

## Brand New 1401

Chapter 1401: Demonic Idols

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RUMBLE!

As the party entered the underground hall and found the horrendous Demonic Formation at full effect, releasing shockwaves of powerful demonic energy into the surface, as they heard the screams of countless human souls screaming...

"T-This is horrifying!" Angelina muttered. "Is this even allowed for a game? Ah, wait, it doesn't matter I guess... But its gruesome."

"Everything is made out of human corpses? And human souls..." Monica muttered, as a ghost she felt a great connection to all of this. "I-It's horrible... These souls are suffering! We must free them!"

"I know..." Anna muttered.

"We should quickly burn all of this to the ground!" Elisa transformed into a golden dragon again.

"This entire thing... It was made using hundreds of human sacrifices... their bodies and even their souls, nothing was spared..." Tomas muttered, feeling disgusted. "It's... disgusting... Ugh...!" he could barely hold the desire to vomit.

"Wait, what's that thing?" Anna asked, pointing at something at the center of the whole formation, it was something utterly bizarre.

It resembled a huge statue of some kind of demon, it had three legs, four heads, and one long, snake-like tail. The heads resembled the heads of insects, perhaps a fly or a cricket, or maybe even cicadas.

"It must be the Core, another Demonic Idol that-"

FLASH!

Before Tomas could speak any longer, the Demonic Idol's eyes shone brightly red, firing two laser beams at the group out of absolutely nowhere!

"Ah! Watch out!"

Tomas panicked, as he tried to do something, but his body could barely respond. In exchange, Angelina did something, summoning her golden shield and placing it in front of them.

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

It wasn't just two beams, but the demonic idol core kept firing countless laser beams, as many as possible, without stopping.

It didn't speak or anything, but Tomas could sense a devilish presence within it! The Demonic Soul inside of the Demonic Idol Core was protecting the formation.

"So there was another line of defense here...!" Tomas said. "The other Idols might attack us at any time! We have to destroy everything!"

He quickly summoned his two Grimoires, as he realized they looked strange, with black covers and crimson red stone over their bodies.

"Huh?"

As he had said that the rest of the group quickly got to start working! Elisa was the first to do something, roaring as she unleashed a blazing breath against the demonic idols and the core idol!

"BURN!"

FLUOOOSH!

The golden holy flames of Elisa reached the nearby idols, burning them, screams could be heard from them as they burned by the holy fire.

"Gryyaaaaahhh!"

It was the mixed screams of humans and the demonic souls inside of them! As the idols continued burning one after another, they started falling, the formation trembled.

RUMBLE!

The Demonic Idol Core grew more angered, as it quickly began moving out of nowhere, despite being made of human bones, it was very much a "vessel" to a demonic soul!

BAAM! BAAM! BAAM!

Its footsteps made the entire hall tremble, the giant of over ten meters glared at Tomas' party, quickly unifying its hands and creating formations with them.

"It is moving?!" Anna screamed.

"Is it coming after us then?" Monica wondered.

"No!" Said Tomas. "It cannot move too far away or the formation comes down, it's... CONJURING MAGIC! WATCH OUT!"

Tomas screamed, as he saw in horror over a dozen crimson pentagrams above the sky, summoning massive crimson eyes made of crystalized demonic energy.

"Blursha Gakurahshak."

A monstrous voice echoed from the Demonic Idol Core, as it conjured a forbidden demonic magic that surpassed all the magic everyone knew.

Every eye gathered demonic elements, demonic thunder, demonic fire, demonic ice, demonic winds, demonic darkness, and even demonic light!

And fired an endless barrage of such magic against everyone, literally unavoidable!

**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!**

"{Holy Angelic Barrier}!"

Angelina poured her Mana into a single spell, using her magic shield enchanted by Planta to quickly release a powerful barrier, the demonic spells hit it constantly, rapidly beginning to spread cracks.

"We have to destroy the Demonic Idols and that thing quickly! We don't got time to be playing games! The Demonic Door was enough!" Angelina said.

"What can we do then?" Monica wondered, looking slightly nervous.

"Monica, you're probably the best for this!" Said Anna. "Use your ghostly form and get through the floor, destroy the Demonic Idol Core from below using some destructive spell! We couldn't get through the door like that because it had a demonic soul, but this floor is just normal floor at the end!"

"Y-You're right!" Monica gasped. "Yes, I can do that!"

"A-Are you sure?!" Elisa asked, looking a bit worried about Monica. "Be careful! We'll bring its attention towards us!"

"Ok! I'll be alright! I know what to do!" Monica nodded, gaining some confidence out of nowhere.

After all, as long as she was assigned a role, Monica felt much better, she was bad at decision making herself, but as long as she was told what to do, she would do it.

And rather effectively!

FLUOSH!

She rushed underground, Monica concentrating completely into her task, as she used her [Phantasmal Ghostly Body Transformation] to easily trespass through all materials underground.

"It's working, there aren't any demonic souls here!"

She flew under the entire formation, noticing a huge red colored barrier there, composed of pure demonic energy.

"Oh..."

And she quickly realized it might not be as easy as Anna suggested.

"I still... have to do something."

Monica's entire build in BNLO was similar to her IRL Magic, but because Skills were simply and virtually much better than BNLO, eventually there would be differences.

The primary difference was... in her attack power.

Ghosts were a unique race due to their frail bodies, but amazing ability to become intangible and even be immune to physical damage.

Another trait that was born from this was that they couldn't grow their Strength Stat at all, and instead, their Intelligence Stat was also their Strength Stat.

Any attack from their ghostly bodies was calculated with INT and WIS!

Making ghosts, rather unexpectedly, amazing warriors.

"{Abyssal Cursed Ghost Fist Arts}"

Her ghostly body grew dozens of ghostly, shadow claws.

"{Netherworld's Onslaught}"

BAAM! BAAM! BAAM! BAAM! BAAM!

Crack, crack...!

CRASH!

The "barrier" blocking her way up was shattered instantly.

Chapter 1402: Monica Goes All-Out

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The combination of a ghost's unique ability and their strength being calculated with INT and WIS instead made them unexpectedly, an amazing secret warrior race that many would play as!

If it wasn't for their fatal weakness, zero physical defenses, as they rely on their intangibility to defend from physical blows, but when this is not active, they can get almost always one-shotted, elemental and physical blows were also lethal against them.

Nonetheless, every race has its weaknesses and strengths, and in the time Monica has played BNLO and used her Avatar, she had learned how to take advantage of her Avatar as much as possible!

"{Abyssal Cursed Ghost Fist Arts}"

Her ghostly body grew dozens of ghostly, shadow claws, and with that Skill, she activated a powerful technique, swinging all claws at once!

"{Netherworld's Onslaught}"

BAAM! BAAM! BAAM! BAAM! BAAM!

Explosions of phantasmal flames, shadows, and cursed energies erupted with each blow, shaking the red barrier, until...

Crack, crack...!

CRASH!

The "barrier" blocking her way up was shattered instantly, breaking into many pieces and dissipating, disrupting the entire demonic formation.

"I got it!"

She rushed up, quickly emerging within the middle of the formation and...

"Uwah!"

The Demonic Idol Core instantly noticed her, firing a beam at her.

BOOOM!

She barely managed to evade, diving underground again and quickly deciding that it was better to attack it from below.

"First I need to weaken and slow down that thing!" Monica thought. "It reacts way too fast...!"

She gathered her Phantasmal and Shadow Powers into her claws, and then merged her Curse Power into it, rapidly manifesting countless chains...

"{Abyssal Ghostly Cursed Chains}!"

