

Brand New 1351

Chapter 1351: The Black Market

"I'm finally done, phew! Thank you for the help so far, Lady Verdant," I said, as I greeted the Druids again. "Are things ready?"

"Yes, most things are completely ready now," nodded Lady Verdant. "It seems you've grown... very strong. I can feel it within you, Planta. Well done."

"Ah, yes, I've used quite a lot of things, not everything, but indeed a lot," I nodded. "I've still saved some more for later, whenever we truly need more strength, to adapt to the threat we're facing."

"A smart choice," said Lady Verdant. "Now then, I suppose you'll be on your way. When is this attack starting?"

"We're doing this at midnight," I said. "So there's still some more hours to go, but it won't be too long, so be on your toes for now, Lady Verdant."

"What a strange saying! What does that mean?" she wondered innocently.

"It means that you need to be wary," the Great Spirit said.

"Oh, very well!" Lady Verdant nodded.

After that, I walked towards Mark, as I noticed he and the rest of my party had also grown considerably stronger too.

"You guys too?" I asked.

"Yeah, we all used what we could to get a bit stronger," nodded Mark.

"Yep, we can't go without some powerup first," nodded Rita. "Anyways, Elayne, you're done too?"

"I'm done, let's get back to the capital." I said.

As we walked back to the capital, my daughter admired my aura.

"Mom, you've definitely gotten stronger, I can feel it within you..." she said. "I can feel the power of the Sword Intent within you, but it has evolved even further... What did you do?"

"Oh, that! I merged it with other Skills, I created something really neat, I think," I said. "I'll show you once the battle begins... But I hope you don't lose focus."

"Sure..."

Once back to the capital, I asked Erdrich where he had seen Julius for the last time, as he was someone important we needed to talk with to use all our coins

"Oh, the little Skeleton Merchant?" Erdrich wondered. "Yeah, yeah, I know where he is, come with me."

"Huh?"

He ended guiding us through the city, near the walls, and where there was a huge crack, unsupervised by the guards, which didn't walk around here that much.

"A crack in the walls? What is this place?" I asked.

"It leads to an underground black market," said Angelina. "It was an interesting place; they sold all kinds of things..."

"Wait, what?! And the Queen doesn't know about this place?" Mark asked.

"Apparently she does I think," Erdrich said. "But I believe even she acknowledges that this place has its uses. We've done some quests for her to spy on suspicious people, and also catching gangs trying to do slavery. It is a good place where dangerous people gather, so it's easy to catch them. But anyways, also a good place to sell and buy goods you don't find anywhere else."

"So Julius came here to look for new items to buy?" wondered Lily. "Is that right? Or did he come here for something else?"

"Well, yes to both," Erdrich said. "Only in places like this can Undead find what they usually seek within the living realm... Souls."

"They sell souls in here?!" asked Anna, shocked.

"Yeah, there are all kinds of sellers, let's go," the necromancer guided us inside.

We walked through the crack and then moved around, walking through the hollow part of the walls, ultimately arriving at a long corridor full of small camps and tents.

Light was dim here, but the place was somewhat illuminated by lanterns and all other kinds of things similar to those.

Here, people of all shapes and sizes were selling items, and a lot of Players were the clients, purchasing stuff they could find in here and not anywhere else, and at cheap prices, sometimes.

"Why do they sell souls here, and how?" I wondered. "I think that shouldn't be legal.."

"It's not, that's why this is the place they sell them," said Erdrich. "We can't do much about it, the Queen doesn't seem to mind either. Most of these souls are from rare or mysterious origins... Let's leave it at that."

"Uh, okay..." I felt a bit nervous here, but I slowly calmed down.

The people in here all looked us in terror, our appearances, height, and auras immediately seemed to be dangerous for them.

Some street vendors outright closed their stalls and ran away, what the hell...

Eventually, we found our little friend.

He was purchasing small white and golden spheres using Gold Coins.

"Hah, first time a skeleton comes to buy me stuff, but you paid so, there you go." The old, suspicious-looking old lady that sold these spheres giggled.

"Thank you!" Julius opened his skeleton jaws and ate the orbs one after another. "Hmmm! Fresh souls, even if those of monsters, they're delectable!"

"Julius! Hey! There you are."

Erdrich called for him, as the little skeleton was surprised to see us.

"Ooh! Lord Erdrich and company, it is nice to see you, it has been a couple of days," the small skeleton carrying a big backpack and wearing a black hat walked towards us, greeting us cordially. "My! But if isn't Lady Planta? I've heard a lot about you lately! It seems that in this past month you've made yourself a great name in these lands! People of all kinds of backgrounds know you and spire to be you, or praise you and your companions as heroes, surprising and amazing!"

"Oh Julius, you flatter me, thank you," I said, feeling relieved he was eating the souls of monsters and not people at the very least. "We were looking for you! Do you still have items to sell for the Nether Coins?"

"Oh yes, the items never run out! Part of the Systems Powers, not mine," he said. ""You see, despite selling items that contain souls and such, I cannot drink or use them myself."

Chapter 1352: Meeting The Little Skeleton Merchant Again

After walking around everywhere and even discovering a new area of the Luminous Kingdom we never knew it even existed, we found our little skeleton merchant friend.

I remember meeting him a while ago when the event just started, he had showed up in my territory and I was a bit doubtful of him and who he was, but he ended being a trustworthy person.

Turns out that, aside from the Undead the Demon King of Death directly controls, there's a whole other population of Undead people in the Underworld.

These people call the Underworld "Netherworld" actually, and even have villages and even nations of their own, although I'm not sure how they work.

Undead, unlike living beings, don't require food, water, going to the bathroom, and perhaps not even sleeping that much, so they're very different.

Our society and lives are shaped by our necessities, where we live, what we need to eat, what we must do to get to those living necessities, and so on.

So I assume that with different necessities, the Undead must have different societies and cultures...

Though, I guess I'm going a bit off-topic.

What I was trying to say is that Julius is a good Undead, just another person in the world.

"We were looking for you! Do you still have items to sell for the Nether Coins?" I asked him, as the intrepid Skeleton nodded, giving me a thumbs up with his bony thumb.

"Oh yes, the items never run out! Part of the Systems Powers, not mine," he said. "You see, despite selling items that contain souls and such, I cannot drink or use them myself, it is a restriction imposed upon me as a Netherworld Merchant Class. In exchange, my supplies are resupplied easily by the System itself! It's nice, isn't it?"

"So that's why you came here..." I nodded. "Do you Undead really need to eat souls though?"

"Not in the Underworld, we can maintain our bodies fine within the Nether," he said. "But when we come to the Living World, we must eat Souls regularly to keep ourselves from crumbling into a pile of bones!"

"Why is that?" Rita wondered, crossing her arms.

