

## **Brand New 1431**

Chapter 1431 Intense Battle!

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RUMBLE!

The Verdant Green Domain shook constantly, as the Realm of the Fey Wilds saw the gigantic Tree in the middle of it all beginning to release a gigantic beam of emerald light into the skies.

FLASH!

The beam of emerald light reached the skies of the Fey Wilds, a world made completely out of rivers, lakes, and endless forests and rainforests, a Realm made by nobody else than her, Lady Verdant.

Born from the Nature Soul of the Entire Continent of Verdant, she was a rather young Goddess (although she has lived for much longer, she only gained complete consciousness a few thousand years ago), and her Realm was a natural creation of her Nature Soul and the Domain of the Continent of Verdant merging.

It was a Realm where Fey, Fairies, Spirits, and all sorts of other Spiritual and Nature-aligned beings lived and were born, fueling the world of Arcadia with their presence.

Now, their Goddess, an eternal guardian of their kind and their world, let out of a large portion of her powers, temporarily manifesting them into the Mortal Plane.

The Fairies, Spirits, Fey, Ents, Gnomes, and many other Forest-dwelling races and spiritual beings within the Fey Wilds glanced at the scene from afar, in disbelief.

"That pillar of green light... What is that?"

"I can feel her presence within it! That is Lady Verdant!"

"L-Lady Verdant?! What is she doing?"

"I don't know, but it seems she desires to help a mortal..."

"Whatever threat they must be facing, to require the assistance of our Goddess, it must be immense...!"

"Please be careful, Lady Verdant!"

The fairies and people of the Fey Wilds prayed for Verdant, as her presence rapidly began to manifest within the ruined city of the Luminous Kingdom's capital.

The pillars of emerald light converged together, rapidly beginning to manifest a gigantic humanoid figure, made of this green light and also golden light.

Emanating an aura of pure life and nature, she rapidly stepped into the Material World, after eons since her creation, being confined within the Fey Wilds while taking care of the Spiritual Yggdrasil Tree, she could finally step out of her Realm.

Her form rapidly took shape, as her slender, female body, made of green and golden light manifested, her bright golden eyes opened, with long eyelashes.

She had no mouth or nose at all, but a barely blank face made of her energies, with these two eyes, and of course, her long blonde hair made of strands of light.

Her body, a Nature Domain by itself, grew endless plants everywhere, forests covered every inch of her body as she walked forward.

**RUMBLE!**

Each one of her steps made the entire ruined city tremble, and with each step, gigantic shockwaves of pure nature and life spread everywhere.

David and the rest of the knights glanced at the scene in disbelief while they were mourning the King, their eyes shining brightly as a sudden wave of golden light washed over them!

FLAAASH!

This was the pure, undiluted power of a Goddess of Nature and Life!

All those that were wounded and almost about to die were rapidly healed, even David felt completely revitalized.

While Planta's Domain was contained within the Sea of Demonic Miasma and was unable to expand further, that wasn't the case for Lady Verdant.

"There he is, I can see him!"

She looked into the distance, a gigantic sludge monster was fighting a huge golden and silver metallic dragon, Yggdrasil.

"Planta's struggling even now...! I must put an end to this!"

She moved faster and faster, the Druids around the city channeling all their power to maintain the formations together.

A small mishap, and the entire thing could come down within an instant!

"Gardenia! My daughter, can you hear me? I am on my way!"

"M-Mother?! I mean, Lady Verdant! Yes, okay! Please hurry!"

"I am moving as quickly as I can, this gigantic body is not easy to maneuver!"

As the two had a conversation, Planta and her army of upgraded Draconic Beasts ravaged Merlinus as much as possible, unleashing explosions of light that began to burn through his miasma, turning it into ashes.

Although the Demonic Miasma became ashes, much more of it was being produced endlessly the more the demonic power within it burned through the agonizing souls contained inside.

"GRAAAAHH! DIE ALREADYYYY!"

Merlinus, who ended up mutating into some stupid, monstrous being, groaned furiously, attacking Planta with his massive body.

She tanked the blows with her gigantic metallic body, although her metallic wood body was already beginning to slowly melt away...

Nonetheless, she continued expanding her Domain, slowing him down through the effects of Fractured Time, and then pushing him back with her swordsmanship.

Indeed! She wielded all her swords in this form, merging them with her own metallic body and her Spirits through Spiritual Synthesis, she turned her weapons gigantic.

"{Heavenly Golden Phoenix Descent}!"

By channeling the powers within her and combining the Yggdragon's Flames with Titan's powers through their connection as her Divine Guardian, Planta unleashed a combined technique!

"CRYAAAAH!"

Her Aura transformed into a massive golden phoenix made of golden flames descending as it impacted the monstrous being with full force!

SLAAASH!

BOOOMMM!!!

A slash was continued by a massive explosion, completely deleting a big chunk out of Merlinus' body, and making the souls within become weakened, many being also purified and exorcised.

"RAAAHHH!"

Merlinus roared furiously, manifesting gigantic arms with crimson eyes on them, which fired hundreds of laser beams at Planta.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Her barriers shattered instantly, although their effects boosted her stats or gave her some counter attacking explosions, the bombardment of laser beams was much more destructive than Planta imagined, filling her body with giant holes.

"U-uugh...! Even with the power of this transformation, he's still this strong?!" Planta groaned, gritting her teeth.

"Planta! My mother is coming! She's right around the corner!" Gardenia, the Great Spirit of Harvest, spoke to Planta. "Once she's here, it'll be over for him for sure! Hold on a few more seconds!"

"O-Okay!" Planta roared, only to be surprised as countless snakes wrapped around her legs, beginning to quickly force her metallic body to decay. "Uugh! I-It's become stronger?! But how!"

"GEHEH... GEHEHAHHAH! I'M GETTING THE HANG ON THIS...!"

Planta's eyes widened, as she heard Merlinus' voice. Suddenly, he sounded much smarter than before.

"He's regaining his intelligence?!"

Chapter 1432 {Heavenly Draconic Skill and Spell Combination Armament Creation}

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Before Planta's eyes, the man she thought was already ruined, slowly began to regain his intelligence. Merlinus, the bastard and his monstrous, fragmented soul, was somehow still hanging on a thread of intelligence. With each passing second, his consciousness became stronger. And his power over his strange new form became just as strong.

"I cannot let him recover more of his intelligence, or he'll start using magic!"

Planta didn't have any plans on fighting Merlinus fair and square, after the old bastard toyed with the lives of millions, destroyed the entire city, and ruined the lives of so many people, the last thing Planta would do is have mercy against him.

"I need more power than this!"

She quickly controlled her summoned beasts, the hundreds of gigantic metallic beast dragons, who were constantly cleaning the area around her, releasing holy flames.