Using a powerful makeshift Spell, the chains emerged from underground, wrapping around the Demonic Idol Core and suddenly slowing it down!

CRAAASH!

The idol fell to the ground with a loud thud, the chains wrapping it as tightly as possible, it felt its entire demonic soul being consumed by a deadly, dark curse that decreased its stats.

"I-I got it!" Monica screamed.

As she did that, the endless magic rain finally stopped briefly, as everyone was freed from its destructive onslaught, and rushed to fight the Demonic Idol Core.

At the same time, Elisa and Anna unleashed golden holy dragon flame breath and rays of elements respectively, blowing away dozens after dozens of the other common demonic idols.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

As they burned and the Formation continued growing tremendously weaker, the Demonic Idol Core started moving, its massive arms breaking out of the chains!

Crack, crack...! CRAAASH!

As it began freeing itself, Monica quickly conjured more and more chains, and then using her many ghostly claws, punched the core's chest with as much power as she could!

"I won't let you escape! I will also do my part! This is the only thing I could do to help everyone; I won't let this opportunity be wasted!"

In the seconds Angelina and Tomas moved to destroy the Demonic Idol Core, she had to keep it there without letting it escape and attack others!

"{Abyssal Cursed Ghost Fist Arts}: {Phantasmal Inferno}!"

Her fists blazed with phantasmal flames, creating a small vortex, an inferno, engulfing the entire monster!

FLUOOOSH!

Nether surged from her body naturally, merging with her other energies and strengthening her attacks, she aimed at the Demonic Idol Core eyes, as they were firing dozens of beams at her friends.

"Say goodbye to your eyes, mister idol!"

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

The idol rapidly had its glowing, jewel-like eyes broken, and then, Angelina and Tomas reached it! Angelina thrust her spear forward without hesitation.

"{Heavenly Spear Descent}!"

With her angelic powers at full swing, Angelina pierced through the Demonic Idol Core, leaving a massive hole through its chest, which erupted with holy light, purifying the demonic energy in the idol and everywhere else.

BOOOMMM!!!

As the explosion of light engulfed everything, Monica quickly escaped, the holy light could literally kill her if she was exposed to it directly, one of the bad things about being in the same as Angelina.

"The Demonic Idol Core is gone!" Said Tomas. "The Demonic Soul though, where did it go?"

"Behind you, brat!"

"Ah!"

Tomas heard his "inner voice" warn him, as he quickly pulled to the side, a second before a ghostly, blazing hand were to cleave through his body.

CRAAASH!

The wolf seemed to respond to his mental commands, moving as he willed it to move, this was thanks to Anna having conjured the Spell "{Familiar Mind and Body Bond}" which she usually used on her familiars, but that she also used on Tomas.

This Spell, or Skill, allowed for direct control and commanding of a familiar beast through mind commands, even things as instincts could be synchronized, making the Emerald Storm Wolf a literal extension of Tomas' body!

"WOOF! GGRRHHH...!"

The wolf barked loudly, groaning at the monstrosity behind them, a five-meter-tall thing made of pure infernal demonic flames, it exuded a massive demonic aura, and it burned everything on its surroundings, warping space as it stood there.

"YOU... DAMNED... MORTALS...! DARING TO... INTERRUPT... THE FORMATION!"

The voice echoed through the entire hall, without a doubt, this thing was the Demon Soul inside the Demonic Idol Core!

"How is the Demonic Soul manifesting on its own without a host or vessel?!" Angelina complained, gritting her teeth.

"It's the Formation!" Said Tomas. "It is the vessel of the demonic souls technically! Although it must be much weaker now, it has become more agile and flexible... don't lower your guard, Angelina!"

"I know!" Nodded Angelina. "Meaning that as long as the other two destroy the idols, we'll be good?"

"I-I hope, but at least the formation is 60% gone!" Tomas nodded. "We're almost there!"

"DON'T THINK... I WILL LET YOU... GET AWAY WITH THISSSSS! WRAAAHHHH!"

FLUOOOSH!

The gigantic blazing Demonic Soul roared furiously, as its flames expanded everywhere, burning through the surroundings!

"Watch out!" Tomas cried, as Angelina quickly conjured a barrier to protect them both.

However, it was unfortunately not the same for Anna and Elisa.

BOOOMMM!!!

Chapter 1403: The Infernal Demonic Soul

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"Not Good!"

Monica saw the raging Demonic Soul and quickly rushed towards Anna and Elisa, using her {Phantom Touch Curse} she cursed both of them by touching their legs, turning them into ghosts temporarily.

And then, she dragged them down into the underground as well, saving them from being burned alive by the tremendous explosion of infernal flames!

BOOOOMMM!!!

"Is Anna and Elisa alright?!" Angelina asked Tomas. "If they die then we'll be in even more trouble!"

"T-They're okay! I felt their Mana Flow going underground!" Said Tomas, who was getting better at identifying the Flow of Mana. "Monica must have done something to drag them underground with her ghostly powers."

"Oh, she can do that?!" Angelina asked. "She should've used it on all of us then!"

"I am sure she didn't because it comes with its own weaknesses...!" Tomas said.

And indeed they came, Elisa and Anna gasped in disbelief as they found themselves underground, unfortunately Anna's Familiars were unable to be dragged down. The golem and the phoenix, however, shielded the weasel, who had the least resistance against fire. They were fine, but barely alive, mostly thanks to the over ten buffs Anna stacked on her Familiars.

"Uwaagh?! What the hell... Monica?! Did you drag us down here?" Elisa asked. "A-Ah... Weird, why do I feel like this? And I feel so weak too!"

"Me too..." Anna said.

"I had to curse you with a Ghostly Touch Curse, I'm so sorry!" Monica apologized. "It lets you become ghost-like but it decreases all your stats by 50%!"

"No way, that sucks!" Elisa cried. "But I guess it saved us from dying..."

"Yeah, it's a fair exchange, let's go help Angelina and Tomas though!" Anna said. "Uwaah! Wait, how do we move like this? Also I can't even see a thing other than you two!"

"Yes the vision is all completely blocked underground, but don't worry, you must follow the flows of energies!" Said Monica. "Come!"

As the trio of ghosts moved underground, the giant Demonic Soul roared, his flames encompassing the formation, creating new demonic runes, trying to repair it.

"He's trying to repair the formation?!" Asked Tomas.

"No way! Is that even a thing?!" Angelina asked.

"Hardly! But he's trying and might make things slower for us!" Tomas said. "We have to deal with it quickly! Angelina, I'll support you from the back!"

"Alright!" Angelina nodded, charging forward. "Hey, big guy! Come and fight someone your size!"

"GRUOOOHHH!"

The Demonic Soul screamed furiously, swinging his massive blazing claws against Angelina, and releasing shockwaves of flames everywhere.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

As it attacked her, Angelina evaded the incoming attacks as much as possible, thrusting her spear forward and releasing powerful attacks resembling rays of light with each thrusting, piercing blow!

"{Heavenly Starlight Thrust}!"

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"GRYYYYAAEEERRGH?!"

The Demonic Soul screamed, covered with blazing holes that spread holy light, it looked weakened, falling to his knees.

"WRAAAHHH!"

However, the moment Angelina approached, it opened its jaws, unleashing a massive vortex of flames, engulfing her whole!

FLUOOOSH!

"Uurgh!"

"Angelina!"

Tomas quickly did what he should've done a while ago, the strange Grimoires that had grown corrupted by his demonic powers, he used them.

"{Frost Wave}!"