"Well, it's because our existences go against the nature of the world of the living," he explained. "The life force everywhere weakens our existences and tries to destroy the link between our souls and bodies."

"Huh, that's quite something... Does that mean that the Demon King of Death would have a terrible time in the world of the living?" I asked.

"Hm, I've never met that being in person," he said. "But I would assume he has ways to counter that effect, most likely through his own Domain or Terrain of Nether. His army all spread this Nether, right? It is a substance that is quite literally the embodiment of death and decay, so when we are within its range or touching it, we Undead feel stronger, and the power of the living world oppressing our existence weakens."

"I see, so that's how it works..." Mark nodded. "Well, we came here to buy stuff, can you let us buy some?"

"Of course! But I doubt this is the right place for a relaxed shopping session," he said. "Shall we go back to the surface? Despite being an undead I quite enjoy the warm sunlight of this world; it makes my bones feel nice and warm."

"It doesn't hurt you?" I wondered.

"Although some Undead may be weak against Sunlight, I am not," said Julius. "It is a perk of being a Netherworld Merchant in service of the System, I have been given various immunities and a strengthened body to move around the World of Living and help Players."

"That sounds really great, honestly," said Anna. "Do all NPC get these privileges?"

"Oh, I doubt it," I said. "But maybe some that are important for certain ongoing events might do."

Once we walked outside of the black market, we arrived in the middle of the city, and we made our way towards an open plaza, with Erdrich by Julius' side, the skeleton wasn't intimidating anymore, as people assumed he was a familiar from a Player, therefore, unable to harm them.

"Very well, we're finally in a nice, open area," Julius nodded. "Here, check my wares for as long as you want. There's a couple of new items I've unlocked after selling and buying products for a while. It seemed that's how I can get to sell more items, interestingly enough."

"That is indeed very interesting... Now, let me see... Oh!"

I quickly saw the huge system window appearing in front of us, showing a list of goodies and my current Nether Coins amount, which was the only currency the shop accepted.

Nether Coins is a reward given after defeating Undead and destroying Nether and Underworld Gates that appear within this "event" which is kind of like an advent of the new Demon King, a World Boss and all of that.

I remember the first time I got mine I spent them all buying very unique items, some of them that strengthened my soul and helped me unlock the SOUL Stat as well.

Now, let's see what else Julius got!

<Underworld Merchant Shop (Special Event Shop)>

{Available Nether Coins}: [138.136]

<Consumables>

[Lesser Phantasmal Soul Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[Superior Phantasmal Soul Elixir (S Grade)] [Price]: [10000 Nether Coins]

[Lesser Necrotic Power Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[Superior Necrotic Power Elixir (S Grade)] [Price]: [5000 Nether Coins]

[Lesser Undead Essence Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[Superior Undead Essence Elixir (S Grade)] [Price]: [5000 Nether Coins]

<Equipment>

[Necrotic Death Dagger (B Grade)] [Price]: [600 Nether Coins]

[Bone Beast Shield (B Grade)] [Price]: [700 Nether Coins]

[Soul Eating Cursed Sword (A Grade)] [Price]: [1000 Nether Coins]

[Life Draining Necromancer Bone Shield (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Soul-Feasting Axe Of Nether Death (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Blazing Phantom Death Flames Assassin Bone Dagger (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Accursed Skeleton Warrior King Soul-Stealing Armor (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Netherworld-Themed Random Equipment Treasure Box (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

Wait, wow, this is more than I remember!

Chapter 1353: Gacha

I glanced at the big Underworld Merchant Shop, which was now filled with many new items!

<Underworld Merchant Shop (Special Event Shop)>

{Available Nether Coins}: [138.136]

<Consumables>

[Lesser Phantasmal Soul Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[Superior Phantasmal Soul Elixir (S Grade)] [Price]: [10000 Nether Coins]

[Lesser Necrotic Power Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[Superior Necrotic Power Elixir (S Grade)] [Price]: [5000 Nether Coins]

[Lesser Undead Essence Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[Superior Undead Essence Elixir (S Grade)] [Price]: [5000 Nether Coins]

<Equipment>

[Necrotic Death Dagger (B Grade)] [Price]: [600 Nether Coins]

[Bone Beast Shield (B Grade)] [Price]: [700 Nether Coins]

[Soul Eating Cursed Sword (A Grade)] [Price]: [1000 Nether Coins]

[Life Draining Necromancer Bone Shield (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Soul-Feasting Axe Of Nether Death (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Blazing Phantom Death Flames Assassin Bone Dagger (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Accursed Skeleton Warrior King Soul-Stealing Armor (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Netherworld-Themed Random Equipment Treasure Box (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [22.000 Nether Coins]

<Skills>

[Soul Manipulation (B Grade)] [Price]: [1500 Nether Coins]

[Necrotic Boost (B Grade)] [Price]: [1800 Nether Coins]

[Undead Creation (1) (A Grade)] [Price]: [2500 Nether Coins]

[Better Undead Creation (3) (S Grade)] [Price]: [10.000 Nether Coins]

[Greater Undead Creation (6) (S+ Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

[Basic Necromancy For Dummies (S Grade)] [Price]: [10.000 Nether Coins]

[Netherworld-Themed Random Skill Book (S Grade)] [Price]: [12.000 Nether Coins]

<Event Treasure Chests>

[Nether Portal Treasure Chest (B Grade)] [Price]: [5.000 Nether Coins]

[Underworld Gates Treasure Chest (A Grade)] [Price]: [10.000 Nether Coins]

[Demon King of Death's Treasure Chest (S Grade)] [Price]: [20.000 Nether Coins]

There were new potions, new equipment, new skills and also random-type items for all of them to get stuff that isn't being sold like that. Also the last section sells me out these Treasure Chests that stopped appearing altogether.

Now I only get coins when I defeat these armies and destroy the portals, it seems the treasure chests being given away for free was programmed for only the beginning of the event, maybe to get Players hooked with the Gacha mechanics of the item.

Now to get more they need to be purchased, the cheapest is five thousand a pop, not cheap at all for most Players that haven't engaged on battles against these armies with thousands of foes at once...

"I also have available for sale the Treasure Chests of the event itself!" Julius said. "Not only you will get a few random items, but you can also get some Nether Coins back as well! The higher the grade of the item, the better the rewards can be! But it's mostly all random, so I can't guarantee you what you want, unfortunately."

"Oh that's alright by me," I said with a gentle smile. "I'm quite tempted with some Soul Elixirs, but I really want the items I got before, the Nether Heart and the Key Fragments. What are their chances of getting them?"

"Of course, the highest chances remain within the Demon King of Death's Treasure Chest! It is the highest quality of all three of them, and only available in my shop, as you cannot get this item otherwise," Julius said. "However, the price is quite expensive, I know. Unfortunately I am not allowed to give discounts or change prices. As this is decided by the System."