"{Heavenly Draconic Skill and Spell Combination Armament Creation}!"

FLAAASH!

What was formerly called {Celestial Draconic Weapon Creation} had evolved with Planta's new form, becoming something much stronger and deeper now.

Through her own thoughts, she channeled the power of several Spells and Skills, rapidly using them as "ingredients" for her new creation.

At the same time, dozens of these draconic beasts walked into her arms, melting away into silver and gold colored liquid metals.

The liquid metals rapidly absorbed the powers she had channeled, and through her forging abilities, quickly were enhanced and manifested into weapons, which she wielded with another pair of arms she grew from her body.

Both weapons embodied some of her strongest spells and skills together, one of them taking the shape of a long golden spear with a black dragon coiling around it made of black steel, and the other weapon was a massive katana made of green metal and embedded with red, blue, and yellow jewels.

Ding!

[You have activated the Divine Skill: {Heavenly Draconic Skill and Spell Combination Armament Creation}! You have combined several Spells and Skills together into powerful Weapons modeled after them, through the sacrifice of dozens of powerful summoned beasts to make as materials.]

[You have created the {Golden Aeternitas' Time-Devouring Spear}! Which possess 25% of all your equipped Weapons' stats and abilities combined together plus a 500% boost to all of their stats and ability effects! Additionally, each consecutive blow will release {Devouring Black Aeternitas Dragon Jaws} that will deal 300% additional damage with each blow, for a maximum of +3000%, while also devouring the Time of foes, Slowing them Down while Speeding up the User.]

[You have created the {Divine Spiritual Verdant Katana of Life}! Which possess 25% of all your equipped Weapons' stats and abilities combined together plus a 500% boost to all of their stats and ability effects! Additionally, each consecutive blow will release {Divine Spiritual Verdant Roots} that will spread through your foe's body and rapidly drain away their Lifeforce and Mana, weakening them over quick period of time the more you attack them.]

[Duration: 2 Minutes, 3 Seconds.]

"I'm ready!"

Planta leaped forward, swinging her weapons against Merlinus who quickly began to rapidly compact his monstrous body to become stronger, receiving her with his giant fists once more!

However, Planta started with a barrage of attacks, unleashing several swordsmanship techniques at once made up of consecutive blows without end.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

"GRRUUGGH?!"

Merlinus groaned in pain and annoyance, as his entire body gained countless more holes, his miasmic powers dissipating and being purified.

But that wasn't all, as the moment he was struck by her larger weapons...

CRUNCH! CRUNCH! CRUNCH!

Several ghostly creatures resembling black dragons wrapped around him, beginning to deal constant damage every second.

What's worse, his "Time" was also being drained constantly!

"W-WHAT...?!"

As Merlinus tried to make sense of the situation, roots made of green jewels grew all across his body, as Planta continued striking him, explosions of holy light consuming his body bit by bit.

"HYAAAAH!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

"NNGAAAGGH...!"

Planta was not giving him a second to rest! Exhausting her energies constantly as she recovered them barely through her domain.

However, the timing of her transformation was already going down, and it would soon reach less than a minute.

"Lady Verdant is... Ah! I can see her!"

Planta noticed a huge green silhouette moving towards her. The bad thing about God's Avatars was that they were forced to be physical and not ethereal.

Meaning that she was unable to move like a spirit or a ghost would do usually, she had to move, and her body was enormous, taking time.

It was a disadvantage and a weakness Planta, and the other Druids had never thought about until now.

"We'll have to fix that problem later...!"

"GRAAAHHHH!"

Out of nowhere, and as Planta distracted herself even so slightly, Merlinus screamed, his aberrant body transforming and merging into a single monstrosity, as massive jaws with thousands of sharp teeth engulfed half her body!

"UGGH?!"

Planta gasped in surprise and pain, the teeth began to quickly grind through her armored body, while the demonic miasma was melting her.

Her transformation was unique, she was unable to recreate it on another Avatar, if she tried to leave this body, there would literally be no hope.

"D-Dammit!"

As Planta attacked Merlinus interior and began trying to break out from the interior...

"NOT SO FAST!"

SLAASH! SLAASH! SLAASH! SLAASH!

Planta heard a familiar manly voice, accompanied by a gigantic blazing sword cutting through Merlinus' body.

A huge hand grabbed her, pulling her out of the miasma at the same time as a rain of massive feathers made of flames bombarded the giant sludge monster.

"{Divine Spiritual Phoenix Feather Rain}!"

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

As the projectiles exploded, Planta realized who came to save her, it wasn't Verdant of course.

"Mark!"

"I'm here! Sorry for the delay, took longer than I imagined assimilating everything but...!"

FLUOSH!

Planta gasped as she saw Mark's new powerful form, a combination of his titanic transformation, his golem, and also Elena and Camilla's powers.

It resembled a titan of black steel with red metallic, vampiric wings, and demonic horns above its head, which resembled that of a ferocious blazing dragon, covered by crimson flames.

"Mom! Are you alright?!" Elena asked.

"We're here, let's fight together!" Camilla said.

"Yes I'm fine! Thank you!" Planta said. "He's coming! Watch out!"

The two quickly faced the incoming monster.

CRAAASH!

Chapter 1433 A Goddess' Descent!

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Planta, Mark, Elena, and Camilla finally regrouped, facing Merlinus together once more. The Wizard was barely grasping on straws now, his body and mind deteriorated enormously. Even though he was regaining some intelligence, he was still a monster that was constantly decaying.

His ascension into a Demon King was stopped, but even then he continued fighting relentlessly, his desire to ascend, to become something more than human was burning brighter and stronger than any flame in this world.

RUMBLE!

And yet, Planta's friends had gained their own resolves through all these battles, since they started fighting in this game, since they had fun together, since they learned about the world and its people. Since they gained power, which they used to protect those they loved.

And since they learned of this world and its truth...

SPLAAASH!

"I GOT YOU!"

"GUH?!"

And a third participant appeared as Merlinus charged towards Planta and Mark's group, a gigantic demonic dragon golem made out of black stone and crystals, and covered with devilish demonic, red colored horns.

"T-That's...!" Planta became more excited as she saw the gigantic golem, which was a fusion between three of them. "Rita, Lily, and Melissa!"

"Yes, it's us!" Rita roared.

"We've merged our golems for efficiency!" Lily said.

"We have to combine our powers, or we'll perish alone!" Melissa said.

"Yeah, this is also part of the formation's powers," Mark nodded. "With this, we can hold him on for long enough! Let's do this!"

"OOOHHH!"

