because he didn't need to move his chest to breathe... Nor did he need to breathe at all.

'Do you ever wonder what would happen to a human body if we were to fill it with void flames? A question that science had not solved yet... How interesting.'

"Hey! It's not my fault the kid released so much killing intent! Get off me already!" The man roared, yet he could not budge from where he stood as he was being held down by both Roderick and Hime.

"Are you okay?" Hime asked with real concern in her voice, completely ignoring the man she was holding down.

"Yeah, I'm fine." Lloyd replied, his eyes glued to the man.

'We should kill him.' A monotonous and emotionless voice spoke in Lloyd's head, yet for some reason, Lloyd felt as if the voice was simply hiding an unimaginable amount of rage behind it.

'No...'

'Why?' it asked.

Ignoring the voice, Lloyd stepped forward and quickly strolled past the white-haired and stood in front of an empty field of orange grass before raising the hand with a watch on it and muttering-

"Open and expand."

A small ball left Lloyd's watch, and right before his eyes, it turned into a medium-sized tent, not nearly as large as the others but good enough for him, or so they thought.

Lloyd glanced back at Hime, and with a fake smile, he spoke-

"I'm fine, don't worry."

Before quickly entering and closing the curtain behind him.

"Thank god I have loaded parents, this would have taken me years to afford." Lloyd thought as he walked through his tent, which now looked much larger from the inside than the outside.

Dimensional Engineering was one of the most up-and-coming jobs around the universe. A job limited to the very small portion of people who have any power over the affinity of space.

The power to make the internal dimension exceed the external dimensions by creating a pocket dimension within the object. It is also the reason why the tent easily collapsed into a sphere the size of a marble without any repercussions.

The wonders of dimensional engineering were slowly lost throughout time as fewer and fewer individuals had the needed class and affinity to fit the job of a dimensional engineer, and even when they did, at that time, they were considered more useful on the battlefield for their war-ending abilities capable of killing millions in an instant.

Of course, this was not the case with Void Walkers, who, throughout the years, evolved to the point where dimensional and space abilities had become a genetic third limb, or that was what the stories said anyway...

No one really knew what happened since the only reliable sources of information were the texts and drawings of ancient civilizations that had been extinct for eons.

All they knew was that the Void Walker race quickly rose to the top, discovering and creating one scientific wonder after the other, easily becoming not only one of the most powerful races in the universe but singlehandedly revolutionizing the entirety of the universe.

Looking around the room, Lloyd's mind raced with calculation and ideas.

He could not understand the scientific marvel before his eyes, yet he did not care all that much.

What caught his attention was how familiar the runes felt to him, alongside how cozy being inside a pocket dimension felt, yet he was quickly snapped out of his daze as a sharp pain reminded him why he ran away from what happened outside.

The inside of the tent was huge. It was possibly 3 or 4 times larger than his own room and about as big as his parent's room, but it still felt like something from another universe.

It had a large bed at the back, a dining area, a wardrobe just big enough to fit a hundred pairs of clothes, and much more, but despite wanting to divulge in whatever was in the room, he walked to one of the mirrors and looked into it.

"I will have to rest a little to heal this wound." Lloyd whispered under his breath while lifting his shirt, yet his eyes widened in surprise when he looked at his abdomen.

A faint light shone from the cracks that were there, and as the already partially sealed cracks faded faster than ever, Lloyd's blank mind was quickly replaced by three words.

"What the f*ck?"

[Author's Note: I'll be locking my chapters soon, so hold on to your fast passes as you might need them (Even though I would recommend using coins since that is the only way I could earn money from this novel, but it's up to you.)

Secondly, massive mass release on the 16th and the 27th of December, as well as the 1st of January. 5 Chapters will be updated on every one of those dates, so you'll get and extra 12 chapters in total. I cannot promise that every single one of those chapters will be the same size as the current ones, but I will try to stick to over 1.2k words per mass release chapter.]

Chapter 63: Eternal Autumn [5] - Elemental Runes

Looking at the swiftly healing wound, Lloyd's eyes narrowed slightly before he finally closed his eyes for what felt like the first time in forever.

Searing pain coursed through his body for a moment, but after a few breaths to calm himself down, Lloyd closed his mind from the phantom pain and tried his best to focus on his surroundings as he had an inkling of what was happening.