"It's alright," I nodded. "Okay, I got... 130k Coins, so let's see... Okay, I'll buy all of it on treasure chests, is that okay?"

"Y-Yes, of course! Thank you for your purchase, madam!" Julius was very happy, rubbing his skelly hands, generating a weird, loud sound by doing so.

Ding!

[You have exchanged 135.000 Nether Coins.]

[You have purchased: [Nether Portal Treasure Chest (B Grade)] X1]

[You have purchased: [Underworld Gates Treasure Chest (A Grade)] X1]

[You have purchased: [Demon King of Death's Treasure Chest (S Grade)] X6]

"Alright, purchased!" I nodded. "Let's see if my luck is on me today..."

What I was primarily looking for were the [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] and the [Underworld Gate Key Fragment (S Grade)] items.

First, the Heart Fragment is part of what the Undead possess, it is a concentration of Nether and Dark Mana they crystalize in their chest, giving them their power and strengthening them beyond their limits.

If I get one myself by collecting three more fragments, it should be possible for me to gain some of the power of the Undead and might even be able to survive in the Underworld without penalties, hopefully.

And then the Key Fragment is pretty much self-explanatory, if I collect three more, I can create a key that'll allow me to open the Gates to the Underworld at any time I want...

This is the way I want to go meet that giant skeleton, by ambushing him and surprising him before he can fully walk out into the surface and fill the entire continent with Nether.

"Open!"

I selected all the treasure chests to open instantly, as I saw them slowly opening, revealing many items inside, several Players, onlookers, stopped doing their own business, looking at what I got with interest.

Ding!

[You have opened the [Nether Portal Treasure Chest (B Grade)] X1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x1000!]

[You received [Novice Necromancer Skull Staff (B Grade)] x1!]

[You have opened the [Underworld Gates Treasure Chest (A Grade)] X1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x3000!]

[You received [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x1!]

Okay not bad, I got a fragment! Two more to go!

[You have opened the [Demon King of Death's Treasure Chest (S Grade)] X6!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x5000!]

[You received [Phantasmal Soul Elixir (S Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Underworld Gate Key Fragment (S Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x5000!]

[You received [Phantasmal Soul Elixir (S Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x5000!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x3000!]

[You received [Phantasmal Soul Elixir (S Grade)] x2!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x2000!]

[You received [Underworld Gate Key Fragment (S Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x2000!]

[You received [Accursed Skeleton Warrior King Soul-Stealing Armor (S+ Grade)] x1!]

"Aggh! I didn't get everything!

Chapter 1354: Gacha Addiction Is Dangerous

I opened all the treasure chests I purchased, and...

Ding!

[You have opened the [Nether Portal Treasure Chest (B Grade)] X1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x1000!]

[You received [Novice Necromancer Skull Staff (B Grade)] x1!]

[You have opened the [Underworld Gates Treasure Chest (A Grade)] X1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x3000!]

[You received [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x1!]

[You have opened the [Demon King of Death's Treasure Chest (S Grade)] X6!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x5000!]

[You received [Phantasmal Soul Elixir (S Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Underworld Gate Key Fragment (S Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x5000!]

[You received [Phantasmal Soul Elixir (S Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x5000!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x3000!]

[You received [Phantasmal Soul Elixir (S Grade)] x2!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x2000!]

[You received [Underworld Gate Key Fragment (S Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x2000!]

[You received [Accursed Skeleton Warrior King Soul-Stealing Armor (S+ Grade)] x1!]

Despite getting so many of the fragments I needed, I didn't get enough to complete any of them!

Now I had three of each, a bunch of Soul Elixirs, and some equipment pieces.

Ugh, can I get a few more treasure chests with the coins I got so far?

Let me see how many I got now...

[Nether Coins]: [29.136]

Uh, maybe if I purchase the lowest ranking one, after all they might have much lower chances, but I get more chances at it than the higher chance ones that are more expensive, right?

"More! Give me more!"

"E-Eh? But Madam, gambling addiction is not something I would ever incentive and-"

"Take the coins and give me all the lowest ranking treasure chests right now!"

"O-Okay!"

Julius screamed in horror at my overly dramatic screams, I might be losing my mind.

But I wanted the damn key!

And I'm going to get it no matter what!

"Here... please have them..."

Ding!

[You have exchanged 25.000 Nether Coins.]

[You have purchased [You have opened the [Nether Portal Treasure Chest (B Grade)] X5]

"There they are... Now don't fail me, Luck!"

Wait, I think I can do something about this.

FLUOSH!

I suddenly unleashed my strongest Aura, combining several skills activations at once, slightly transforming and even summoning my crown, wings made of blades, everything.

"E-Eh? Mom?!"

Elena panicked, as she saw me unleash all my power.

"Don't worry I set a barrier, so Merlinus won't be able to detect me anyways..."

But this, I did it all to get my Luck Stat even higher!

All these Skills and Buffs that increase "All Stats" will also increase Luck Stat.

"Now, let's open them!"

I should have done this way before, but I never thought about it until now.

Dammit, give me what I want!

FLAAASH!

All five treasure chests opened and...

Ding!

[You have opened the [Nether Portal Treasure Chest (B Grade)] X5!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x1000!]

[You received [Novice Necromancer Skull Staff (B Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x900!]

[You received [Death Warrior Axe (B Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x1100!]

[You received [Phantom Hunter Bow (B Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x1200!]

[You received [Phantasmal Soul Potion (B Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x800!]

[You received [Phantasmal Lich Phylactery (B Grade)] x1!]

"N-No way..."

I felt completely destroyed, there was no hope anymore.

"Um, madam, did you thought that Luck Stat affects the item by any chance?" wondered Julius.
"Because it doesn't... The rates are fixed by the system."

"A-Ah..." I felt even more devastated. "Okay then..."

I had to accept I was unable to get it and just move on I guess.

"Sorry for overreacting, I'm stupid."

"Ah, no, don't worry about it."

As I sighed and felt like my plan was breaking apart, Mark stepped in.

"Can I buy the treasure chests too?"

"Huh?"

I looked at Mark, carrying a bag of Nether Coins of his own.

"Me too!"

My daughter also stepped in to buy some more.

"I got some coins on me as well, give me as many of those things, skelly."

Rita then also asked for more of these.

"I have some too!"

Lily as well.

"Uh well, after seeing her like this... Please let me buy some as well."

Even Angelina?!

"Everyone..."

I felt moved as they smiled at me, and Julius happily sold them the treasure chests.

"Of course! Please have them! I have an endless supply from the system!"

More people gathered around us, not only Players but also the NPC seeing as everyone started opening the treasure chests, trying their luck.

"There, I got a Heart Fragment!" Mark said. "Love, there you go."