He conjured a powerful spell, Frost Wave from one of his grimoires, aiming to turn off the infernal flames and save Angelina.

And yet, what came from this wave was...

RUMBLE!

An explosion of red and black ice, resembling a massive monster opening its jaws, engulfing the demon entirely.

BOOOM!

"Uuurrgh! UARGH!"

The Demon screamed, as it began to free itself from the demonic ice rather slowly, the ice was consuming his energies, but it wasn't enough to destroy the soul.

As this happened, Tomas rushed towards Angelina, conjuring another spell to bring her back to him!

"{Magnetic Attraction}!"

Using Thunder Elemental Magic, he manipulated magnetic forces through electromagnetic magic, a derivation of thunderbolt magic, bringing her back to him!

However, it also ended up being different, his spell turning into black thunder, hitting the demon and blowing him away.

BOOOM!

"Uuurgh...! D-DEMONIC... MAGIC! HOW... CAN YOU CONJURE SUCH POWER?!"

The Demonic Soul began to slowly recover a bit faster, standing back up, Tomas rushed towards Angelina, the vortex gone, and dragging her to his side, on top of the wolf.

"Angelina, you're ok?" Tomas asked desperately.

"I've healed myself!" Angelina drank an elixir. "My Mana's at full too, I owe you one, Tomas!"

"It's fine, don't worry about it!" Tomas said. "More importantly, we have to do something about this! It simply not dying!"

"The Formation... we have to destroy it completely," Angelina said. "The girls are in a stage of ghostly forms, so it might be harder now... But we can't split, we aren't strong enough to fight the Demon Soul alone."

"I..." Tomas muttered.

"Come on, are you going to let an angel say you're weak now? After everything you did?"

His "inner voice" spoke once more to Tomas mind.

"I can do it! Leave it to me, Angelina."

"E-Eh? Tomas?! But...! You've already done enough!"

"No, I feel stronger, even if I'm missing an arm... You saw it already, the grimoires changed as well... Leave it to me."

"But you're an NPC! You'll die and won't be able to revive!"

"I will make sure to survive."

"Haaah... You're really hopeless!"

Angelina sighed, patting Tomas' head and then rushing out, using her wings to fly towards the Demonic Idols.

"I WON'T LET YOU...! TOUCH THE DEMONIC IDOLS...! ANGEL!"

The Infernal Demonic Soul rushed towards Angelina to stop her! However, Tomas quickly conjured more of his Demonic Magic, this time reading through the pages as he did.

"{Demonic Ice Wall}!"

RUMBLE!

A huge wall made of demonic ice of purple and red color was manifested, stopping the Infernal Demonic Soul from reaching Angelina, and hitting its entire body into it!

BAAAM!

"I promised her I would take care of you... And that's exactly what I'm going to do now!" Tomas roared, black and red thunder coming from his hands. "Now face me or are you a coward?!"

"COWARD... ME?! DON'T BE... RIDICULOUS! IF DEATH... IS WHAT YOU WANT... I'LL BURN YOU... TO A CRISP!"

The Infernal Demonic Soul took the bait, putting all of its attention on Tomas!

"Good, that's the spirit. Be braver, brat. You're stronger now."

Chapter 1404: The Battle Against Merlinus Continues

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Erebus explained many things to Planta as they rushed to fight Merlinus after his transformation, which didn't come completely to fruition.

He explained to her that Merlinus' true intention was to ascend into some kind of Demon King of his own, and for that he had to sacrifice thousands of human souls alongside the souls of demons.

He already had most materials as well, the old man possessed a fragment of the Demon King of Miasma and also of the Demon King of Death, and most likely their "Curses" which were like Dark Blessings that Cultists received sometimes.

With these materials and his gigantic Demonic Domain, Merlinus planned to absorb them and completely transform his body and mind, even the reason why he summoned those Void Aberrations was to use them as materials for this entire thing.

It was a ritual, everything, from the summoning of Demonic Beasts to the spreading Hell Hole that absorbed any Demonic Beast that died, or human that died for that matter.

It was all for him to ascend and become a Demon King, to leave behind any shred of humanity left within and evolve into a new lifeform.

While Erebus considered being a Demon King a cursed existence where they were destined to be abhorred and to destroy, even against their will, Merlinus found such existence wonderful.

He wanted to become an eternal being like them, no longer affected by the passing of time, to destroy and spread chaos, to do as he pleases, no longer restricted by being born a human, or by his past.

"He has one of my Fragments, which he had been experimenting with, trying to replicate its power, all this time," said Erebus. "I can feel it within him. He has also managed to secure a Fragment from the Demon King of Death, likely a large piece of his skeleton body. And also, he has absorbed and become the vessel of dozens of Demons Souls, at least some Demon Dukes are within him. Demon Dukes and Princes are direct children of the Demon King of the End, meaning that they're his Fragments, technically."

"N-No way, he already has everything?!" Planta asked.

"Yes..." Erebus nodded, squinting his eyes. "However, he has yet to fully merge with these fragments. Hence he planned to use millions of sacrificed human souls from this kingdom to complete the ritual entirely... but things have changed because of you Planta. Now he has grown desperate, trying to rush the ritual and use the souls of powerful Voidlings and Demonic Monsters instead. It's a gamble, it could fail. But even if it fails... the result won't be good for us either way."

"So this entire time he's been making all these monsters and demonic humans, was it all experimentations for him to achieve this?" asked Planta.

"Maybe... he's been indeed trying to replicate or fully merge the powers, and he has finally achieved the perfect ritual, in theory..." Erebus said. "We don't get much time left! We have to find a way to destroy his Domain, but it's too strong, and anchored to a fixed area within space and time. The Hell Hole seems to also be another Ritual that uses Demonic Materials somewhere... Your friends went to take care of that, right?"

"Yes, let's hope for the best!" Planta nodded. "Then the plan doesn't change much anyways! Mark, Lily, Camilla, use the Formation when I give you the signal! Elena, Rita, Mimy, Erebus, come with me!"

Planta charged forward, confronting Merlinus, whose entire body was undergoing a transformation, perfecting itself, despite the wounds. He was trying his best to absorb the Voidling Bodies and their Souls, so he could start the next stage of his Transformation.

"You're here already?!" he screamed in disbelief. "Dammit!"

He swung his giant fists against Planta, as she used her weapons to intercept the blows, activating her techniques in quick succession, her swords swung down as she spun in midair, unleashing countless techniques against him, creating a combo of blows accompanied by her Spirits turning into Sword Spirits, adding to the damage!

"[Divine Holy Smite]! [Divine Draconic Execution]!"

Her swords overflowed with tremendous quantities of Holy Spiritual Energy, smashing the head of Merlinus and pushing him onto the ground for a moment.

CRAAASH!

However, as the old man was about to stand up, the second technique activated automatically, as she swung her swords down like guillotines, while the roar of a dragon echoed from above, the swords resembling the fangs of a giant draconic beast.

CRAASH! CRAASH!

"NNNGGH...! AARGH!"

Merlinus roared back, swinging his fists and tentacles and punching Planta's entire body, leaving her full of holes through her wooden body.

However, she didn't fall back, quickly stepping forward as she attacked once more.

"[Meteoric Star Fall]! [Sun Flare Arrows]!"

Almost at point blank, she unleashed a combination of techniques, swinging her swords down and making them resemble two meteors falling from the sky, all while they exploded, dividing into hundreds of blazing arrows.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"S-SHIT...!"

Merlinus was quickly covered with holes himself, each hole blazing with holy sunlight flames, he screamed in agony, but his magic activated in that moment.