'Focus...!' He thought, his worries, pains, and anxieties fading into the distance as his body and mind slowly became numb and limp.

His memories began to slowly disassemble, each of his memories being thrown to the back of his mind, yet his brain activity was beginning to go off the charts for some reason.

When his memories began to disassemble, so did his thoughts, yet instead of throwing them all into the back of his mind, he created a single command and ingrained it into his mind.

Of course, he had no idea what he was doing; he was simply following his instincts. His mind followed a step-by-step procedure that almost felt natural to it, and when the rest of his thoughts finally disassembled, only two remained.

'Find the source.'

[4-Dimensional Thought]

When he opened his eyes, he didn't see the expected mirror he was just facing. No, he saw a dark void. It felt familiar. Not the familiarity of him being close to its elements or anything, but the familiarity of having been there before.

A dark voice filled with nebulas, stars, and galaxies in the distance. It was like the universe had been laid before him, but he was certain that what was before him was not his universe... No, it was not any universe he had ever seen before.

The darkness of the abyss he was looking at was as dark as what one would see if they closed one eye and tried to see through the closed one. It was black, yet it was empty and didn't exist. It didn't make sense, but Lloyd was used to such a thing by that point.

Then it appeared.

4 Runes, 3 of them being close in size while the fourth was 5 times as big as the largest one.

They all seemed to revolve around the larger rune, all three of them forming a triangle around the largest rune while emanating unique energies.

While the biggest rune seemed like a single rune, [4-Dimensional Thought] allowed Lloyd to split it into three different sections, each one of them seemingly representing their own element before combining to create something truly powerful. Something that came together to shine bright violet.

The three runes that floated around the larger rune all also had distinct colors.

The black one that shifted every now and then was the largest and most powerful out of the three. On the other hand, the orange one flared every now and then as tremendous amounts of heat were released from it.

It was less powerful than the black rune, yet it felt more powerful as an offensive Element, while the black one looked more powerful as a defensive element.

Last and by far the least, the cyan-silverish one that crackled every now and then released the weakest energy as it was much smaller than the red rune, coming at about half the size.

Looking back towards the large purple rune, Lloyd stretched out his hand and tried to grab it, and the moment his finger touched one of the rune's lines, a lash of white light blinded him before his vision and perspective returned to that of his laying on the ground while looking at the tent's roof...

But something was different.

'White... Maybe a little beige?' Lloyd thought to himself as his eyes were glued upon a white, cloudy, beige energy that wafted through the room like the smoke from a scented candle.

It didn't move fast enough to alert Lloyd of danger, yet I did not move slow enough to make Lloyd feel a shiver go up his spine. It moved just quickly enough to keep Lloyd completely calm, yet somehow, that was terrifying in its own right.

However, before Lloyd could move from where he lay, he saw another stream of energy come from his right, yet before he could react to the sudden intrusion of his private space, he watched as it entered the last remaining crack on his abdomen, causing a sharp pain to go through it before the wound finally sealed.

He didn't know why, but in that instant, he knew that one part of the purple rune had lit up.

'Dimensional engineering uses spacial runes, and since dimensional manipulation is a sub-ability of spacial manipulation, it only makes sense that one of the main elements that make the void rune is space.

It fuels it, which is the reason why my wounds healed so quickly. My body must have drawn upon the space energy within this tent and used it the best way it knew how.' Lloyd concluded while sitting up and looking around at the energies, yet when he did so, they slowly began to disappear as he lost his ability to see them, yet not his ability to feel them all around him.

Without thinking twice, Lloyd crossed his legs and sat in the lotus position before closing his eyes. Of course, he could not help but flinch a little as the scene of his skin being scorched entered his mind, but he quickly shook his head and focused rather than remind himself of the past.

Hours passed in the blink of an eye, and when Lloyd opened his eyes once more, they glowed extremely bright violet before slowly calming down and returning to their neutral color.

'I completely failed...' Lloyd inwardly sighed while getting up from the floor. He loved the fact that he could sit on the ground for possibly days without getting a cramp or muscle pain, yet a part of him almost missed it.

As Lloyd strolled to the front of his tent, he quickly thought back to everything he had done in his meditation.