He gave the fragment to me without even hesitating.

"Mark... Thank you..."

I felt a bit moved.

"Mom, I got another key fragment after I opened all of the ones I bought. Is this what you needed?"

My daughter also gave me the fragment.

"Really?! W-With this we got the key completed! And the heart! Ah, but even with one heart, not everyone will be able to-"

"Hey, I got a bunch of heart fragments!" Lily said. "I must've been lucky!"

"Got a couple myself," Rita noted.

"Me as well," said Angelina.

"I got only one..." said Erdrich.

"Ah! Got three! Nyahahahaha!" Anikitty giggled.

"I got one as well..." Anna said. "Is this useful somehow? Why did your mom want them so badly?"

"W-With this..."

We ended calculating how many fragments we got, it was enough to create four hearts!

It was enough to create four, so that meant four of our members could go there without suffering from penalties.

Better than I expected!

However, who are we going to choose though?!

Should it be me, Mark, Rita, and... Lily?

Or maybe my daughter?

Wait, what about Angelina or her group?

We can't exclude them.

Or maybe give it to an NPC...

Erebus?

"What?" he immediately noticed I was glancing at him while squinting my eyes. "I don't suffer penalties in the Underworld, my own Demon King Miasma protects me easily, also I'm practically immune to Nether."

"Oh..."

He was pretty OP, that's so unfair!

...

Maybe I'm not the best person to be saying that though.

Chapter 1355: Underworld Gate Key

Once we were done, and because we were making a lot of ruckus, we decided to move back to Ambil's home, which had pretty much become our headquarters. The house wasn't big enough for our entire squadron to fit in, but we moved quickly to the underground area, and then decided to give a visit to the Cloudia Fragment Realm while we were at it, which is enough of a nice place to stay.

Little Titania was happy to receive us, inviting us inside the moment we showed up. Her large castle made of wood was inside of the tree of Yggdrasil itself, and her "siblings" the other Divine Beast Guardians were also there, adorable and cute in their baby forms.

To think all of them have now become Time Spirits is interesting, does that mean I could even summon the baby forms of the guardians as Time Spirits? I wonder what abilities they got... I had summoned Little Titania yesterday in Earth and it worked just fine.

"Hello everyone! Welcome back!" she said happily. "I'm glad you've visited me again! Please have some tea and fruit!"

She happily brought us tea and a lot of fruits, allowing us to relax in here, where nobody would come to annoy us.

"It was really entertaining when you summoned me yesterday, auntie Planta!" she said. "We killed a lot of evil ants!"

"Huh? You summoned her yesterday?" wondered Angelina.

"Yeah she summoned me in the..." Titania was about to talk, but I stopped her.

"Yeah, yeah, yesterday!" I nodded. "She helped us hunt some monsters... attacking the forest. Anyway, let's combine the fragments and decide what to do with the hearts..."

We placed the items above a wooden table, as Titania glanced from a distance, feeling the auras of these items, they reeked of death and nether, so she obviously felt they were intimidating.

"Um, what are those items?" she wondered, her voice was trembling. "T-They're so scary looking! They're bad news... I just know it!"

"C-Calm down a bit," I said. "It's alright, they're below our control. They're items we'll need to use to confront a Demon King."

"Oh wow... But how?" she was very curious because she was a child.

"Like this, let me show you," I said. "Combine Items."

With a simple command, the items were combined together.

Each fragment of the hearts came together into a heart-shaped object, rapidly overflowing with a nether power.

FLAAASH!

Ding!

[You have combined the Items: [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x4!]

[You have created the Special Item: [Necrotic Death Heart (S Grade)] x1!]

[You have combined the Items: [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x4!]

[You have created the Special Item: [Necrotic Death Heart (S Grade)] x1!]

[You have combined the Items: [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x4!]

[You have created the Special Item: [Necrotic Death Heart (S Grade)] x1!]

[You have combined the Items: [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x4!]

[You have created the Special Item: [Necrotic Death Heart (S Grade)] x1!]

Each of these were hearts made out of a black stone-like material, and at the center there were blue crystals overflowing with phantasmal flames.

They floated around and responded to my will moving around, Titania cried in surprise as she felt their deathly presence.

"Such powerful items full of death!" she cried. "A-Are they okay to use?! Won't you die?"

"It's alright..." I said. "I guess we can decide who'll use them later, I will save them. Is everyone okay with that?"

"Yeah go ahead," nodded Mark.

"Sure," my daughter agreed.

"It's alright," Angelina nodded. "I am sure everyone else agrees."

Her party was fine with it too, and also everyone else of my friends.

"Then we'll save them," I nodded, putting them inside my inventory. "As for this..."

FLUOSH!

All four key fragments converged, forming a huge black key, it was longer and bigger than I imagined, almost as big as a sword...

Was this really a key and not a weapon?

Ding!

[You have combined the Items: [Underworld Gate Key Fragment (S Grade)] x4!]

[You have created the Special Item: [Underworld Gate Key (SSS Grade)] x1!]

[Underworld Gate Key (SSS Grade)]

A Special Item that leads to the Underworld. A Special Key that can be used to open the Gates of the Underworld, allowing you and your Party to explore the completely new Map of the "Underworld" a Realm the same size as Arcadia with its own zones, cultures, NPC, Monsters, and Quests to find, and also the Realm where the Demon King of Death reigns supreme.

This Item can be used up to 4 Times before it disappears, the Gate remains Open for 1 Hour before it closes again. Those that can enter through the Portal can only be allowed by the Key Holder and have no limit, and once the Key is obtained by someone, it cannot be stolen or taken away, and it is an indestructible item.

While being inside of the Underworld, all non-Undead and non-Demonic type Players, NPC, and other beings will be weakened due to the Nether in the environment, and their Health Points will gradually decrease. Domains, Terrains, and Auras that are not of Death or Demon-type will be rapidly eaten away by the Nether in the environment as well.

"Huh, so this gives us a lot of insight about what's in the Underworld," I said, showing the key's description to everyone.

"Apparently we'll be weakened a lot, huh?" Angelina wondered. "I guess Erdrich will be the only one that'll be fine... And maybe Melisa and Erebus."

"Yeah, everyone else will be subjected to decreased stats and health being taken away over time..." I said. "Also my own Domains might also begin disintegrating very quickly, so I won't be able to solve this problem... too quickly. If we use the Heart, we won't suffer penalties though but the Domain problem remains..."

But what if I use the Qliphoth Staff though? Maybe that power of twisting nature upside down and darken it into decay which I can control might be the solution?

We'll have to see once we actually go, which will be for later.

Chapter 1356 Meeting Brisingra Again

"I guess we'll be able to decide what to do once we get to that point," Mark said. "For now, let's concentrate on the present."