All three titans began clashing against Merlinus from every angle, without giving him any time to even rest or breathe. Blazing swords cut through his slimy body and burned him constantly, massive spears of blazing, explosive blood bombarded him, powerful Cursed Weapons absorbed his Demonic Energy and massive spears made of black stone emerged from the ground, impaling him.

An army of metallic draconic beasts attacked him from every angle too, although most of them died at the end, their explosive deaths caused more chip damage over time, creating an endless rain of damage and attacks.

Planta participated in this, as she swung her weapons, slashing, piercing, and blowing through his body. The Demonic Miasma was dying faster than it could regrow, more than half of it already gone within mere seconds.

"Y-YOUUU! S-STOP...! UGGH...! STOOOP!"

FLAAASH!

Suddenly, a heart-shaped red jewel shone brightly within the sludge's interior, everyone quickly realized what it was. Merlinus' crown jewel fragments merged together into a makeshift demonic core.

The enormous explosive shockwave of demonic flames pushed everyone back, as they felt the immense power trying to consume their energies and souls!

"W-What was that?!" Elena asked.

"I don't know, but we almost had our souls eaten!" Mark said, gasping for air.

"That motherfucker never gives it a rest, doesn't he?!" Camilla was already beyond furious.

"HYAAAAAH!"

As that happened, Planta charged forward recklessly, her weapons merging into her own body, as she sacrificed most of her arms and turned them into a single, golden sword.

CRAAASH!

She used the sword to piece through Merlinus exposed core, resisting the soul-consuming aura with her enormous soul, literally tanking damage with it.

"G-GUUGGH?!"

Merlinus groaned in agony, his Demonic Heart Core gained cracks and then shattered into pieces again, severely weakening him even more.

"NOOOOO!"

He cried, attacking Planta and punching her everywhere with massive sludge-made fists, sending her flying away.

BAAAM! BAAAM! BAAAM! BAAAM!

"U-uugh...! My soul...!"

Planta grasped her soul tightly, feeling an immense, sharp pain through all of it, her reckless attack managed to stop everyone from having their souls consumed but she was greatly damaged as a result.

"ELAYNE!"

"MOM?!"

Mark and Elena screamed in horror and anger. Their emotions were aligned, as both of them summoned a giant blazing sword and a black katana, their Auras merging into one.

Their techniques fused, as flames and void became a single slicing barrage of black flames!

"{Void Phoenix's Blade Inferno}!"

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

"GRUUUAAAGGHH...!"

Merlinus was engulfed on countless slicing attacks, several fragments of his soul consumed by them, but ultimately...

"HAAAHH!"

With a furious yell, he unleashed a gigantic spiraling flame towards them, sending them flying away as well!

BAAAM!

Their gigantic body fell near Planta, both of them almost knocked out.

"YOU'RE THE LAST!"

Merlinus faced Rita, Lily, and Melissa, all three of them said one word collectively.

"Shit."

Merlinus transformed into a gigantic draconic jaw, attempting to swallow them completely and be done with it!

"ENOUGH."

Divine Words suddenly reverberated across the ruined city, as a titan made of green and golden light faced Merlinus.

"Y-YOU...?!"

Merlinus eyes widened as he saw the majestic goddess in front of him, her huge, yet delicate-looking hands were pointed at him.

"Merlinus, your crimes are too many to count, your sins too horrendous, and your existence a mistake. In the name of the Gods, I declare your sentence."

Her Divinity manifested, as a gigantic tree made of green and golden light emerged, piercing through Merlinus' entire body.

He couldn't move or even fight back, as the tree grew through his entire body, piercing his soul and sludge-like mass.

"I sentence you to the death of your entire existence. Soul and body, none shall remain!"

Lady Verdant's brightest light manifested through the entire city, as the pillar of light she summoned encompassed everything around her and her foe.

"{Supreme Spiritual Divinity Authority}: {Eternal Yggdrasil}"

FLAAASH!

The Yggdrasil Tree grew through Merlinus constantly, destroying him by an almost subatomic level as his entire being turned into ashes.

"GRYYYYAAAAGGGHHH!"

Merlinus yelled in agony, his entire existence being swallowed by the void, as the endless light of Yggdrasil remained supreme, shining the brightest, at the same time as the sun rose across the horizon.

As the Yggdrasil Tree made of Spiritual Divine Energy grew from Merlinus, a shockwave of light spread through the entire city, all wounded were healed, and even Planta's soul...

FLAAASH!

"A-Ah? My soul...?!"

She couldn't believe it, as she slowly stood up, her draconic form long gone.

"I'm fine..."

She stood up in front of the ruined city, as a beautiful forest spread through all of it, at the same time as she saw the sun rise from the horizon.

"Everyone... Is everyone okay?!"

She didn't have time to celebrate, however.

Elayne was a worrywart after all.

Chapter 1434 Merlinus' End

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FLAAASH!

Merlinus saw the brightest light he had ever seen in his entire long life, the green and golden light of life and nature, which engulfed his soul and body completely.

"T-This light... It's so bright...!"

The light rapidly consumed his physical body, the demonic miasma and the hundreds of thousands of souls within them were purified, as they flew into the skies resembling spheres of light.

His entire being rapidly disappeared, as his soul fell into a limbo of darkness, the last thing he saw was the figure of a goddess purifying his very being.

"So they had to bring a god to stop me..."

Deep down, he smiled, despite facing his ultimate end. He felt proud of his power, he felt proud of the fear he spread through the world.

That a god had to come to beat him down already said a lot about how much they feared him...

And yet...

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

Although a part of him accepted his death, the other couldn't accept it.

As the memories of his life began to rapidly pass through his mind, from his infancy to his childhood, years he had long ago forgotten, he began to slowly go through a retrospective.

He began to see the path he took, and where things went wrong, the steps he took towards his goals, and how badly he ruined his own future.

Like any human, Merlinus was selfish and hypocritical.

Although he said he didn't regret anything, deep down, as he recalled the past and his whole being felt more complete.

He began to regret what he did.

"Why..."

His soul started crying as it was slowly being consumed by a dark limbo of nothingness.

"Why do I regret it now, from all times?"

At this point, it didn't matter, he was going to die.

Considered worse than the Demon Kings, there was nothing and nobody that would help him.

Planta felt no pity for him, only for the Demon Kings because of how they had been forced to become monsters since their birth.

"Unlike them... I chose the path I walked... ultimately, this is all my fault."

As he faced the darkness, he saw light at the end of the horizon.

FLASH!

"T-This is...?"

The light expanded into countless branches across the darkness, reaching all realms and the stars beyond.

A beautiful tree that grew across the universe.

"W-What... What am I seeing?"

His soul's eyes widened, as he couldn't understand what was happening anymore.