'I got really lucky meeting Jack. Without him explaining his technique, I would have never known how to move the energy. Yes, I failed to fully cultivate any of the spacial energy despite spending hours on it...' Lloyd narrowed his eyes at realizing his words, but he still continued-

'But I learned how to circulate mana through my voice body! That's what matters, right?!

Mana channeling, cultivation, and circulation worked differently for most classes, unless the classes were inherently the same. While the more physical classes tend to cultivate in order to increase the strength and durability of their body, emitter classes like mages and sorcerers tend to cultivate in order to enlarge their mana pool.

However, instead of doing what most other people would have done in his situation, he felt like he should put his efforts into something else...

Clenching his fist and taking a 'breath' in, Lloyd felt an energy enter his body, and before he could react to the sudden surge of mana within him, it was quickly absorbed into the orange rune before lighting it up.

'A form of fire cultivation. It uses the elemental particles around me to strengthen the fire rune, and since I can't use cultivation breathing techniques, I just absorb the elements through the pores of my skin which is surprisingly more efficient than I would like to admit.' Lloyd thought to himself while holding his chin.

'Of course, cultivation of different elements depends on many things like talent, environment and available mana, concentration, and comprehension of said element.

If I want to cultivate as fast as possible, I need to study the element and cultivate in areas of high mana and heat since those are the areas where I will most likely find the most fire elemental particles to absorb.' Lloyd concluded, and without skipping a beat, he left his room with his arms to his sides before slowly rubbing his eyes as if he had just woken up.

"Oh, you took your time. What were you doing in there, huh?" Veronica's teasing tone entered his ears as cold breath tickled the back of his neck.

However, instead of focusing on the vampire, that was a mere inch away from biting into his neck, he could not help but frown when looking up.

"Its still dark?" Lloyd asked.

"No. You just slept for a day." A pair of cold hands landed on his body as one caressed up to his neck while the other tried to tilt his head to the side.

"That's unlikely. I slept for about 8 hours, and it took about half the time for the sun to set. Not only that, but if I take into account that this realm feels like an infinite autumn, the nights are going to be equal to or longer than the day." Lloyd muttered to himself for a moment, yet he was quickly snapped out of his daze with the cold breath returned stronger than ever while a pair of sharp fangs pushed upon his skin.

Without thinking twice, Lloyd enveloped himself in flames, an action that caused Veronica to quickly jump back a few steps.

However, after putting her hand in the flame, she swiftly understood that the fire was too weak to hurt her, but now that Lloyd was no longer standing in the same place as before, she felt like the moment had passed.

"Where are you going?" Veronica asked.

Looking back at her, Lloyd's brow raised for a moment, but he quickly answered with a question of his own.

"Where are the rest of your group? And since when did you live here amongst everyone else. I'm pretty sure I saw your tent in the last location."

"Well, I think they are all having a meeting in that big tent. Everyone except Felix. I shoved him into that tent." She pointed with her thumb at a small tent a few dozen meters away from the main group of tents.

Of course, it was still within the mana field, so no monsters could get to it, but it was at the end of the mana field, meaning that if the mana field ever happened to go down, the person sleeping in that small tent would most likely be the person forced to deal with the first incoming monsters.

"We call it the thinking tent. Its where you sit for a few hours to think of your actions." She let out a laugh that would have pulled upon the heartstrings of whoever heard it.

Looking at Veronica again, Lloyd could not help but appreciate how beautiful she looked without her red armor.

She wore a long black dress, yet from the look of it, it seemed like she could turn it into battle-ready clothing in a matter of seconds through a little bit of mana to activate the runes that had been ingrained into the fabric.

Her fashion seemed a little gothic, but that only served to add to her charm.

"Cute dress, right? I look pretty good in it don't I." She smirked and winked.

"I wonder how it works. The craftsmanship on it must be top-class and must have taken forever. The ability to reconstruct a piece of fabric into something completely different is an amazing use of runes." Lloyd replied, causing Veronica's smile to freeze at his convincing acting.

She could never know that he felt even the tiniest form of attraction towards her. That would definitely give her vampire pride a boost it did not need.

Before she could say anything, Lloyd's eyes looked like they had lightened up, and without saying another word, he turned around and strolled past all the tents before entering the largest one.

Separating the curtains, Lloyds stepped in, yet due to his [Soundless Steps] passive, none of them seemed to acknowledge his existence.