"{Demonic Void Spacetime Magic}: {Spatial Repulsion}!"

TRUUUMMM!!!

He tried to send Planta away, and he managed to, using the pressure of space to destroy most of her body, sending her pieces away as quickly as he could!

And yet...!

FLASH!

"Huh?!"

A second Planta appeared from the ground, swinging her swords against him.

"Wait, another of her bodies, underground?! It wasn't there before; I couldn't even sense it!" Merlinus gritted his teeth. "She also has her weapons? Which she had in her hands a second ago?!"

"[Heavenly Pinnacle]! [Divine Dragon Spear]!"

Her swords ascended from below, slicing through Merlinus body and splitting it into two halves with a blast of pure holy light, which pieced the dark skies above, all while her second blow resembled a coiling dragon's roar, piercing through his two halves like spears.

CRAAASH! CRAAASH! CRAAASH!

"UUUAAAARRGGH...!"

Merlinus screamed in agony as his two halves began to combust, but they forcefully merged together as he cut the space between them using magic, and a second later, he smashed Planta's face with his fist, blowing it into pieces.

BOOOM!

Chapter 1405: Go All-Out!

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Planta fought a dangerous opponent with overpowered, cheat-like abilities by abusing her own overpowered cheat-like abilities, it was as simple as that.

When Merlinus was surprised to see her appear from underground, it was because she had set up her return in that moment her first body was destroyed or sent away.

By discarding her first body completely, she reanimated a Seed she had planted underground, one of many, into a new Yggdrasil Avatar in a matter of seconds.

These Seeds were easy to plant, her very steps expanded her Domain and Terrain, and seeds would spread everywhere!

She discovered that she could select where she wanted her Avatar to be born, and it didn't have to be from the wood of her true body, the giant tree in the Forest of Beginnings.

As long as it came from her, it could become a new Avatar, and Seeds became the answer, she spread them all over the field, although the amount of Avatars she could make was limited.

She was going to make it worth it!

And about the weapons? She quickly placed them back inside her inventory each time her Avatar would be hit or blown away, and then re-equipped them all into a new body.

Her armor and accessories were the same, this was all a quick micromanagement that Planta had learned to do a while ago.

As Planta split him apart and covered him in holy spiritual flames, Merlinus agonized.

"UUUAAARRGGH...!"

While in agony, Merlinus gritted his sharp teeth and forcefully merged his two halves together as he cut the space between them using his powerful magic!

"RAAAHHH!"

Without wasting his time, and a second later, he smashed Planta's face with his gigantic fist, encompassed on Void Miasma, blowing her head and her torso into pieces.

BOOOM!

As her body exploded, her equipment disappeared and then...

CRAASH! CRAAASH!

"NGUH?!"

Her giant draconic claws emerged from below the ground attacking Merlinus and hitting his chin and stomach! Using her claws, she pierced his body, leaving behind countless spirit seeds and fragments of her wood, which spread like a "curse" around his body, draining his energy and trying to stop his regeneration and transformation.

"NNGGH...! Y-YOU NASTY BITCH! WHAT DID YOU- ARGH! SO FRUSTRATING!"

Merlinus quickly remembered when he couldn't regenerate his arms back, although he was able to brush off that annoying "Curse" that Planta had placed over his body, she had managed to do the same once more.

As he was attacked, he quickly materialized long blades out of his hands, which were already partially made of Void Miasma, slicing Planta's claws clean off!

SLAAASH!

After that, he quickly attempted to slice off his own body parts "infected" by Planta, but the seeds and roots spread everywhere all too well, fully knowing that he would try this.

"NNGGHH...! DAMMIT! ARGH!"

As he continuously burned these little seeds and roots with Infernal Flames, he wasted a lot of time, a few precious seconds, enough for Planta to appear behind him again.

FLASH!

Her wings spread out, exploding into a swarm of magical swords overflowing with spiritual energies, as Merlinus noticed her body looked metallic!

"That transformation again?!"

A swarm of swords engulfed Merlinus, made out of Planta's Sword Wings and also of her Blade Spirits, slicing, stabbing, and attacking him from every angle.

"RAAAHHH!"

With a furious, frustrated roar, Merlinus burned the blades with Demonic Fire and killed the Spirit with his Void Miasma continuously!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

However, the number of attackers never stopped coming. More Blade Spirits and Flying Swords continued emerging from within Planta, who moved around Merlinus, firing powerful spells at him.

"AAARRGH! THIS IS POINTLESS! YOU'RE TRYING TO BUY TIME OR SOMETHING?! IT'S USELESS!"

Merlinus grew more and more frustrated, as he quickly placed both of his hands together and unleashed a powerful spell.

"{Demonic Void Spacetime Magic}: {Spatial Void Fragmentation}!"

CRACK, CRACK...!

CRAAASH!

Space around him instantly shattered into countless pieces, the shattered space where the Blade Spirits and the Flying Swords were was instantly destroyed, and so the beings within them.

Planta was caught within the spell, a third of her body instantly disappearing and being destroyed at an almost molecular level by this insanely strong spell!

However...

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

"GRAAH! A-AGAIN?!"

Merlinus was shocked to find Planta's draconic claws sliced and cleaved through his legs, pulling him down into the ground out of nowhere!

At the same time, the other half of her body quickly unleashed its accumulated power, exploding right into his face.

"S-SHIT!"

BOOOMMM!!!

The explosion burned through Merlinus body, as a large part of his mass was burned into cinders, he rolled over the ground, bleeding across the ground and vomiting even more blood.

"UURGGH...!"

However, the Souls of Demonic Beasts and Voidlings rapidly fed his body with more power, constantly helping him recover, Planta's "curse" was barely stopping him.

As long as the domain was up, he was only going to get up from anything, no matter how severe.

"You're only wasting your time...!" Merlinus laughed. "The power of this Domain... you cannot overcome it! Not even your Domain or Terrain can destroy it! I've sacrificed hundreds of human souls to make it! You simply... you simply cannot stop me!"

"Are you sure about that?!" Planta rushed forward, her two swords coming down, accompanied by a third, all while her swarm of Flying Swords and Blade Spirits surrounded Merlinus once more.

While her Avatar was at low health, she activated several techniques at the same time, her swords rushing towards Merlinus, shattering through his Spatial and Void Barriers by infusing her attacks with her own Demonic Spatial Distortion Skill effect.

"[Moonlight Butterfly's Sword Flight]!"

She ascended into the skies with a pair of butterfly wings born from her Spiritual Aura, and the descended, swinging her blade against Merlinus!

CLAAASH!

At the same time as she hit him and an explosion of butterflies spread everywhere, slightly confusing him, Merlinus noticed something.

A crown above Planta's head.

"[Fairy Queen's Sword Crown]"

FLAAASH!

As the crown manifested, Planta's sword swung forward, stabbing and piercing through his body consecutively, constantly, within a mere second, over fifteen attacks were unleashed!

"[Blade Spirit Forest's Guardian Last Stand]!"

Chapter 1406: Fairy Queen's Swordsmanship

-----

Planta activated the powerful techniques of her [Divine Sword Fairy Queen's Arcane Blade Intent Wings] Skill, surprising Merlinus as they worked perfectly in tandem with her fighting style and other swordsmanship skill.

"[Fairy Queen's Sword Crown]"

FLAAASH!

As the crown manifested, Planta's sword swung forward, stabbing and piercing through Merlinus' body consecutively, constantly, within a mere second, over fifteen attacks were unleashed!