"Yeah, you're right," I nodded.

"Right, so mom, I was thinking if we could ask the help of the Time Spirits too?" wondered my daughter. "Seeing how Acorn and Nieve went to request the help of the Forest People and all."

"Wait, the people of this Realm?! But... I don't really want to risk their lives," I said. "Also it's unknown what'll happen if they stay for a prolonged period of time in here."

"Still, you can summon them right? With a Time Spirit Spell," said my daughter.

"Yeah, I guess..." I nodded. "But I think I could only summon one at a time, unfortunately."

"Ah, bummer..." my daughter said. "If we had Time Spirits helping us all, it could make things easier with their time abilities."

"I know, unfortunately I don't think it's possible..." I said.

"You're fighting a big bad?" wondered Titania. "I want to fight too! Please let me help! It's the least I could do after you saved our world!"

"A-Ah, well, if I can, I'll summon you," I said. "But no promises, okay?"

"Hmm... If you summon me, then I'll bring everyone along!" Titania suddenly had a strange idea. "You can only summon one-person, right auntie? But if I bring everyone along as my friends, maybe we can bypass that limitation!"

"How could that work?" wondered Mark. "Even if you tried... it'll still make more than one person."

"I-I'll make it work!" Titania said valiantly.

"Ah, well, don't overexert yourself," I said. "You've done more than enough already, little Titania."

"Hmph...!" she suddenly pouted. "I don't like when people look down at me because I'm a kid! I-I can help and make a difference!"

Well, I guess she could?

"We'll trust you then," I nodded. "Do your best."

"Okay!" she said confidently.

After that, we decided to move to Cloudia, where Brisingra was.

We wanted to go meet her and tell her what we were going to do.

We weren't going to invite her to this fight, but I thought she needed to know these things anyways.

We reached the city above the skies, people were living their normal lives, unaware of the world outside and its chaos.

"Oh, it's Planta, our hero!"

"Welcome back!"

"Titan and the others are with her!"

"It's rare to see them here!"

"Hello!"

People greeted us and called our names; we waved our hands. They seemed strong, but I don't know if they would be as powerful once they stepped outside of their Realm.

We moved towards Mercedes' house, which we knew where it was, and we knocked at the door. We heard footsteps approaching and then, Mercedes greeted us with a surprised expression and then a gentle smile.

"Oh! Planta and everyone else! W-Welcome back! I didn't expect you, but you're welcome. Please come in!"

She opened the door and let us in, as we thanked her.

The house looked almost the same as before... I don't know why it feels like a long while since we've been in here, even though it wasn't even that long.

"Thank you Mercedes," I said. "How have you been so far?"

"Yeah," Mark nodded.

"Oh I've been fine, I've been moving on by now, slowly processing what happened..." Mercedes sighed. "My daughter's been alright as well, she seems happy every day, and she brings me more joy than I imagined... she has been telling me so many tales of... me and her father, of the future and all of that. Brisingra has been keeping me really good company."

"I'm glad to hear that..." I said with a nod. "I was wondering where she is right now... We wanted to tell her a few things before we go."

"Ah, of course, she must be in her room," nodded Mercedes. "Wait a bit."

She rushed upstairs and knocked at the door, as I heard Brisingra's voice, and a lot of clanking sounds, it seemed she was making trinkets.

"Planta and everyone's back?! Oh!"

She ran downstairs, her mother following her, as she greeted us happily.

"Everyone! Hi! I sure didn't expect a visit, I'm sorry, I was busy crafting some stuff," said Brisingra.

She looked much more vibrant then before, radiant even, her Aura had... grown stronger somehow. It seemed she had been growing stronger in here.

I could even feel... Spiritual Time Essence flowing through her body and her Aura!

Was the Realm assimilating her over time or... giving her powers because of her mother?

Last time I checked, the Realm shouldn't be capable of making other living beings' spirits, only those that were pre-existing of this world.

So it shouldn't be the former, nope.

Then she's... gaining power.

But how? This is because of her connection with Mercedes as "her daughter from the future"?

Technically, if that's the case, then her being from the future itself and this connection is what has awakened some sort of Time Magic Affinity.

So even a concept such as "being from the future" can give someone affinity with Time... It's strange how these things work sometimes.

"Brisingra! Hey, you seem stronger than before," I said.

"Yeah! What with that aura?" wondered Mark, laughing.

"You've become stronger?" Angelina asked.

"Eh? Me?" Brisingra wondered, seeming rather confused. "But I haven't even hunted monsters lately... Do I really look stronger? That's odd..."

As she wondered that, her Aura only grew bigger...

FLUOSH!

It seemed all-encompassing, and it even carried Divinity within it.

What in the world is going on with Brisingra?!

"A-Are you sure you don't realize?! Look at your own aura for a bit!" I said.

"Huh? What are you on about..." she glanced at her own aura and squinted her eyes. "I don't... Huh? Wait that's my Aura?! I thought it was my mom's presence that..."

"No, in fact your mother has a smaller aura now..." I said.

"I think I know what might be happening," nodded Mercedes. "Brisingra is my daughter. Then as an Ancient Elf, she must've awakened her Time Magic Affinity by staying in this Realm for so long, which had become a Realm of Time. Maybe because she was half-dwarf, this affinity had been dormant, but now, it is fully awakening... and perhaps being half-dwarf too, is what has made her so strong."

Chapter 1357 A Small Talk

Brisingra's new Aura was surprising beyond belief, the power of Time and even Spiritual Time Essence flowed through her, but she wasn't a Time Spirit at all. I am fairly sure that before, she had no such powers, but right now it seemed as if she had been unaware of its growth and further awakening the more time she spent in this Realm.

When we told her about it, she took a bit to realize her Aura had changed, it seemed it had become something so natural to her she was completely unaware for some bizarre reason. Maybe because the Realm itself did it? So it felt as natural as breathing air... Maybe.

"Huh? What are you on about..." she glanced at her own aura and squinted her eyes, she looked confused about our own question, thinking we were talking nonsense.

However.

"I don't... Huh? Wait that's my Aura?! I thought it was my mom's presence that..."

She had confused it with her mother's presence this entire time?!

What do you mean with that, Brisingra?

This girl...

"No, in fact your mother has a smaller aura now..." I said. "What's this? So weird... How couldn't you realize this, Brisingra? Hahah..." I ended laughing because it was a bit unbelievable.

"I think I know what might be happening," nodded Mercedes, glancing at her daughter with a slightly worried expression, but still smiling proudly of her strength.

"Brisingra is my daughter. Then as an Ancient Elf, she must've awakened her Time Magic Affinity by staying in this Realm for so long, which had become a Realm of Time. Maybe because she was half-dwarf, this affinity had been dormant, but now, it is fully awakening... and perhaps being half-dwarf too, is what has made her so strong."