From what Lloyd could see, 5 people were sitting at the table as they all argued over each other, to the point where Lloyd couldn't even pick out the words they were saying to piece together what was occurring before him.

The tent looked beautiful, yet it was clearly just a place for them to eat and drink lots of beer after a long and hard day on the field.

Lloyd could see that the inside was about twice as large as the outside, and in all fairness, much larger than his bedroom tent.

Down the middle of the tent lay a long table with 13 available seats, the thirteenth one being at the end of the table and on the other side of where Lloyd sat.

No one was sitting on it at that moment, yet Lloyd had a feeling that the act was more of a courtesy than a need, since there was no way that the two outside the tent were in any way, shape, or form capable of being leaders.

Cough Cough

Fake coughing, Lloyd waited a moment for them to hear him as he entered, yet even then, it seemed like they could not hear a single sound coming out of his mouth

Cough, Cough!

Nothing...

COUGH COUGH

It was like he wasn't even there. And so, he did the only logical thing he could do: raise his hand and point his finger right down the middle of the dining table.

Swoosh

Boom

Without thinking twice, Lloyd shot a flame bullet at the seat at the end of the table; despite not doing much damage, it was enough for it to not only knock the chair back but also somehow catch the attention of everyone at the table, causing silence to finally fall upon the tent.

"Now I understand why Veronica doesn't want to be in here..." Lloyd commented, his eyes narrowed slightly as if he was looking down on the people within the tent as his [Monarch's Aura] only amplified that stance.

"You all complain and scream at each other as if you are back in highschool."

Silence...

That's all Lloyd heard at the moment, and even after he began to walk again, that's all everyone else heard.

He didn't know if they were stupified, flabbergasted, or confused, but it didn't really matter to Lloyd.

He was not about to watch the only group of people capable of getting him out of the dungeon break apart from one another and form distrust. Hell, he could even see Hime

and Roderick, one of the most chill people he knows to date, shouting at two others without holding a single thing back.

Walking to the 'front' of the table where the slightly larger chair lay, Lloyd leaned down, grabbed the chair off the ground, and sat on it without skipping a single beat.

[4-Dimensional Thought]

Lloyd's eyes hazed over while his aura flared.

At the same time, they all watched a serious expression wash over Lloyd's neutral one while his voice became considerably more monotone, but not to the extent of when he becomes Null.

"So..." Lloyd spoke, his violet eyes piercing the room's heavy tension.

"What seems to be the problem here?"

Chapter 64: Eternal Autumn [6] - Unworthy Leader

"What seems to be the problem here?"

The silence continued for a few more seconds, but before Lloyd would be forced to repeat his question, a man stood up from his chair and turned to Lloyd with a piercing gaze, yet Lloyd didn't seem too bothered by it as he returned the gesture.

The man was tall, being a little taller than Lloyd, sitting at 6ft 4 while Lloyd sat at solid 6ft 1.

He had aqua-blue hair, and while the hair made him seem a little soft, his angular facial structure, followed by the scar running through his eye, made him look menacing in his own way.

Like everyone else on the team, he wore a black trench coat that reached his ankles, yet due to him being inside a tent rather than outside, where it was a bit colder, he left his jacket unzipped, showing the military uniform under it that looked almost identical to the one Roderick wore under his coat.

"My name is Lachlan Raven, and I am the leader of this group, and I believe you are sitting in my seat." Lachlan spoke as his aura flared slightly as if he was trying to show it off.

Narrowing his eyes, he continued-

"I don't know who you think you are, barging into our meeting, using your ability in our presence, and taking control of our meeting, but I sure as hell will not be taking any of it." The man growled

"You're the leader?" Lloyd asked in an almost mocking tone that angered the man more.

Lloyd was aware that the man could probably kill him with a single swipe of his palm, but Lloyd was also certain that it would never come to that.

He saw what happened to Felix, so if Lachlan hurt someone as weak as him for a reason that is so petty, he would most likely lose all support from his team.

Not only that, but Lloyd was pretty sure that it wouldn't be hard to replace him, as not only did they have Veronica, who was by far the strongest in the group, but they also had Hime, who, while being a little rash at times, had good battle senses and could very easily lead a battalion to victory.