"[Blade Spirit Forest's Guardian Last Stand]!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

And these instant attacks continued growing and multiplying due to her low health, from 15 to 25 due to the technique's effect.

And with the crown, this was further multiplied by four, all while her mirages emerged, adding even more damage!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

"S-STOP...! STOP!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

"MORE?! HOW CAN YOU...?!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

"GRAAARRGGHH!"

Merlinus saw his entire body being disintegrated by Planta's endless barrage of one hundred blows in less than three seconds!

He was unable to resist, everything was shredded and deformed to smithereens by her attacks, Merlinus gritted his teeth but even his teeth were destroyed.

His head, torso, arms, legs, everything was beginning to fade away!

"NOOOOO!"

As he screamed in frustration, his magic activated once more, several times in a row.

TRUUUM!

A powerful repulsion force interrupted Planta's attacks, sending her flying away while destroying her into pieces.

However, from behind, she appeared again! Her swords piercing his body once more, spamming the same ultimate technique.

And yet, Merlinus smiled maniacally, resembling a mass of tentacles taking the form of a giant, muscular old man, as he smashed her clone into pieces before touching him.

BOOOM!

And yet... more, and more, and more!

Planta emerged and died, firing spells, techniques, and died again, constantly reappearing, endlessly!

"Y-YOU DAMN...! HAHAHA...! THIS IS RIDICULOUS!"

Even Merlinus had to admit, Planta was insane if she could pull this out while resisting the immense mental strain and the energy consumption all on her own!

"YOU'RE A WORTHY FOE, PLANTA!"

Merlinus clapped all four of his arms together, as his Demonic Domain started to rapidly warp space.

"BUT IT'S OVER!"

Countless souls kept flying towards him, Planta tried to scatter them away ahead of time, but it was not working, even as Merlinus was being attacked constantly.

He had set some sort of soul protection to the sacrifices, making it so they simply couldn't be destroyed, transferring the damage to the demonic beasts instead.

More and more souls continued swelling within his body, Merlinus became massive, constantly growing more and more even as half of it was being disintegrated by Planta!

"This is...! Come on guys, hurry!"

Planta roared, as she clashed against Merlinus continuously, everyone else aside from her was busy, preparing something.

Erebus, however, was right there, watching.

His hands gathered miasma and darkness, void itself.

And behind him was Elena, infusing her void powers and darkness inside of him by touching his back, she looked in pain while doing so.

Something dark within him was being released, unleashed by Elena's own powers, allowing Erebus to go beyond his current strength.

Every second that passed, this darkness spread out more and more, this darkness within him that his reincarnation had instinctively suppressed!

"There."

TRUUUM!

His chest opened a gigantic red eye, as he felt like several chains within him shattered, releasing his true self into the world.

FLUOSH!

Erebus' Aura transformed, growing gigantic, distorted, resembling hundreds of long, black and miasmatic tentacles, with countless red eyes.

Despite that, his body remained the same, except for the big red eye on his chest...

"It's done."

And of course, a little black crown made of crystalized miasma appearing above his head, alongside crystalized miasma armor, as tough as diamonds.

His body began to overflow with distorted quantities of mana and demonic energies, power suddenly began to multiply tens of times over

"I'm done powering up, thanks for buying time, Planta. And thank you for helping me, Elena."

"We don't have any more time to waste! Let's hurry!"

The two rushed towards the battlefield that was Merlinus against Planta, the two strongest beings in this entire domain, whose fierce battle seemed to never end.

As they rushed to her help, Planta clashed against Merlinus, a powerful curse constantly trying to weaken her, while all the blood Merlinus spilled began to devour her Domain and Terrain, slowing down her regeneration of health, stamina, and mana, and also lowering her bonus stats.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

"Uaagh!"

"What's wrong?! You're getting sluggish and weaker! Hahahaha!"

Merlinus laughed as he finally began to have the upper hand, Planta had unleashed almost everything she had, yet she still couldn't go toe to toe against Merlinus completely.

She slammed into the floor, rolling over it as Void Miasma started eating her body away, turning her into black ash.

As her body disappeared, she quickly emerged from behind Merlinus, her eyebrows furrowing as she unleashed something... more special and unique this time.

"We've accumulated enough Energy, right? Let's do this!"

"What? Who are you talking to?!"

Merlinus quickly twisted his body, growing eyes on his back and unleashing another barrage of space-shattering punches, while summoning void-warping shockwaves, his magic spells, as he grew monstrous, became more and more part of his own body, every physical attack he did was like a spell now.

And yet, as the attacks reached Planta and her barrier began shattering one after another, recovering her health and mana while exploding and dealing some damage back to Merlinus, three little spirits appeared out of nowhere.

No, they weren't three, they were a whole dozen of them! They looked... strangely funny, like no other spirit Merlinus had ever seen before through his long life.

"Higgledingles! Please help me out!" Planta roared desperately. "Luz the Shiny! Your time to shine!"

"Pygyeeehhh!"

Luz the Shiny, the Higgleding of Light Element released all her power at once, as her little group of smaller Higgleding that manifested behind her combined their powers.

"What would just a group of five damn spirits do to me anyway?!" Merlinus roared, growing more monstrous by the second. "THEY'LL DIE ALL THE SAME!"

His massive arms rushed down, about to hit Luz!

And yet...

"Pipipiigyeeeh!"

FLAAASH!

Luz and her band merged, manifesting a gigantic being made of pure light.

[The Higgleding of Light, [Luz The Shiny] has activated her Skill [Light Guardian!: 1/5]!]

BOOOMMM!!!

"Wha...?!"

Before Merlinus could realize what happened, half his body disappeared, as an endless light consumed it all.

Chapter 1407: Luz, The Shiny

-----

Planta called one of her trump cards, her recently contracted Ancient Spirits, the Higgledingles!

Luz, the Shiny, was the first to emerge, and attack.

"Pipipiigyeeeh!"

FLAAASH!

Luz and her band merged, manifesting a gigantic being made of pure light. It was only a glimpse of it before pure light filled the surroundings.

But Merlinus and Planta could swear they saw a giant of over thirty meters of height made of golden and white light, with long arms, a white and gold divine robe around their bodies, and a head resembling a blazing sun with two sharp, white eyes and a crown of golden and red light.

It was as if for a moment, they became a God.

[The Higgleding of Light, [Luz The Shiny] has activated her Skill [Light Guardian!: 1/5]!]

BOOOMMM!!!

"Wha...?!"

Before Merlinus could realize what happened, half his body disappeared, as an endless light consumed it all.

Just like that.

Within a mere instant!

"I-Impo... ssible!"

Merlinus vomited blood everywhere, as the light covering his massive wound didn't fade, it began to consume him, turning his massive body into ashes.

"W-What was that?!"

As he looked at the Light Guardian, it was already above him.

"OOEEEEHHH~!"

Its voice was like a beautiful chorus of angels, as the Light Guardian spread a massive pair of glowing golden wings.

In fact, the entire Domain began to shake before its presence, as the Demons below started exploding and burning by its brilliant light.

"Gyaaaagghh!"

"W-What's thissss?!"

"Uuaarrgh!"

"Shyeeeh!"

Demonic Beasts and the Demonic Wizards, who were the weakest of them all, simply began to burn and scream in agony!

"A-A mere spirit...! D-Dares...?!"

Merlinus gritted his teeth, his wrath coursing through his demonic, monstrous body, as countless red eyes across it began to spiral.

From the half that had remained alive, he grew countless new tentacles, reaching the Light Guardian while releasing void-shattering shockwaves.

And yet Luz glared down with her two sharp white eyes, her powers manifesting once more.