The darkness that consumed him began to turn into pure light.

The branches of Yggdrasil that pierced his soul and body, weren't destroying him in the same sense that Planta and the rest believed.

"I'm being...?"

His soul rapidly began to turn into pure light.

The sins he committed, the terribly things he did...

"Why?"

He looked at the branches embracing him.

"WHY?!"

He started crying as he saw the light purifying him and trying to send his soul to the afterlife.

"WHY DO YOU OFFER ME SALVATION?!"

Merlinus felt insulted, after having set himself as the most terrible man alive...

At the end, Yggdrasil...

Decided that his soul needed to pass away.

Damnation was never the answer.

"You fool! Why are you...?!"

As Merlinus was filled with emotions he had not felt for hundreds of years, he realized that the destruction and damage he had suffered would probably never truly heal from the hearts of those he hurt.

"I don't deserve this..."

His soul slowly let go of the light, falling once more into the abyss, as he was consumed by the void piece by piece.

The light expanded its branches, trying to find him.

And yet...

"Leave me alone... I will pay for what I did..."

The light and the branches stopped for a moment, as if glancing at him.

"But..."

Merlinus glanced back at the light, smiling bitterly.

"Thank you..."

The void consumed him completely, dragging him elsewhere.

The endless branches spreading through the stars seemed to remain still.

They didn't cry, despite everything, he was not worth a tear of sadness.

But they only glanced, the being they tried to save ended choosing to die in the void.

TRUUUM!

"Ngh?!"

Yet, despite it all, Merlinus felt an immense tinge of pain.

What remained of his torn apart soul and consciousness had yet to be destroyed.

Something had taken ahold of him.

"Y-You're...?!"

His soul eyes glanced blurrily at the thing in front of him.

A gigantic skeleton, grasping him with his gigantic skeletal claws.

"Merlinus... You've failed me."

His voice reverberated through the darkness; each word was like a painful needle piercing Merlinus' soul fragment.

"T-Thanatos...!"

The old wizard instantly recognized that voice, he had dealt with a lot with him, he was a temporary ally, although one he planned to eventually betray.

And yet now, the tables had turned, he was nothing before him.

"Why did you drag me here... Do you intend to... resurrect me as your wicked undead?! Let me die!"

Merlinus faced him without any fear, he was ready to perish anyways.

"Let you die? But of course... not before I take my prize."

"Your prize- UUGGH?! AAAGGH!"

Merlinus saw the gigantic skeletal claws piercing through his consciousness and then, the core of his existence, the metaphysical and conceptual core all living beings possess within their souls.

An Origin Core!

Crack, crack...!

CRAAASH!

The Origin Core was shattered, as Merlinus felt his own existence fading away.

"U-uggh...!"

His soul eyes glanced in disbelief at what the Demon King of Death was pulling out of that Origin Core.

"A-A crown...?! Where...? How!"

He was completely speechless.

It was the Demon King crown he had developed through his failed ascension, which he believed was destroyed.

"Why did you ever think I helped you for? It was all for this, you were nothing but my pawn, Merlinus. You actually didn't quite fail me... It's not complete but, it's better than nothing."

"G-Give me that back! I worked my whole life for-"

Greed surged on Merlinus' eyes for a moment, only for his existence to rapidly begin shattering.

Crack, crack...!

"What? Didn't you say you wanted to die? I thought you had finally decided to pass away?"

"B-But that's...! Don't you dare...!"

"Don't worry, I will take good care of it! Farewell, Merlinus!"

"THANATOSSS! YOU BASTAAAARD!"

Crack, crack...!

Filled with regret, frustration, anger, sorrow, and hatred, Merlinus screamed, as his existence, and all he was, is, and would be, died.

CRAAASH!

Chapter 1435 The Demon King Of Death's Ambitions

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Merlinus' existence disappeared, as the fruits of his entire life ended landing in the hands of a being he envied and abhorred. If at least Planta had taken them, or the goddess that slayed him, he would have at least felt more satisfied. But it ended up going into the worst hands he could have possibly imagined.

His life felt like it was for nothing, and everything he ever accomplished ended up being for nothing too. The fruits of his labor were stolen, and now with him gone, the Demon King of Death felt truly satisfied, although he would've wished for more.

"The crown is not complete..." He complained, squinting his blazing eyes made of will-o-wisps.  
"However, this should be enough... nonetheless."

The artifact on his hands was floating in midair, made of red and black crystals, its size was as big as fifty meters of length, and it spun constantly.

It had small red and black spikes around it, but several parts of it were missing, looking as if it had become old and slowly eaten away by time.

"If Planta and the others hadn't been so prepared for this, he might've been able to complete the crown..." He sighed.

FLUOSH!

In that moment, he noticed a huge phantasmal flame materialize by the left side of his throne of bones. The Demon King glanced at the being that appeared.

"Ah, there you are, my advisor. You're finally back."

It was a small skeleton wearing black robes and holding a scary-looking staff, the skeleton exuded the aura of a powerful necromancer and dark sorcerer, a Lich.

"My apologies, your majesty, I failed you."

He apologized, kneeling before the Demon King of Death.

"I await for any punishment..."

"Failed me? Hardly, you've done well, Gespair."

"But your majesty, I was unable to help Merlinus enough, and he died, and those accursed spawns of Yggdrasil once more- Ah!"

Gespair gasped in disbelief as he saw the crown floating over his King's skeletal claws.

"T-The crown?! I thought it was shattered?"

"Yes, its physical form might had been destroyed, but these powerful Crowns cannot be easily destroyed. They're abstract embodiments of an authority. I simply extracted this authority from Merlinus' soul and used my powers to materialize it once more."

The Lich was dumbfounded, he had never imagined his king's powers went to this level, but he was both surprised and rejoiced.

"I-Incredible! Then your plans...! Could they come to fruition with this power, your majesty?"

"Hmph..."

Thanatos glanced at the crown, placing it above his skull.

The crown floated, slowly spinning until it rested over his bone, its red and black crystals piercing his bones like roots, spreading their powers.

"Nggh...!"

"Y-Your majesty?!"

The Lich panicked, as he saw his King being in great pain. Usually his bones breaking didn't even cause pain to begin with, but for some reason they did this time.

"Be at ease, I am fine."

The Demon King slowly calmed down, as the crown began glowing slowly becoming brighter.

"I am in the process of assimilation. It will take me less than a week. And once I am done..."

RUMBLE!

The entire underworld started trembling, his army of billions of undead glanced into the distance, the Demon King of Death was growing stronger than ever before.

"I shall personally tear that Gate apart and open our way towards the Realm of the Living!"

His words echoed through the entire underworld, the billions of undead celebrated, raising their skeletal and putrid arms, ghosts howled happily, and zombies danced.