Lloyd could easily see the problem this group had, and while he might not have the ability to easily fix it, a trend that Lloyd has seen with most of his problems, he knew that he could find a temporary solution, one that had enough of a lifespan to hold out until they are released from the hell-hole they found themselves in.

"Are you mocking me?" Lachlan asked, his voice deep and filled with hatred.

"Since when did the army appoint such hot-headed and easily angered leaders?" Lloyd replied with his own question, yet it only seemed to anger the blue-haired man even more, causing a vein to bulge on his forehead.

"I let you Void Walker-looking child into my camp, and you dare talk to me this way?" Lachlan seethed with rage; every single one of his words was laced with venom.

"You say that you're the one who let me into your camp, but from what I've seen from being here for less than a day, is that you aren't really a leader in their eyes... No one respects you here, to the point they are more than willing to shout at you. Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't you have to raise your voice to be heard?" Lloyd spoke as he leaned back into a relaxing position while a small smile crept up the corner of his lips.

"You might be one of the stronger individuals in this group...

But you lack the confidence, aura, and rational decision-making of a leader..." Lloyd's smile slowly disappeared as his voice became slightly more monotone while the air in the tent shifted.

For a moment, the wind became still, and the room's temperature plummeted.

Lloyd's words lingered in the air for a moment, and before the mood could be broken, a friendly, warm smile appeared on Lloyd's face as he jumped out of his seat and patted Lachlan on his shoulder twice.

"I'm kidding. Why so tense?" Lloyd asked in a cheery voice that felt like the complete opposite of his monotone one.

"I'm just playing around. Of course, your team trusts you. A good leader is one capable of gaining the trust of his group, to the point where they would gladly risk their lives because they know that the leader knows better than they do." Lloyd laughed and stood behind Lachlan before placing his hands on his shoulders and slowly pushing him toward the bigger chair.

Standing behind Lachlan, Lloyd inwardly took pleasure at his confused face, yet without breaking character, Lloyd continued-

"I'm certain the army picked you for a reason. It's not like they would pick you for only your class, family status, political power, and money, right?" Lloyd chuckled, even though he knew he was the only one who was laughing at the situation. Well, that's if he didn't count the vampire.

Looking toward the two he hadn't officially met yet, Lloyd's smile slightly widened.

The first one was a shy girl wearing round spectacles. Her bangs were long enough for her to hide behind, while her clothing and figure were mostly conservative.

She had brown hair that reached her shoulders, and from the staff that lay next to her and the bag hung on her chair, Lloyd easily identified that she must be a mage of some kind, one that would require her to carry books around at all times.

The reason she caught Lloyd's attention first was mostly because she was the only one who shouted to stop the arguing rather than arguing a point of her own.

However, the other one looked pretty normal. There was no real indication of his class and personality other than the fact that he looked pretty athletic, but that was about it.

The boy had spiky red hair and amber eyes. He probably had a fiery nature to him since that is what his affinity seems to lean to, but Lloyd felt 'fiery characters' were things of fiction and didn't really exist in real life.

Looking around for a moment, Lloyd's smile quivered slightly. He was enjoying this way too much, and he knew that.

When he heard that Lachlan's last name was Raven, he instantly thought of a hundred ways to take him down.

'Lachlan Raven... As in the Raven family who was in charge of the Raven academy. It also means that Lachlan has an affinity to shadows and a class to support such an affinity.

Since he became the leader of a group and clearly has no items like an assassin's cloak, a dagger, a wand, a staff, or even gauntlets, it means that there is a high chance that his class has to do with leading units or a class that supports him in doing so.'

"Stop spouting this nonsense! W-What are you trying to say?" Like a child that had just been caught stealing candy, Lachlan stuttered in anger while trying to somehow shift the blame and attention to someone else.

'Think of me like Switzerland. I simply laid the seeds of doubt in their minds. He's the one who's going to cultivate these doubts into a magnificent tree with his own actions. Just continue acting the fool and let's see how long you hold out.' Lloyd took a step back.

It was never a good idea to get on the bad side of someone's 2 commandments above you, but it was necessary for this situation.

To rebuild something from the ground up, you must knock down whatever remains to create a structure with as few flaws as possible.

Building upon an already ruined tower is like building a castle out of a deck of cards. You're basically asking to be blown over.

"What's wrong? Why does everyone seem down?" Lloyd asked with a voice that feigned genuine curiosity.