"EEEEIIIIAAAAHHH~!"

As her voice was like a loud holy chorus from the heavens, a massive beam of light manifested from her giant hands, rushing down towards Merlinus.

"Y-You're kidding me..."

BOOOMMM!!!

"Guuuuaarrghhhh!"

Merlinus tried to fight back the light, but its blinding, holy and burning power was too oppressive, his massive body was pushed back over and over again no matter how hard he tried to stand back up!

BOOOM!

"T-This can't be happening...!"

BOOOM!

"A mere spirit...!"

BOOOM!

"Dares to...! Fucking humiliate me like this?!"

BOOOM!

"E-ENOUGH! STOP THIS!"

BOOOM!

"Uuuuaaarrrrgghh!"

As Merlinus screamed in disbelief and frustration while being held singlehandedly by Luz and her band, Planta smiled in disbelief, her eyebrows twitching.

"I-I never thought you guys were this powerful..." She muttered, glaring at the other two by her side.

"Myguh, megyeh!"

"Muguguguh?"

The other two talked with one another, shrugging at Planta's words as if they were saying that Luz was the one that liked going a bit too far sometimes.

"Mom!"

Planta heard Elena's voice amidst the explosions of light, as she saw her daughter reach her.

"We're done with Erebus!" Elena said with a smile.

"I've unleashed more of my power; with this we should be able to do that." Erebus said mysteriously, his Aura seemingly endless.

"A-Alright! Took you long enough but let's do it! Luz's power... is dwindling, it seems she's struggling to keep him down at the end." Planta said, flying with Elena and Erebus towards Merlinus.

"If it wasn't for his damn Domain she would've surely killed him already!" Elena said.

"I don't think that would've been enough, but it's problematic the damage is almost nullified after he recovers..." Erebus said. "But with this power... it shouldn't be the same anymore."

"I'VE HAD ENOUGH!"

Merlinus finally broke out of the endless bursts of light, reaching the Light Guardian and piercing its chest with his massive fists!

BOOOM!

As he did, the giant Light Guardian gained countless cracks, as if it were made of glass, and shattered into pieces.

Crack, crack...!

CRASH!

Little Luz and her band reappeared behind Planta, leaving Merlinus confused as he sought her after.

"Pyguuh!"

Luz quickly fell asleep over Planta's head, slowly becoming invisible alongside her band of smaller Light Higgleding.

"Well done! You bought us a lot of time, Luz! Rest well, once this is over, I'll give you all the carrots you want."

Within Luz the Shiny's information, it said she liked Carrots, it was her favorite food, and each Higgleding had a favorite food they liked more than anything!

A feast of carrots would be fitting of the little Luz.

"Haaahh... Haaahh... Haaahh... Uuuggh..."

Merlinus gasped for air, looking exhausted, his Domain and his sacrifices keeping him up, even while he was struggling to even stand up anymore. The more power he gained, the more his mind was being consumed by darkness too.

"T-That light... it hurt so much! Dammit! I hate this weakness...! Why do I have to suffer this?! My plan... my plan was almost perfect! No, it still is! I-I can do this! I can, yes! Yes!"

He started talking to himself like a madman, constantly speaking with different tones of voices, as if he had many personalities within him.

He was most likely suffering from some sort of personality disorder and dementia due to his incredibly old age and deteriorating body prior to his transformation, which only became worse as he demonized.

FLASH!

And in that moment, a blue oni samurai appeared above his resting body, her two katanas spiraling down as she spun downwards, her Stance changing and combining.

"{Stance Combination: Fire + Wind + Water + Earth}: {Heaven's Stance}"

Each of her stances converged, as she created a stance of pure balance, the four elements converging around her body, creating white clouds.

Merlinus glared at her with his crimson eyes, her movements, however, were simply too quick to respond to in time!

"{Empty Blade Arts}: {Heaven's Sword}!"

Elena went all out, using her powerful Specialization and unleashing the power of Empty Blade Arts themselves against her foe!

A wave of pure emptiness manifested, hitting Merlinus with immense power!

"E-Emptiness?!"

SLAAAASH!!!

Chapter 1408: A Desperate Struggle!

-----

Elena combined her various stances into their ultimate form so far, Heaven Stance, which boosted all her stats greatly for a moment, while her Aura transformed into white clouds wrapping around her.

Not only did her very presence become hazy, making it so even the monstrous Merlinus was unable to completely realize what was happening, but the white clouds seemed to enhance her focus and her movement speed!

And then, gray colored essence flowed through her body, wrapping her two katanas at once, as her Heavenly Aura merged with them.

Elena's eyes turned completely white in that moment, as she released a mighty downward slash!

"{Empty Blade Arts}: {Heaven's Sword}!"

She went all out, using her powerful Specialization and unleashing the power of Empty Blade Arts themselves against her foe!

A wave of pure emptiness manifested, hitting Merlinus with immense power! The Arch Wizard instantly noticed what power this was, gasping in disbelief.

"E-Emptiness?!"

SLAAAASH!!!

His entire body was sliced apart, his massive body reduced to a tenth of what it was, as everything else was instantly... deleted!

"W-What?! Since when did she...?! I've been... underestimating her this whole time?!"

Merlinus was flabbergasted, the power that Elena had hidden this entire time came in handy right now, if anything, holding back and hiding powers and abilities were always required to surprise foes when they least expected it.

Or well, that's how DarkReaper operated with her Player Hunting, always revealing but a small fraction of her power, never all of it at once... always keeping her victims in check, without knowing what else she had at hand.

And when they finally got cocky and thought they had seen everything they had to offer...

Just like Merlinus, they were slashed apart!

"A-Ah...! Y-YOUUUU!"

Merlinus suddenly summoned dozens of Demonic Pentagrams, feeding off his Domain's power!

"{Demonic Void Space Magic}: {Spacetime Distortion}! {Devouring Void Stars}!"

RUMBLE!

The space around Elena distorted in a second, as it began to rapidly shatter apart, she rushed away from the destruction, but then, she saw gigantic spheres of darkness reach her.

And blow up one after another!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Each explosion left a hole in space itself, a small black hole that threatened to absorb Elena completely! She slashed them apart with the power of Emptiness, managing to escape barely from danger!

"COME HEREEEEEE!"

Merlinus roared, calling for her as he began to regenerate, growing a new body slowly, tentacle after tentacle. As he chased after her....

Suddenly.

CRAAASH!

The ground beneath him shattered as his massive, regenerating and crawling body fell into a pit!

"What the...?! What kind of stupid trap is this?! I can float through space and even shatter the void itself! You think a pitfall will- ACK!?"

Merlinus eyes widened, as he was...

Terrified!

"No...! I have to get out of here!"

He quickly tried to crawl away!

But it was too late.

Thousands of vines made of pure white spiritual light wrapped around his body.

These vines weren't normal, but came from...

"Planta?!"

Merlinus gasped as he saw Planta emerging from within the deep pit.

Her body was strange, she had merged with spirits of holy light and her spirit guardians of summer and spring, while keeping her metallic form, and then turning completely gold.

"I told you already...!" Planta's relentlessness and conviction started to become scary rather than just annoying. "THAT I WOULD STOP YOU NO MATTER WHAT!"

"Uuuuaarrgghh!"

Merlinus screamed, realizing that the gigantic metallic vines were like holy chains, sealing part of his demonic powers altogether, and pulling him back more and more.

This was because...

"I have managed to do it! I merged my own body with the Demon-Sealing Holy Chains! I never thought I could do this, but turning into a Holy Metal body through the combination of Skills and Spirit Synthesis somehow worked!" Planta thought. "However... keeping this form takes a toll on my soul! Ugh...!"