"I PROMISE YOU ALL, THAT ONCE WE STEP OUT, THE WORLD OF THE LIVING SHALL BE NO MORE!"

"OOOOHHHHH!"

The Undead roared in unison, after eons of living confined to this Realm, they finally were stepping out. Old grievances would be finally resolved, they would finally go to the world they had hoped to go back this entire time.

Why? Because the Undead were only born when a Soul had so much attachment to their life that they could not accept the afterlife.

They rejected it, becoming Undead within the Underworld!

This attachment became a deadly curse that bound their souls to their putrid bodies, they might start as more innocent people, but over time, they become corrupted and malicious.

Of course, not everyone is like that either. Natural inhabitants of the Underworld exist too, Undead naturally born from the Underworld's sea of phantasmal souls and their bones and putrid lakes.

These Undead are similar to the Underworld's real inhabitants, and they were much more peaceful beings, until the Demon King of Death started forcing them to become his soldiers.

They were unable to resist, enslaved by his powerful Authority, they could only mindlessly obey, going against their own principles and abandoning their lives of peace and meditation.

"It is finally happening!"

"At long last..."

"Our King is almost ready!"

"Yes! Yes! Gyehehehe!"

In front of the Demon King, several of his strongest retainers, powerful Death Generals laughed in unison, smiling evilly as they celebrated the coming of a new era.

FLUOSH!

The power that Merlinus had cultivated and transformed into the crown now began to slowly flow through the Demon King of Death.

A power that combines several elements together, capable of distorting space and even time.

Corroding Void.

"If he had become a Demon King, Merlinus would have been truly terrifying..." Laughed the Demon King of Death. "With the power of Corrosion and Void on his hands, he could have destroyed the Dimensional Walls between Realms and cause tremendous chaos!"

"But now you possess this power, your majesty!" The Lich by his side spoke. "What do you plan to do with it?"

"Isn't it obvious? I'll go a step further..." Thanatos smiled through his skeletal teeth. "I will bring despair and destruction to all living beings! Until no living being remains between these two worlds! It shall be a Necropolis of pure death and nothing else! Only then, when everyone is an Undead, and below my control... I will be able to achieve my goal."

He glanced at a huge blue crystal behind him, a crystalized fragment of his soul, containing the preserved bodies of a beautiful woman hugging her two children, and their souls.

"And once I can secure a world where we can live together and happily... I will bring you back. And I will make sure to never let you suffer ever again."

Chapter 1436 It's Finally Over

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It was finally over.

As I saw a gigantic spiritual tree rise in the middle of the capital, the death of Merlinus was finally confirmed.

And my soul, which had been damaged a lot, seemed to have healed as well.

That tree wasn't disappearing either, it was only solidifying, going from spiritual to physical, or both.

"Wow..."

I felt relieved, as I slowly stood up.

At the end, I was unable to fight and defeat him on my own.

Without my friends and family, and without Verdant appearing here, we would have most likely lost.

Yeah, it makes me both happy to have friends, and also...

A bit frustrated with myself, with my weakness.

But in the end, that's the wrong way of thinking.

We won't, and this is a victory worth celebrating.

He's finally gone.

"Is everyone else alright?"

I felt relieved, like a huge weight on my shoulders was finally gone.

A foe we've been fighting in the shadows for all this time, he was finally freaking gone!

I couldn't help but smile, a great evil was vanquished today.

"Everyoneeee!"

I ran towards Mark and my daughter, and also Camilla, who were right around the corner.

"Elayne! You're alright?!"

Mark ran to my side, hugging me tightly and lifting me off the ground.

"Yeah I'm fine! That light that Verdant released healed everyone! My soul's fine!"

"Thank goodness!"

Mark was in tears, hugging me tightly.

"Calm down, even if I wasn't healed, I would've been alright..."

I hugged him back, as I giggled.

"I was worried..."

"I know you were, but it's okay! We did it! Elena! Camilla!"

"Mom..."

I quickly freed myself from Mark's grasp and hugged my daughter too.

"It's finally over right?"

"Yes, it is..."

The Demon King of Death was still there though, but for now, we tried to not care about him. Before even daring to do what I'm planning, we'll rest and prepare.

And above all, we need to rebuild this city... Even with Lily's powers, it'll take a while.

"Thank you for everything, Planta..." Camilla sighed. "It's finally over but... so much was lost."

I felt sorry for her, she was perhaps the person that suffered the most through all of this.

I hugged her afterwards, showing her how I felt sorry.

"It's alright, we'll rebuild things together, don't worry." I said.

"Planta... this world..." She muttered. "All of this... it wasn't a simulation, wasn't it?"

"..."

I fell into silence as she said that her eyes were crying tears of sorrow.

"I-it's... Well, you guessed it already," I sighed. "Not even we are so sure how it even works, but... Arcadia is a real world, yes."

"I always kind of had a feeling that some things were too real," she said. "That there was something wrong with this game... I sometimes deep down hoped it was all real as well."

"It's hard to make people that hasn't seen real proof believe it but..." I said, taking out a doughnuts box from a local Donuts Store that is popular all over Canada, and showing it to her.

The item was way too strange and different than anything in-game to ever come from this world, from the game.

"I can bring stuff from the Earth and vice versa... Is this enough of a proof?"

"It is... Oh my god... What do I do now? If I know the truth then..."

"It's fine, it's not like people will believe you out there... But if possible, it should be kept a secret, for now."

"...I understand, though what's going on?! The developers of this game... why did they even made it this way if it's a real world and..."

"We don't know either," Mark said, crossing his arms. "But we know that the dangers of this world are also connected to our own. If we don't take care of certain threats in time, sooner or later they'll affect our own world."

"The First Contact... then that was...?!" she gasped.

"Yeah, it was when we fought the Demon King of Miasma," I nodded. "He did that... and the world was changed forever."

We decided to not share with her about the "Underworld" that had been hiding in plain sight even before the First Contact though.

"Dammit..."

She sighed, gripping her fists tightly.

"Then that means my husband...! Ah, I need to go see him!"

"C-Camilla?! What happened?"

She quickly began running away.

"I felt it, Planta! He... he died! Maybe... I have to see if something can be done!"

"T-The King died?!"

I couldn't believe it, quickly deciding to run to her side.

"Everyone, let's go!"

I quickly released my Aura, grabbing everyone with it and flying towards the soldiers, which had all gathered within a huge area of the city that had become a massive grassland with a nearby lake.

Everything had changed so much it was almost unreal, the ruins of the city now covered with plants, grass, and flowers, there were even small lakes and rivers flowing around.

"Plantaaaa!"

"We're hereee!"

"Heeeey!"