However, instead of one of them speaking up, hesitation could still be seen written across their faces.

"Hey, how about we have an anonymous vote? What do you think of Mr. Raven's leadership so far? Think of all the things that make a leader and compliment him a little.

Maybe we should make this a regular thing from now on. We all vote on certain key decisions, while the group's leader votes on the decision made on the battlefield. That seems fair, correct?" Lloyd smiled.

Everyone thought for a moment before they all silently nodded... Everyone except Lachlan, yet despite it seeming like he wanted to say something or lash out in rage, he surprisingly stayed quiet as he tightened his fist to the point where blood began to leak from where he pressed his fingernails into his palm.

'That won't do.' Lloyd thought coldly as he passed out several sheets of paper for everyone to write on.

When they all looked down at their sheets of paper, Lloyd narrowed his eyes before grabbing a chair and sitting at the other end of the table.

The moment Lloyd parted his lips, the room became eerily silent before his voice echoed throughout it, making every single one of them pause what they were about to write and look up from their papers with slightly perplexed expressions.

"Lachlan, its cool to know what others think of you, but the real question is, what do you think of yourself as a leader?" Lloyd asked.

Like a tantruming child, Lachlan was going to throw another fit, yet when he looked into Lloyd's eyes, he could not help but feel his muscles relax beyond his will.

[Void Gaze]

For a moment, the blue-haired man forgot why he was angry, yet as the room became darker and the atmosphere became calmer, memories of his past flashed before him, causing his rage-filled heart to beat in a slow and peaceful rhythm.

Of course, the man before Lloyd was in the second commandment, so Lloyd couldn't hold the [Void Gaze] for more than a moment, yet that was all he needed.

"Do you think that you're a suitable leader? You are responsible for every life currently living in this camp, so do you think you can lead us all. Do you believe everyone here should trust you with their lives? Do you think you can make the difficult decision that none of us can?" Lloyd asked.

"You're green behind your ears. What the hell would you know?" Lachlan replied, yet from the sound of his voice alone, they all knew he had lost some of his confidence.

Even if he still remained the leader from here on out, Lachlan was certain that his influence over the group would be lower than ever before. He knew that he wasn't cut out for the job... But what is he supposed to do? Say he couldn't do it? He is a Raven; how could he take a step back on such a great opportunity?

'Do you believe everyone here should trust you with their lives?'

That question echoed through his mind as he tried to formulate an answer, yet even as he tried to defend himself, he knew that the answer to the question was no.

However, on the outside, his silence was already enough of an answer.

Without wasting any more time, they all wrote down their answers, and after a few seconds, Lloyd stood up from where he sat and collected the pieces of paper before shuffling them behind his back, so no one knew who wrote what.

"I'll read them out now."

[Lachlan isn't a good leader. He might be older than us, but he is rash and never thinks of his actions' consequences.]

[Lachlan's leadership is weak at best. He tends to make a lot of mistakes, and he has a lot less experience than many of us. I believe that the only reason he is the leader is because of his family's influence]

[Lachlan is a good person if you get to know him, but I don't think I can trust him with my life.]

[Lachlan is immature and gets angry quickly. Maybe someone like Roderick or Hime would be a better fit as a leader since they have been in such positions before.]

As Lloyd read out everything, he could see Lachlan slowly shrinking in his seat.

He could only imagine Lachlan's humiliation at the moment to find out that everyone in his group thought of him that way, but could he really blame them?

He knew that he shouldn't have been chosen as the group's leader, yet his pride as an individual with the last name Raven took over his personality.

"I think they have said more than enough." Lloyd spoke as sympathy and compassion filled his voice.

Lloyd knew what he was doing; hell, he had planned it the moment he sat on Lachlan's chair.

Everything from the cruel and cold act he initially put on to the overly friendly one quickly replaced it. He knew that the change would seem off to everyone around him but more to Lachlan.

It would throw him off and subtly make him feel no longer in control of the situation. Now that he wasn't in control, as the leader of this group and a part of a prestigious family, he would try to get his power back through an explosion of emotion, and due to his history, it would most likely be aggression.

And then, finally, Lloyd sat on the other side of the table and switched up again, yet instead of going back to his cold self, he knew that the most efficient way to end this strife would be with the use of compassion, no matter how fake it was.