"LET GO OF ME, YOU WENCH!"

Merlinus quickly manifested more Magic Pentagrams, unleashing a barrage of Void Beams against her! Planta gritted her teeth, as her metallic body gained black circuits around, and a Mane around her entire neck and shoulders manifested.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

As the explosions reached her, her mane absorbed the Void once more, beginning to rapidly spin around while her power increased, tightly wrapping around Merlinus more and more.

"NOOOO! THAT DAMN SKILL YOU STOLE FROM THE DEMON! FUCK!"

Merlinus completely forgot that Planta had it! And it was because she had deactivated it due to its immense energy consumption, keeping it down and hoping he would forget.

And because he was an old man, he ultimately did!

However, Merlinus quickly realized something...

"Heh..."

His body, although sealed and restrained... wasn't taking as much damage as he thought! The Domain's powers regenerated him.

"You think you have the advantage, Planta? Despite being weaker than me? The only thing you can do is restrain me! But the more time passes... the stronger I grow!" laughed Merlinus. "How long will you be able to resist?!"

With a wicked laughter, Merlinus attacked Planta from every angle! Now using his physical strength without Void, he manifested hundreds of fists out of his amorphous body, punching through her entire body.

"NNGGHH...! BASTARD!"

However, Planta grew furious as well, roaring madly and attacking back with her punches, her Aura growing stronger, as she manifested giant draconic claws and several dragon heads.

No, in fact, she went full Yggdragon! A completely metallic one made of Holy Gold!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

The two of them maintained a stalemate for a couple of seconds, as they punched one another without end! Planta combined her swords into her tail, swinging it around and unleashing several techniques, cleaving attacks and constant stabs engulfed Merlinus more and more!

"GRAAAHHH!"

He roared back, growing more old man-like heads made of black goo and with long white beards and old-looking faces with giant, spiraling red eyes, opening their jaws to fire beams of pure demonic flames, an element Planta couldn't resist or become immune to so easily.

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

"NNGGHH...!"

Planta gritted her teeth, feeling her entire being beginning to melt as if she were a piece of alloy within the interior of a furnace.

"EREBUS!"

As she called for him, Erebus appeared.

Her battle against Merlinus only lasted but a few seconds, the time it took the sluggish fairy to reach the old man.

"Sorry, I've become a bit slower due to all the power I must carry. Merlinus, I'll be your opponent from here."

"Erebus?!"

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

Merlinus suddenly felt his very soul being punctured.

"NNGGH?! WHAAAAT?!"

He gasped in disbelief; he was sure he had protected his soul through the Domain's powers!

And yet...

YET!

He saw Erebus' little hands, manifesting a pair of giant purple and black crystals, shaped as spears.

And from the spears, pieces of his soul were falling from, turning into ashes...

"I promised Planta I would take responsibility for my actions," Erebus said. "And I swore to myself... that I would one day become a Hero like Luminous. The first thing I must do is slay you, your creation was my fault, Merlinus!"

"Y-You dare... attribute my creation to YOU?! You're... YOU'RE NOT EVEN THE REASON WHY I CHOOSE TO BECOME LIKE THIS!"

Merlinus raged, as his demonic power exploded, sending Planta flying away with a massive explosion!

BOOOM!

"I'll kill you and eat your Soul and become a Demon King forcefully!"

"And I will slay you, like Luminous would do a Demon King."

CLAAASH!

Chapter 1409: Merlinus' Insanity

-----

Merlinus felt furious, Erebus had said that it was his fault he became like this, when to him, it wasn't at all the case! His entire life, seeking answers, seeking a point, seeking a reason to exist, and slowly deteriorating by the passing of time... Merlinus had grown frustrated and furious with life, with the world itself, with humanity and society, with everything.

He grew spiteful and furious, in the past he was a humble magician, someone respected, and someone that guided heroes through their journeys and that helped monarchs achieve prosperity. But as he saw everything he cared for die off and fall by the hands of time, he realized that being a human...

Was too painful.

He denied being a human, he rejected his own humanity!

He was tired.

Merlinus showed his true self, a man more demonic than demon kings themselves.

This was him!

And he wouldn't let anybody, not even other Demon Kings, mock his conviction, and try to make it all about them.

"IT WAS NEVER ABOUT YOU, EREBUS!"

He swung his dozens of massive fists against the fairy, as the fairy responded by moving his little hands, intercepting each punch with his glowing spears of crystalized miasma, leaving giant holes through these fists, as blood splattered everywhere.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Merlinus screamed, as he felt his soul being damaged more and more, his gigantic, demonic soul which he had already merged with two Demon King Fragments.

With each blow, more of its power was lost, and the old wizard couldn't help but grow tremendously desperate!

Even more when Erebus glared at him with such an expressionless face, full of... apathy.

"You speak with words that make no sense. Who gave you the power to do what you're doing? Who gave you a chance? Who shared his power with you? Who helped you manipulate Miasma and combine it with your magic? Who gave you access to the Demonic Gate?"

"T-That's...!"

Merlinus gritted his teeth, as he quickly unleashed countless beams of void from his entire body! Every hole that Erebus had carved into his body fired powerful void beams, bombarding Erebus.

**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!**

Yet as the smoke covered him, Erebus remained...

"UNSCATHED?!"

Merlinus gasped, as he realized that if he wanted to win this, he couldn't just do a half-assed job anymore...

The old man had to go all-out, and not hold back a second!

There was no point in saving energy or power.

It was now or never.

Or he would...

Die.

"No, the Domain is still active, as long as that's here...!" Merlinus smiled. "I can win!"

BA DUM!

BA DUM!

BA DUM!

His heart started beating rapidly as the two fragments continued melting through his very being, the souls empowered him further, as his body started to evolve faster and faster after he forced the process to speed up.

"I can feel it...!" Merlinus roared. "I AM BECOMING A DARK GOD!"

RUMBLE!

His body transformed, gaining a massive pair of demonic wings, his body became more muscular and streamlined, with completely pitch-black skin, three pairs of black horns grew above his head, and over nine red eyes appeared within his face.

"The process is speeding up, it seems..." Erebus said.

And yet...

"Nah, it shouldn't be that big of a difference, you're still... weaker than me."

"SHUT UP!"

Merlinus rushed forward, swinging his fists against Erebus with everything he had!

Shockwaves of void were unleashed; darkness engulfed his opponent.

And as this happened, Erebus unleashed his techniques too.

"{Abyssal Miasmic Void Chains}"

FLUOSH!

Chains wrapped around Merlinus arms, pulling him towards Erebus!

"{Abyssal Demon King Eye}"

TRUUUM!

The crimson eye within Erebus' chest opened, releasing a crimson shockwave that engulfed Merlinus in pure agony, a terrifying, paralyzing agony carried by a curse that...

That drained his Miasma!

"UUAAAGGGHH!"

As Merlinus screamed, memories of his distorted life flashed through his mind, while he gritted his teeth, as his demonic eyes spiraled in anger and pain.

Of his first love...

"Merlinus! Still studying until late? Come on love, let's go sleep, that's enough."

And how she died.

"I'm sorry... for not being able to accompany you... any longer..."

Of his children he loved so much.

"Father! One day I'll become a wizard like you!"

"Papa, let's play! Let's play!"

"Stop looking at your books all day!"

And how they died too.

"Dad... I'm sorry..."

"I didn't want to die before you..."

"I guess... I couldn't be the wizard I promised you..."