"Eh? Really? So I could also wield the Time Magic you can use, mom?!" Asked Brisingra. "I had no idea! This is amazing! Imagine all the things I could do with it..."

"Well, Time Magic manifests differently with each person," her mother said. "It probably won't be everything you think it could be... Sorry."

"A-Ah..." Brisingra's hopes quickly pummeled.

"But wait a second, I think there's something deeper to this," I said. "Yeah she must have awakened her powers and all, but it also feels different... this is not just magic anymore. There's spiritual power within her. As if she were a Time Spirit, or... half of one."

"Huh? But that's..." Mercedes remained in silence for a moment. "Right! I had completely forgotten. But didn't every person in this Realm become Time Spirits because we belong to some sort of Record of the Past now brought to the Present?"

"Yeah, kind of," I nodded.

"Then this means that..." Mercedes paused for a moment. "Could it be? Maybe the world... this Realm, is recognizing Brisingra as my daughter. And because I am a Time Spirit now, as my daughter, she's also becoming one. Her father remains alive in the present, isn't it? Therefore, only half of her is becoming a Time Spirit, amazing."

"I-I'm becoming a Half-Time Spirit?!" Brisingra almost fainted. "N-No way, does that mean I won't be able to get out of here? I still want to visit dad and..."

"It's fine," I said. "Nothing bad will happen, Brisingra, calm down. And it's mostly just great news! It means you'll awaken to greater powers, and become more attuned with the world as a half-spirit."

"Ooh..." Brisingra nodded. "I-I am not so sure though... but thanks. Anyways, I heard you wanted to talk about something in specific, Planta?"

"Oh yeah, let's talk a bit..."

We drank tea made by Mercedes as we explained Brisingra what we came here for, regarding the big battle that was approaching, and everything else, and the dangers that it involved.

"Y-You're fighting against that monster?" she muttered. "But that's..."

"We've prepared a lot," I said. "So I believe we got a decent shot at it... Also Fafnir had showed up again as I told you, but he's been taken care of, permanently now."

"I see... I wish I could've been there... to get back at him," sighed Brisingra. "But well, it's already in the past, I suppose."

"So yeah, we wanted to tell you that," I said. "That's all. We weren't going to invite you to fight or something else, so don't worry. I know you want to be with your mother and that's alright with me."

"Uh, are you sure?" asked Rita. "We could really use her help, her barriers and her new time magic-"

"It's fine," I said, noticing Brisingra was too nervous and insecure. "Unlike Players, Brisingra cannot revive. I wouldn't want to put her into danger anymore."

"Planta..." Mercedes looked at me with a slight amount of sadness. "Thank you... My daughter might not want to fight, but I do. If you can, I wouldn't mind if you summoned me."

"E-Eh? But mom!" Brisingra complained. "What if you die?! I don't want to lose you a second time!"

"...I just feel like I need to do this, Brisingra," said Mercedes. "It's the least I could do for Planta. And also to fend off such a monstrous evil like Merlinus, a man that has even toyed with the power of various Demon Kings, and is trying to become one himself... It makes me feel bad of how terrible we left the world for the present to give birth to such a monster, a human no less, a race that we will nurture into a prosperous civilization in the future..."

"..." Brisingra remained in silence, her hands were trembling.

She was a princess at the end, not a warrior, and I won't force a child to fight a war where she doesn't belong to.

This is our responsibility after all.

"It is alright," I said. "Thank you for your time, take care. Brisingra, please be happy."

I smiled at her, patting her shoulders.

"Planta..."

She started crying a bit.

"I'm sorry..."

"It's fine."

I patted her head, giving her a kiss in her forehead.

"I'm glad you're fulfilled and happy here, so don't worry about a single thing." I smiled at her. "Let's go, everyone."

We walked away without saying anything else.

It was their life, and we had no right to force them to risk it for

Chapter 1358 Yggdrasil And Erebus 1

After being done with Brisingra's and her mother's case, we moved back to the Verdant Continent within the Realm of The Past. There, I decided to speak with Yggdrasil herself, who was alive and kicking just fine. Her tremendous divine powers, which I had experienced once when we talked, remained intact.

Meaning that similarly to Lady Verdant, Yggdrasil was a Goddess born from this Realm itself. Even if turned into a Spirit of Time, her nature and powers remained intact, completely at that! So, although I won't ask the help of just Brisingra, it wasn't the same for someone like Yggdrasil.

"Eh? You want to talk with mama?" Little Titania wondered. "But she's sleeping."

"I'm sure she'll wake up once I touch her," I said. "Would you let me have a word with her?"

"Ah, sure!" she nodded. "Go ahead!"

"Alright, thanks."

I walked towards the deepest area of Yggdrasil's interior, finding her primary roots which flowed with tremendous quantities of divine spirit energy.

She fueled the entire continent with life, cleaning it from the darkness and miasma that Erebus in the past had left in here.

Erebus, of course, was by my side as well.

"T-This place is..." Erebus muttered. "I can't believe it, are we really in the past? This is the original Yggdrasil?! Your predecessor..."

"Yeah," I nodded. "She's a representation of Yggdrasil's Past, a Living Record given physical form. I wanted you two to have a little conversation, and also ask for her help in the incoming battle... and maybe the next ones as well."

"That's..." Erebus fell into silence the moment I said that he didn't even know what to say.

Once we got there, I touched the wooden walls, which constantly glowed with golden colors and green spirit energy, constantly flowing with life.

"Yggdrasil, I'm back."

I touched her gently, caressing her hard bark.

And right after that.

FLAAASH!

The interior of her body started glowing brightly, illuminating the dark areas with pure spiritual white and golden light, and sometimes even green.

"A-Ah... Yes, this feeling... that's definitely her..." Erebus muttered, feeling surprised. "Yggdrasil, born from the Yggdragon's body once the battle between my original, unfragmented self battled him. And the one whose roots I ate, and whose children I corrupted..."

Erebus gritted his teeth, feeling frustration over his own past, and ashamed of being in front of the victim to his madness.

"So you've come back."

Her voice was all-encompassing, reverberating through every angle, she spoke through every single inch of her wooden body.

Every time she did, her wooden body would glow with different colors as well, making everything even more surprising and incredible to witness.

"Yes, I've come back, Yggdrasil," I said with a nod. "It has been a bit since we talked."

"Indeed," she said. "You've evolved, reaching a stage even further than the Yggdragon... You've already become your own being, and you may continue evolving into something even further beyond the Origin and Legacy you inherited from the me of the future."

"It does seem to be the case, my predecessor," I said with a nod. "This here is Erebus, the Demon King of Miasma and your former enemy, in the future, after I defeated him with the help of many allies and the sacrifice of your child, I reincarnated him."