"Ah! It's Rita, Lily, and Melissa!"

I descended to grab them along, as my Aura, resembling a giant serpentine dragon grasped them with its large claws and lifted them up.

"W-What the hell is this? Have your aura always been this way?" Rita asked.

"I-I don't know? I mean it was kind of like this...?" I wondered. "Or not? Well it doesn't matter! For now we have to hurry!"

"We won though!" Lily smiled. "But why isn't anyone celebrating?"

"What happened?" Melissa asked, noticing Camilla's worried face.

"I'll tell you once we get there..."

Once we finally got there, I descended as quickly as I could, running to the side of the soldiers. There we met David, who was sitting next to someone.

Someone resting over the grasslands, covered with the flowers that the soldiers had picked up and placed by his side.

"N-No...!"

Camilla ran towards him, crying, the Queen's presence made the rest of the soldiers' step back.

"Y-Your majesty...!"

David tried to call her, but she didn't listen.

She ran towards her husband, crying over him.

"Please wake up! Everyone's healed! Dear! Please!"

She hugged him, as she started crying.

"No...! Don't leave me alone! Luminous! Please!"

I walked there, trying to use an Elixir I had, an item capable of reviving the dead.

[You are unable to use the [Greater Spirit Elixir (S Grade)] Item to revive the target because they aren't a Player or an NPC with a [Player] Title.]

[You possess no items capable of reviving NPC without a [Player] Title.]

"A-Ah... It doesn't work?! Come on!"

I screamed furiously, throwing the bottle into the ground as it shattered into pieces.

There was nothing we could do...

Everyone remained in silence, as Camilla wept while hugging her husband.

"While I'm still here..."

FLAAASH!

Yet, in that moment, we saw her.

Verdant appeared behind us, her gigantic body was already beginning to disappear.

But even then, she extended her hand towards the King.

"Verdant! C-Can you revive him? You can right?"

"...His soul is gone."

"E-Eh?"

"However, there's hope."

Her eyes glanced at us, as Camilla looked back at the Goddess.

"I will preserve his body with my divinity, it will keep his body alive... However, without a soul, he cannot revive."

"W-What do we do? Where is his soul at?!"

"The King of this Kingdom was a man too attached to his people... He mustn't had passed away yet."

"What... do you mean?"

"His Soul... it is in the Underworld."

Chapter 1437: There's Hope

-----

King Luminous had died.

I didn't even know how he died at all.

But according to David, he died fighting, he had unleashed all the power of his Heroic Bloodline.

And he ended up slaying dozens of Demonic Wizards, almost all of the ones that remained fighting them even after the Demonic Domain was destroyed.

The reason why he looked a bit younger than before, with long hair and everything was because by unleashing this power and awakening as a hero for that small time, he gained immense power.

Enough to finally put an end to this war aside from defeating Merlinus, and save everyone else that had survived until then, before they were to get killed by the Demonic Beasts and the Demonic Wizards.

He died as a hero, and that only makes his passing the more depressing... I could barely hold my tears, and I ended up crying a bit.

I had barely interacted with this man on very formal occasions, for only a few weeks but... I already felt like I lost a valuable friend.

Above all, I suppose I also cried because I felt sad for Camilla, she really loved him and seeing her like this made me so sad.

However, there was still some hope, with Lady Verdant keeping his body "alive" through her powers, the only thing we need to do is...

Find his soul in the underworld.

Okay maybe it's not that easy.

"Y-You mean that there's a way to save my husband?" Camilla asked her. "Really?!"

"Yes, you'll need a special artifact to bring his soul to the Mortal World, however," explained Verdant. "As you've seen already with the many souls purified out of Merlinus' body, they immediately pass away and disappear, moving towards a different plane."

"S-So that's how it is..." Camilla cleaned her tears, looking at Verdant as she dissipated. "Would you please help me, Lady Verdant? I will do anything you ask me... But please, tell me what I must do!"

Verdant's eyes were full of motherly kindness, her gigantic hand tenderly caressed her body, especially her head.

"Of course, there's nothing you need to do for me, but perhaps to my people, the druids," said Verdant. "I don't know in specific what they need, but help them prosper more, and also all other demi-human races, if possible. I had heard this country had difficulties befriending them."

"Ah yeah..." Camilla nodded. "I'm sorry, it is my fault, I've been negligent despite being a ruler... If only I had worked harder maybe..."

"Your Kingdom is in ruins now, but it can be rebuilt. Thanks to Planta, the people have been saved. There is little point in lingering on past mistakes, it will not help you move forward," Verdant explained. "The artifact for his soul can only be crafted by Necromancers. I cannot help you with this... However, I will protect your husband's body."

FLAAASH!

A beam of green light reached the tree in the middle of the city, rapidly moving the King's body there, and crystalizing him within a spirit crystal of the highest quality.

"I've left his body resting there, once his soul is brought to the mortal world, it shall be naturally brought back to his body, because it still alive thanks to me," Verdant said. "Planta..."

Then, she glanced at me.

"Yes?"

"I know you plan to go to the Underworld, and unlike now, I will not be able to help you defeat the Avatar of Death..."

"I see..."

"You must grow stronger. Visit the Fey Wilds whenever you have free time. I will help you awaken the powers hidden within you."

"P-Powers?"

"Yes, the power of a Goddess that dwell within your Soul."

"G-Goddess?!"

I couldn't believe it, am I really what she's saying?

I am fairly sure I haven't ascended nor gone to heaven or something so-

"It still immature, but I can help you let it blossom. Relying on the System will not help you grow stronger anymore, not until you do your Trial. Therefore, until then, you must surpass your limits through this method."

She was already almost completely gone.

"I get it... Thank you, Verdant. I will go there in the next few days, maybe!"

"Very well, have a good rest, all of you need it. One step at a time, everyone. Don't hurry things up, take your time. As long as we do things together, we can always push through."

The inspiring words of a goddess filled everyone's hearts with hope. The many knights and soldiers that lost loved ones glanced at the Goddess while nodding and shedding tears, a few others that had given up despairing regained some of the light in their eyes.

Especially Camilla.

"I happen to be a Necromancer myself," said Camilla. "Do you know how this artifact is conceived, Verdant?"

"I only know a few things," Verdant said. "However, I must go rest for now... Tomorrow, come to me with Planta to the Fey Wilds, I am sure you're worthy of entering now."

"I see... Thank you for everything," Camilla nodded, smiling. "I never believed in god before but... I guess they are real now, huh?"

"Hahah... I am not as strong as an idealized god but... I always try to help when I can."

Verdant disappeared after saying that, as everything became silent for a moment, we were surrounded by beautiful nature, the sound of birds singing and cicadas resonated as the morning sun rose above the horizon.