Of his second wife...

"Let's pursue and find the secrets of magic together, Merlinus!"

Who also died.

"I don't want to die... Merlinus..."

Of his many other children...

"I'll become a knight when I grow up, father... I want to grow strong to protect you once you're old."

Who died as well.

"Father... Why do you live so long?"

As he lived and lived, pursuing magic, he became more afraid of death as he saw everyone crumble around him out of old age.

Seeing his own children die before him, his wife...

It filled him with so much frustration.

It made him question why he was pursuing magic to begin with.

Why was he doing all of this?!

"I gave up my family and everything I loved for magic..."

He looked into the void, and the void looked back at him.

"My obsession with magic is my greatest sin..."

The darkness engulfed him completely.

"I pursued it before all else, it made me live longer, but at the same time..."

The flames of hell baptized his existence.

"I had to see everyone die before me..."

The Miasma left his body, but something else took its place.

"I both hate and love magic... It is my greatest passion, but also my greatest sin, my curse."

He smiled maniacally; even as bloody tears fell from his eyes.

Erebus squinted his eyes.

And then he widened them.

"Huh? Already?!"

"For them... I'll see this to the very end! I'll find the truth of all things! I will reach the Root of Magic... FOR ALL THOSE I ABANDONED! FOR ALL THOSE I SACRIFICED FOR MY SELFISHNESS! IT'S THE VERY LEAST... THE VERY LEAST I COULD DO! EVEN IF I MUST TURN INTO A DEMON KING TO ACHIEVE IT!!! THIS IS MY SIN! MY OBSESSION! AND IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, BASTARD! WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY PAIN?!"

Merlinus opened his rotten heart, showing one of his true, and actual goals.

Humanity indeed was discarded within the process.

But ultimately, as he cried and whined over life's unfairness, while taking selfish decisions himself.

Wasn't he the most human in this moment?

RUMBLE!

And so, a glitching crown made of void manifested above his head.

Chapter 1410 Erebus' Great Power

-----

As Merlinus rapidly transformed and evolved into a Demon King, he saw memories of his past, of what he had done and of those he had lost, further making him remember his true conviction. Aside from his hatred towards humanity, towards being a feeble human, and his spite against the immortals who got to be the true protagonists of this world, there was also something.

Some sort of promise he made to his family and to himself, because of his own selfishness, because of the mistakes he committed, and because he deep down still regretted having spent all his time on magic and not on his family, allowing himself to become long-lived and outliving even his children... he had a promise, something he had sworn within his rotten heart.

That if he went so far for magic, he would never back down. For the sake of those he abandoned for magic, for the sake of his loved ones now long dead... For the sake of them all, he swore that he would pursue the deepest truth about magic.

Even if he had to sell his damn soul to the devil, or worse, become one himself!

Before the eyes of everyone, the madman was actually achieving it, his ascension... or descent into a Demon King was nothing but a few steps away from him!

A crown made of void was rapidly manifesting above his head, glitching. The absence of Miasma within his body ended speeding up the process, as he began to refine his own personal "Demonic Element" that every Demon King had.

Miasma and Nether... he couldn't take those!

To truly ascend, he had to choose his own element, and he chose the deadliest, Void and Space.

"I will ascend...! I shall become the Demon King of the Abyssal Void!"

As he self-proclaimed himself a Demon King of the Void, Erebus reached him, his Aura manifesting its true powers, as countless miasmic tentacles reached Merlinus from every angle.

Merlinus intercepted them with his giant, muscular arms, his clawed hands tearing through the tentacles! However, the tentacles also managed to pierce through his arms, leaving holes through them that rapidly began to grow larger.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

As this happened, Merlinus smiled lightly, realizing that his power was growing more and more, the wounds of his arms quickly filled in a matter of seconds.

"So this is the power of a Demon King! But a mere taste! Once I have it completely, I will finally be able to reach heights I never could as a human!"

As he laughed, he rushed towards Erebus, punching his entire body and then using his whole body to rush down, hitting the floor beneath with a tremendous explosion.

BOOOM!

As they did, the two battled against one another, Erebus continued merging with his Aura, crystalizing more of his miasma until he became a giant made of diamond-hard crystalized miasma with several arms, alongside his miasmic tentacles around his Aura itself.

"{Abyssal Miasmic Crystal Formation}: {Black Diamond Armor Sentinel}"

Merlinus quickly rushed towards Erebus again and recklessly, growing more insane as he gained more demonic powers, his hands began breaking apart and exploding the moment he hit Erebus, however.

"You're still too weak, a cheap imitation, if anything!"

"NNNGGHHH...! NOT... FOR LONG!!!"

Merlinus grew frustrated, screaming to the heavens, his Demonic Domain responded as it feed him more and more power, making him grow swollen with muscles.

"RAAAHHH!"

With a furious roar, he swung his fists down, as massive distortions in space manifested by his very movements, void engulfed Erebus with each punch, sending tiny cracks through his armor.

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

"Hmph."

However, Erebus didn't take kindly of that, manifesting a sword, trying to imitate Luminous' Durandal sword, and swung it down, vertically and horizontally, perfectly replicating Planta's and Luminous techniques with his photographic memory.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

Explosive slashing wavs reached Merlinus, cutting through his body and soul at the same time, Merlinus struggled even now! He continued manifesting his magic and combining it with his physical blows, but Erebus was always a step ahead.

And yet even then...

BA DUM!

BA DUM!

BA DUM!

His heart continued beating faster and faster, his Demonic Powers were rising, evolving with each passing second! Even as his soul was being shredded and torn to pieces, he had to resist.

He had to persevere! It was almost there; he was almost getting there!

After everything he sacrificed...

"I cannot... give up! NO...! NOT YET! NO, NEVER!"

With a furious roar, he clashed against Erebus and threw him into the ground, his head divided into dozens of monstrous heads of several different animals, trying to bite Erebus' armor.

CLAAANK!

However, the armor was still too tough, his teeth shattered into pieces, Erebus quickly swung the blade again, piercing and stabbing Merlinus' soul with it several times.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

"AAARRGH!"

As Merlinus screamed in agony, suddenly, gigantic golden roots emerged, wrapping around his legs and stopping his movements.

"UGH?!"

As he glared in disbelief, he realized whom these vines came from, these giant, thick metallic roots and branches from an annoying world tree!

"Planta? I told you I had to handle this myself!"

"I know, but I came back after confirming things! Let me assist you, Erebus! He's growing stronger with each passing second!"

"Fine..."

"IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE, YOU KNOW?!"

RUMBLE!

With a furious and mighty scream, Merlinus Demonic Void Aura surged, growing stronger and more defined with each passing second.

His glitching crown continued to develop and solidify!

Planta aimed at that crown in specific, as giant roots rushed towards it.

Merlinus rapidly evaded the attack.

CLAAASH!

However.

"ROOOAARRR!"

A massive Yggdragon made of gold appeared behind him, there were two Plantas.

"AAGH!"

The Yggdragon opened its three jaws, the crowns above its head infusing it with powerful spiritual and draconic elemental powers.

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

Three massive explosions engulfed Merlinus completely, the beams piercing through his body and hitting his crown, spreading cracks through it.

"N-NO...! MY CROWN!"

Merlinus screamed, as he saw his crown beginning to fragment into pieces!

Erebus smiled, rushing towards Merlinus in that moment.

He manifested his sword once more, larger than ever before, and fused it with Miasmatic Spirits like Planta does.

"{Abyssal Demon Hero Swordsmanship}: {Demonic Descent}!"

SLAAAASH!!