Talking to his opponent on a deeper level would not only throw him off, but also allow him the chance to blame himself or see the error of his ways. Sitting down and talking to him would also make Lachlan hate him less, making it less likely that he would suddenly decide to kill Lloyd without a moment's thought.

Looking to his left, Lloyd leaned onto the chair on the opposite end of Lachlan while looking Roderick and Hime in the eyes. Roderick's eyes were filled with suspicion, while Hime's felt slightly menacing.

"W-We no longer have a leader..." The brown-haired girl stuttered.

"True!" Lloyd pointed at her and shouted, making her slightly flinch at the dramatic volume increase.

"Some of you also spoke about how others in the team would be better leaders, so why not have a vote. You can't vote for me by the way." Lloyd chuckled at his last remark, yet it only made everyone raise a brow.

"Why not? You have shown great intelligence, why can't we vote you?" Roderick asked.

"Because, as Lachlan said, I'm green behind my ears. I know nothing of strategy, and I doubt you would be able to trust someone so much weaker than all of you as a leader. Of course, I can help from a logistic stand point by explaining probabilities to you guys, but they already have you for that." Lloyd shrugged while most of the suspicion Roderick felt dissipated.

"Veronica. Bring Felix here. We're about to have a vote." Lloyd waved, causing Veronica to flinch from outside the tent's curtains.

"S-Sure." She stuttered before shooting into the distance to retrieve Felix.

'how the hell did he notice me?' She asked herself. She had concealed her scent, mana signature, aura, and presence itself, so how could he know that she was there?

Of course, Lloyd didn't actually feel her presence, but he knew that she was strong enough to hide it from him. That, added to her personality, made it obvious that she was most likely listening in from behind the curtain without actually choosing to enter herself.

When she returned with Felix struggling in her arm, Lloyd waved to her to sit down.

"There are eight of us, but if you exclude me, there are seven. You can't vote for yourself, and you can't vote for me." Lloyd spoke while handing out sheets of paper he found in his storage. Lachlan's eyes widened when he realized that he was allowed to

vote since he was certain that Lloyd hated him and would find any way to stop him from voting.

"We will be voting on a leader. A leader's job is in the name. He is there to lead the group during battle, make tactical decisions on the fly, and get to make the final decision on most occasions when the rest of the team can't come up with one. However, a vote will be held whenever someone demands one. Understood?" Lloyd asked, making everyone nod as they wrote down who they wanted as a leader.

"I will not be sharing who voted for who; the name thing is just to make sure that you aren't going to vote for yourself," Lloyd said while glancing at Felix, who was by far the most immature one in the group from what Lloyd had seen so far, Lachlan being a close second.

'Can't believe these guys are part of the army. Makes them look a little pathetic, to be honest.' Lloyd sighed, but he quickly remembered that everyone who acted so immature was most likely from big families that would have gotten respect outside the battlefield.

After the vote was finally cast, Lloyd looked through all of them and could not help but raise a brow.

'Felix voted for Lachlan?' He inwardly chuckled before continuing-

'Roderick and Hime voted for each other, Lachlan voted for Hime, Veronica voted for Roderick, the girl named Tina voted for Veronica, and that hot-headed guy named Rex voted for Hime.' Lloyd thought.

"I'll tell you the votes from least to most. Veronica and Lachlan both have one vote. Roderick has two votes, while Hime has three. Hime is now the leader of our group." Lloyd announced before glancing at her.

"Do you have anything to say?" Lloyd asked, and Hime nodded.

Standing up, she walked to where Lloyd was and looked down at the table before saying a few words of gratitude while giving a few promises that she would make sure to keep.

At the end of her speech, she said something that made everyone tense up a little, and that was-

"We will start moving at sunrise. The goal is to find the boss of this dungeon and defeat it before the dungeon can spill out onto the planets it opened on. Is that understood?"

"Yes, ma'am!" Everyone shouted at the same time.

[Author's note: Sorry, this chapter is a little longer than usual; I wanted to get the voting thing done within this chapter. Hope you enjoyed it. I would appreciate the use of your golden tickets on my novel, as well as power stones, since they are super helpful in growing this novel.

Also, what do you guys think of me making a discord server? Tell me your thoughts in the comments. Thank you for reading!]