"Haah... I'm really tired, and it's morning already, I think we'll be logging out for now, Camilla." I said. "I wish I could stay for more but... we need to go to sleep."

"I know," Camilla nodded. "You can go, once you're back, we can talk about what to do and whatnot."

"Alright, thanks," I nodded.

There were a couple of system messages popping up, but I couldn't really bother myself to check them right now and save them for tomorrow.

Once we logged out, we placed the VR devices at the side and then slept right away...

What a day...

But why didn't Camilla log out though?

She should also rest... I hope she's not pulling all-nighters, that's unhealthy!

Chapter 1438: The Developers

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Inside a large office room where dozens of workers were typing on their keyboards and watching several gigantic screens showing constantly changing data and programs, and the images of in-game footage, the large team celebrated, as they saw the gigantic monster be vanquished by the combined efforts of everyone.

"I-It's done! Merlinus was finally defeated!"

"We didn't have to intervene at the end, what a relief..."

"I can't believe they did it! That guy was stronger than any other content available at the moment..."

"Well, Verdant did the last blow, without her help they wouldn't had been able to slay him in time before he acquired more of his powers."

"Verdant, huh? So she's one of the Goddess implemented recently, an embodiment of the whole continent's Nature Soul. She's unique and unlike the others."

"Both have their limits I suppose, but unlike the other ones she can do more things freely, and isn't... well, you know."

"Yeah..."

The people talked with one another, overall looking very happy and content with what had happened, a large logo above the wall where they were read [Nexus Corporations] with a big X and CO in the background, looking both stylish and futuristic.

"Director, did you see the news?"

A woman with long black hair that seemed to be Japanese walked towards a man standing there, glancing at the screens in silence.

His face didn't seem to change at all, he was tall, very tall, with long silvery-white colored hair, almost metallic in color.

His eyes were also dark silver of color, and his skin very pale. Wearing a gray suit with a red tie, he noticed the worker walking to his side with an almost robotic glance.

"Yes, I saw... It is good. I am relieved."

"You don't seem... so happy though."

"...There are still many threats."

"But it's a great step forward!"

"...I suppose I agree, yes. I'm glad."

The man smiled faintly, although his face remained almost expressionless even now.

"..."

The woman sighed, as she noticed the director quickly looking at his clock.

"That's enough for today everyone, the second team will be arriving in a minute, you can rest for the rest of the week."

"Thank you director."

"See you next week then."

"I hope everything goes well!"

The people walked out of the office as new workers stepped forward, the director greeted them before he went on his own way.

The woman glanced at him from afar, following him while trying to be sneaky, her presence lowered through a small rune within her left hand, glowing with a black light encompassing her.

She saw the man walk through several corridors, and then enter another room, she looked inside from the open door, noticing him standing in front of someone.

It looked like a hospital room, despite being in the middle of a huge company building.

Someone was resting over a hospital bed, it looked like a girl, in her late teens. She had pale white hair like the Director, and her eyes were closed.

She was connected to various tubes and other objects, and over her eyes and forehead there was a small object connecting her mind to a virtual reality.

The girl looked very weak and slender; she had been in a coma for many years already.

"T-This is...?"

The woman gasped for a moment, covering her mouth as she glanced at the girl.

"You can come in if you want to."

"A-Ah!"

The woman was shocked, she was sure she had used a strong charm to hide her presence.

And yet the director's silver-colored eyes could see through everything.

"You don't have to be afraid, I will overlook this misconduct and not fire you."

He smiled gently.

"Were you curious who she is?"

"D-Director... Um, yes."

The director looked back at the girl, for the first time, the woman saw genuine feelings within his eyes.

"She's my daughter."

"Oh..."

The woman slowly walked to his side, as she looked at the girl, with pitying eyes.

"What... happened to her?"

"She fell into a coma 13 years ago, when she was twelve. An accident left her with brain damage. Doctors her brain had essentially died."

"..."

The woman remained in silence, shocked. One of the reasons being that despite being 25 years of age, the girl didn't look older than twelve, it was as if her body also stopped aging once she fell into a coma.

"But they were wrong. I tried many methods to heal her, but nothing worked... However, I discovered something, as I delved into the hidden world."

"Something?"

"The nature of the soul. Thoughts and personalities are stored within the soul as well. The brain is not everything."

"..."

"I discovered my daughter's soul was still within her body, but because of her brain having been almost shut down, she was unable to express herself, to live properly."

"T-Then this is...? You... this whole project...?"

"It wasn't made just for her, no. There was another purpose too, other benefactors. But above all, I agree to work on this large-scale project because of her, yes."

"All for your daughter?"

"The Virtual Soul Engine was made by me. I designed it with the resources and efforts of the Nexus Magus Family. It is the magnum opus built upon all of my four hundred years of work."

"I-I knew you were long lived but... so long?"

"Indeed... It is well known around the world of magus that the Nexus Family live for very long. My daughter here, was going to become my heir, she would inherit the family and everything else..."

"..."

The woman sighed, feeling both sorry, but also amazed about everything she was learning.

The director was someone very trusting too, she could've been a spy or something, yet he told her everything anyway.

"And you created the Virtual Soul Engine to help her soul awaken within her body?"

"Something like that... I wanted to also... to also give her another chance."

"H-How so?"

"By letting her live in that other world, she would be able to experience everything she hasn't been able to experience through most of her life, as she was only twelve when she fell into a coma."

Chapter 1439: The Digital Soul Engine

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The director revealed things to his worker that she never expected to learn from his words alone, the child he was looking at with such tender eyes, it was his daughter.

"Okano-san."

"Y-Yes?"

"Do you know what a Soul is made of?"

"A Soul? I... I come from a small Magus Family, so I was never able to... study such things."

"I suppose you don't know well, it's fine. I can explain to you."

The man slowly walked towards the window, glancing at the big city of Tokyo in silence.

He then touched the window's glass, and left traces of blue essence within it.

Slowly, the entire glass was covered with blue essence.

"T-This is...? The Magic of the Nexus Family!" Okano thought. "Digital Projection Magic...! The Magic that can "digitize" the world itself! The inventors of most digital technology, without a doubt."

FLUOSH!

Suddenly, from the window's glass, the projection changed into a small golden flame.

"This is a soul, Okano-san. When we glance at it, what do you see?"

"A mass of ethereal energy?"

"Yes, the Soul is made of Ethereal Energy, as I've investigated, it is called Soul Essence. But what is Soul Essence? What composes it?"

"...I have no idea."

"Nobody does apparently, it is a mystery. A new type of element altogether, one that exists within a different plane. It is a "phantom molecule" as they say. And also an "interdimensional element", it exists within several planes of existence at once. That is a soul, wonderful isn't it?"