"A-Aaaah...!" Erebus panicked, screaming a bit as he felt Yggdrasil's presence constantly inspecting every inch of his existence.

I decided to be very blunt and direct with her, because from what I've analyzed, she was already a very serious being.

"...I see."

She didn't react with anger or hatred, as I expected.

"So this is what has happened to his future..." Yggdrasil said. "I... I'm glad, Erebus."

"H-Huh?!" Erebus gasped in disbelief.

"I'm glad you've turned on a new leaf... Your body, it is the one born from Planta's true body, isn't it? My successor's body is the same as mine," she said. "Therefore, you were reborn with a body made by mine, as my child, a Fairy."

"T-That's..." Erebus muttered, feeling confused. "You don't hate me?"

"...I never held any feeling of hatred against you, or any of the other Demon Kings, and this is something even the Yggdragon, my previous incarnation, also felt," said Yggdrasil.

"...but why?! I... I destroyed you, and I even corrupted your children, killed them!" Erebus screamed. "You have every right to hate me! To want me to suffer!"

"...I simply don't harbor such feelings," Yggdrasil said. "In the current me, none of such things have happened yet, they're knowledge of the future that has yet to happen to me. But even then, after considering the destruction you caused even before that... I have no feelings of hatred, resentment, or anger against you."

"...How is this possible?" Erebus asked. "I..."

"My dear child," Yggdrasil embraced Erebus with her own Spiritual Aura, giving him the warmth of a mother. "You're nothing but a victim in all of this... Yes, you did many atrocities, you committed many horrible things... But they all happened because of the negligence of our creators, the Gods. They happened because they made you, to begin with. You were manipulated and used as a tool to destroy Gaia's reputation amidst the Council of the Gods."

"I-I..." Erebus muttered. "Even then... what I did is unforgivable..."

"It might be for some, but not for me," Yggdrasil said. "I forgive you."

"...Eh?"

"I forgive you, that's what I said."

"But this is..."

"It makes you feel frustrated that I forgive you, my child? Do you rather prefer hatred? Why?"

"Because I deserve it, it is something I must pay, or I will never feel good with myself, I will never feel right... I need to pay, I need to be hated, I need to-"

"No."

"..."

"You will not be hated by me, never."

"B-But..."

Erebus started crying.

"Why?!"

"Because our mother loved us both equally, and I love you as well."

Overwhelmed by her mercy, Erebus dropped to the ground, screaming and crying in disbelief.

"I'm sorry... Yggdrasil... I'm sorry!"

"It's alright... I am so happy to see you different now, to see that you're finally trying to redeem yourself. I'm so proud of you, my dear brother."

Chapter 1359 Yggdrasil And Erebus 2

Erebus encounter with Yggdrasil was more moving than I imagined. Yggdrasil was all-forgiving, and Erebus only wanted to be hated, because he felt guilty for the things he had done.

However, no matter how much he asked her why she didn't hate him, she would give him the same response.

"Because our mother loved us both equally, and I love you as well."

And overwhelmed by her mercy, Erebus dropped to the ground, screaming and crying in disbelief.

"I'm sorry... Yggdrasil... I'm sorry!"

He was being a bit overdramatic, but as someone that never got to experience these things to begin with, it was understandable that he would explode when his emotions developed and surged.

"It's alright... I am so happy to see you different now, to see that you're finally trying to redeem yourself. I'm so proud of you, my dear brother."

She even called him brother...

"B-brother?" Erebus asked. "I'm your brother?"

"Yes..." Yggdrasil said. "We were both made from the divinity fragments of every god combined together. You embodied chaos, and I embodied creation. But we are two faces of the same coin. Your

creation, I believe, was not an error. Just like I was bound to be made, you were also bound to be made. Without you, I wouldn't had been born."

"Y-Yggdrasil..." Erebus couldn't believe how she thought about these things, they were so merciful yet made complete sense.

We just never considered things through her perspective, I guess.

She wasn't a human either, we are emotionally driven beings, but she was always born special, a god, a tree, and once even a dragon.

Her perspective and way of thinking, everything would be different than us.

Instead of developing hatred like someone else, for example, another human maybe...

She only felt pity for him.

"Therefore, you are my brother, and I am your sister," Yggdrasil said. "Erebus, there's no point in hating yourself anymore. I know you've committed many terrible things... and I know you also feel guilty. Use this guilt you feel to drive yourself and do better. Help others, save lives, fight evil. Create a path towards the peace you once destroyed. Use the power of Chaos, to bring Happiness."

"..."

Erebus eyes widened, as he fell into silence, slowly standing up.

He cleansed his tears with his little arm, as he nodded.

"I will... I promise you I will, sister."

He smiled lightly, feeling embarrassed to even call her like this, despite making total sense.

"That's good..."

Yggdrasil extended a root from her body, shaping it as a gigantic hand, which she used to pat Erebus in the head.

Despite being younger than Erebus, it really felt like she was his big sister instead.

"We never truly had the chance to live normal lives, didn't we?" Yggdrasil wondered.

"Ah..." Erebus glanced at Yggdrasil. "Yeah..."

"Since the day you were born that you were hated by the Gods that made you," said Yggdrasil. "Only Mother Gaia loved you, and only she took care of you, while everybody else scorned her for doing this, and found you disgusting. You tried to fit in but..."

"I could never do so..." Erebus said. "I was too different, too strange, too... monstrous. It's ironic, I finally have a body that others can find more appealing and accepting. My true form... it was too disgusting for anybody to love, except Mother Gaia..."

"A mother's love knows no boundaries, no limitations, and no conditions." I said. "Yes, I know very well that. We love our children unconditionally, forever. No matter what they do, no matter how they look, we find them cute, and beautiful, always."

"..." Erebus remained in silence.

"Because they didn't understand who you truly were, and your true purpose they even treated you like a failure," said Yggdrasil. "Despite that never being the case, your creation, to me, was never a failure, Erebus. You were destined to be born like this. You are yourself, and you are special as you are. But because of their inability to understand, you were unable to live a normal life. You were unable to make friends... And when the Gods finally grew tired of you and Gaia, they Cursed you with Hatred and Resentment, and this is what brought you to attack the Gods in their Divine Realm, against your original will. Because I remember that Mother Gaia always said you were a good natured, shy, and lovely boy that would never hurt a fly if he could help it."

"Mother..." Erebus sighed, missing Gaia very much. "Sister... Can you tell me how it felt to be praised instead? How was your childhood? Was it... better?"

"No..." Yggdrasil said. "Of course, my creation brought great joy to everyone. When I was but a small dragon pup, when my identity was the Yggdragon, I was spoiled. Every single God loved me and brought

me gifts every day. I was always given their attention, and everything else... but I wasn't born free. They put upon me a great task, to stop you. They said my whole purpose was to fight you, my brother, and stop you..."

"..."

"This put a tremendous pressure in my entire life, I never wanted to fight you if I could help it... I never wanted to do what they said either... But Mother Gaia, she was afraid, afraid of the destruction you were bringing, she wanted you to stop..." said Yggdrasil. "And so I had to step in. And I did... what I had to do... I didn't have a glorious celebration upon your defeat. I had to put all my body and powers into sealing your frenzied powers, dividing you into seven fragments. And even then, I was exhausted. The Yggdragon was no more, as I technically died in the contaminated Continent of Verdant, later to be reborn as myself, Yggdrasil, suing all my power, since the beginning of my reincarnation, I have not stopped working to heal this continent... every single day, every single hour, every single minute, and every single second... I have never known... what having a break means, hahah..."

"I'm sorry..." Erebus sighed. "This is... all my fault..."

"It's not, I already said it wasn't," said Yggdrasil. "Even with everything... I am grateful to be alive, and to finally talk with you like this, Erebus. Thank you Planta, for making this possible."

"Please, don't mind it," I smiled. "I just did what I thought was correct."

Chapter 1360 A Glimpse Of The Past 1

These two divine siblings never had proper time to take a break, even less talk with one another, from heart to heart like they were doing right now.

I don't know if this Yggdrasil is truly the same as before, but she's the embodiment of her Records within this World, so I'll consider her Yggdrasil anyways.

I really had imagined some kind of fight, actually, so I'm very relieved none of that happened, and that Yggdrasil was a very mature being... person... woman.

Though I still feel it's a bit peculiar that when she was the Yggdragon she identified as a man, but after becoming Yggdrasil, she became a female.

So I decided to ask her that...

"Oh, you mean the change in my identity?" she wondered. "I am not too sure myself, it feels like, while I was the Yggdragon, he's still a different being than me. As I had said before, it was as if I reincarnated. Perhaps because instead of a dragon that battled, I became a tree that granted life, my identity became that of a woman, because females are the ones that create life, isn't it? A mother, just like Mother Gaia. Perhaps that's what my own instincts told me to become. A Mother for this torn, damaged world."

"I see..." I nodded. "I remembered hearing the Yggdragon's voice sometimes, do you still harbor him within you?"

"Not anymore... What you heard must've been the echoes of his Legacy and Powers you've inherited from him," said Yggdrasil. "But who knows? Maybe one day you will find another Fragment of the Past, one that'll lead you to a time when he was still alive."

"That would be amazing..." I said. "But yeah, I guess this is enough for now. Thanks for the answer."

"You're welcome," said Yggdrasil. "Now, let's go to the matter at hand, the reason you're here to talk with me, aside from my meeting with my brother."

"Ah, yeah, it's about Merlinus, the Demon Kings helping him, and everything else..." I said, speaking to her about things.

"...I see."

She quickly understood most of what I said, if she had a head, I guess she would be nodding.

"So the other fragments of my brother had already become active within that Future... This is indeed very troublesome," said Yggdrasil. "To think that a human, the race of weak beings we've been nurturing to populate the world alongside the other tribes would become such a monstrous being... But is he truly just a monster? There's always a story behind anything, even the most fearsome and hated being has a story to tell, and a reason why they are the way they are."

"...I guess so, but right now we can't really afford to have pity or mercy for him," I said. "He has done... too many terrible things, and we have to stop him before the entire Kingdom is destroyed."

"...Of course, my bad," Yggdrasil said. "I could give to you something, a gift... Or perhaps a technique?"

"Eh? What is it?" I wondered, feeling excited.

"The Power I used to seal Erebus' Fragments," said Yggdrasil. "At your current level, it will be utterly impossible to do what I did though."

"Oh..." I muttered.

"You would need to become several times stronger, and I don't mean through buffs or skills," she said. "But your innate growth as Yggdragon and of your Soul. It'll take time, even when the System assists your growth, this power cannot be easily cultivated."

"I understand..." I sighed.

"However." She said out of nowhere. "I can actually still teach you a part of this millenary, divine technique. A power I was born with, and a power you should've also been born with. It won't have the same effects but... It could potentially do something against the Demon Kings, either stun them temporarily, weaken them, or even decrease their strength. No matter the scenario, this should give you an incredible edge against my brothers. And even Merlinus, who has assimilated the powers of the Demons, direct descendants of a fragment of my brother, therefore, becoming a lot like him, so it could work... Or not at all."

"Amazing! Yes, please, anything would be great!" I nodded excitedly.

"Very well," she said, her entire body glowing brighter.

FLAAASH!

She extended a root of wood from her body and then placed a white sphere overflowing with divine spirit energy on top of it.

"By touching this, our Souls will connect temporarily," she said. "Once it happens, I will help you awaken this innate power. It should only take a second."

"O-Okay..." I nodded.

I gently touched the sphere, it was cold.

FLUOSH!

In that very second, I suddenly found myself within an endless sea of colors, constantly flowing forward.

This was Yggdrasil's soul!

But this time, I wasn't about to die from experiencing its powers, it felt soothing, relaxing even.

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

And then I saw it, countless fragments, her memories appearing everywhere around me.

I felt my consciousness being absorbed by these memory fragments, as I saw what she went through.

Or what the Yggdragon went through.

RUMBLE!

The skies were dark, the ground was on flames.

A gigantic behemoth stood above everything, its massive body made of countless black, blue, red, green, yellow, and purple ooze, swirling together to form a slightly humanoid monstrosity.

It had many heads and eyes, an embodiment of pure chaos, everywhere it walked through, and everywhere it looked, things began to explode, burn, rot, and decay.

Erebus truest form, when all seven fragments had yet to exist...

When he wasn't the Demon King yet... but the God of Chaos.

"UUUAAAARRGGGHH!"

He screamed furiously, his eyes were constantly crying, everywhere he looked, he destroyed everything, even when...

Even when he seemed to not want to do that.

"WHYYYYY! THIS HATRED...! THIS ANGER...! THIS RESENTMENT...! I HATE... I HATE EVERYTHING! WHY... WHY DOES EVERYONE ELSE SEEMS HAPPIER THAN ME?! WHY IS THE WORLD SO VIBRANT?! WHY IS EVERYTHING SO DIFFERENT THAN ME?! WHY IS LIFE SO BEAUTIFUL?! WHY AM I SO UGLY?! WHY WAS I BORN...! WHY WAS I CREATED?!"

He was constantly shaking his head in agony and sorrow, fueled by endless rage.

I see now.

I can see why she could never hate a being like him.

The only emotion that comes from my heart is...

Pity.

"That is enough, Erebus..."

And a gigantic, draconic being faced him.

"Please, no more."

The Yggdragon.