"Impressive..."

"Souls can be controlled, possessed, and even destroyed through Magic. However, has anybody ever been able to create a Soul? No. Souls simply come to us, to living beings. We don't know where they

come from, where they're born. We only know they exist. Not even the Gods can create them out of nothing."

"..."

"So I discovered a way to infuse the soul into another body, and create a Digital Avatar that can become real within that world, and exists as long as the Soul exists in that world."

"So that's how..."

"Indeed, that's how the Digital Soul Engine works."

"A-Are you really sure this is fine, director? To tell me this..."

"Everyone in this building knows how it works. Nobody can replicate it, however. Only members of our family."

"I see..."

She quickly realized why he was carefreely telling her about the secret behind this powerful Engine, and how things worked to an extent.

However, there were still many mysteries left, such as what was the System exactly, and why the World of Arcadia was the way it was.

And its mysterious and enigmatic connection to Earth.

"So the Beta Testing that began over ten years ago..."

"Indeed, my daughter was the first of them. She was very confused at first, but I accompanied her through her journey, introduced her to this new world, and helped her slowly adapt. I visit her every so often now, but she has built a life in that world now."

"...Aren't you happy or...?"

"Well, I can't really say. I imagined that over the years... My dear daughter would begin to slowly grow stronger, her Soul in specific would mature. And once her soul was to become strong enough, she would finally regain her consciousness in this world."

"Digital Avatars... Once connected to the real world's body..."

"Indeed, like it's happening with Planta and her friends, the power of the Avatar can be shared with the real body, and so, even a normal person can become immensely powerful."

"If such power was widespread and shared, then the entire world would..."

"Maybe it would change forever, yeah. But unless I allow it, nobody can awaken such powers. Planta and her friends... her family. I trust them. I've seen through their souls and hearts. But not everyone can be given this power."

"..."

Okano remained in silence, glancing at the girl.

"What do you think will happen to her now, Director? What are you hoping to achieve?"

"There are many things we want to achieve here... Saving a world that was destroyed was one of such things. And well, to save my daughter and help her wake up one day."

"...Then your daughter... the man she loved in that world..."

"..."

The Director looked sad as he glanced through the window.

"She loved him... I can immediately tell that she's incredibly sad. And it pains me that I am unable to do anything for her."

"But Planta and the rest are planning to do something, even she said so..."

"You want to have hope as well, Okano?"

"Yes... I do... I cannot let go of this hope. As stupid as it might seem, we must trust them."

The man smiled.

"I never thought back then that she would build such a huge life in there, marry and even... have a child," the man said. "I love my grandson, despite how I've never met him in person, and my son-in-law was also my family."

"It's painful to be a whole world apart from her and her life..." he said. "Even with my Avatar, I cannot reach her now that the Beta has ended."

"But why don't you use another Avatar?"

"We can't, those that have chosen this specific Avatar cannot choose another. It has been bound to our Souls after all, just like you have bonded with her Avatar."

"..."

The woman sighed, looking down, as she readjusted her glasses.

"Um... Then..."

"Please count on me as well! I'll help however I want... I think you should've told me before! I would have happily-"

"It's alright, Okano-san. This is not a problem you should trouble yourself with. My dear daughter... She will wake up once the right time comes."

The man caressed his daughter's little hand for a bit, sitting by her side.

"As the one that Blessed her, your responsibility is in protecting her and giving her opportunities, to raise her well, so she can help us achieve the future we want to reach."

"I... I understand, director."

The man smiled gently at her.

"Now, I would like to have a moment of privacy, if you excuse me..."

"Of course... I'll leave. Thank you for everything director, have a good day."

"You too, Okano-san."

The man looked at the woman walk away, and the door to be closed gently.

He glanced at his daughter sorrowfully, beginning to cry.

"Is that world... and the life you built there... what you really wanted?"

He felt lonely, and melancholic.

His daughter had chosen the other world rather than this one.

He knew she could wake up with enough effort, her soul had grown so strong now.

And yet the girl...

She was too attached to Arcadia, to her family, to her Kingdom, to her people.

"You've become someone incredible in that world... And I am so proud."

Despite being so happy for her, he couldn't help but feel sorrowful anyway.

For the death of his son-in-law, and also because of how much his daughter had compromised herself into this world.

"I wonder... will you come back one day?"

He looked at the portrait of his family, it showed him, his daughter, and his wife.

A beautiful woman with a bright smile, someone that died in the accident that left his daughter in a coma.

"What would you do in my situation, my love?"

Chapter 1440 Dream 1

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When I went to sleep, I was so tired I didn't realize how deep I slumbered. To the point I felt my very soul was pulled elsewhere completely.

I felt like I was drifting across an endless sea of darkness, it frightened me at first, but as I calmed myself down, light began to sparkle across the dark horizon.

Small sparkles of light, resembling tiny stars in the distance, the dark skies were rapidly decorated by them, everywhere.

The stars sparkled and danced across the dark sky, as I slowly felt like I was getting closer to somewhere within this sea of stars.

I noticed at first but a small concentration of stars in the distance, slowly fusing into a huge golden and white branch.

It spread into the infinite cosmos, and as I saw one branch, more were revealed right afterwards, each one shining brightly and beautifully.

"Those branches... Is this a tree?"

I couldn't help but feel amazed as I was drawn closer to this, I saw countless souls flying towards the branches, across the stars, everywhere.

"Why am I here? Is this another weird dream?"

I recalled another Dream, one where... I might have visited someone that might've represented the entire world or something.

It was confusing, and even now, I was completely lost too.

"What do I do? Uhh..."

I felt a bit nervous; I really didn't know what to do. Should I wait here and just wake up or do something?

Perhaps I can do something.

There's no voice guiding me this time or anything of that sort.

Perhaps...

This might be some opportunity.

These stars and this tree, they must be connected, and perhaps there's a reason I am here.

"Well then, here goes nothing...!"

I slowly swam towards the gigantic branches, as I realized the water I was swimming through was a starry sky, and once I got close enough, the water felt dried until it dissapeerd.

Then, I was floating in the empty air, or perhaps space.

"Woah...!"

I evaded small spheres of light, perhaps tiny stars or concentrations of energy.

Souls passed around me, always making sure to evade me or even spin around my body, but never touching me.

I didn't dare to touch them, these small Souls were people, I am sure.

"But what is this exactly?"

I glanced down, finally having a good view of it.

It was immense, a gigantic tree made of white and golden light and also composed of stars and cosmic light.

Nebulas of all colors wrapped around its body beautifully too, making it seem even more majestic.

I could just stand here staring at this beautiful scene for ages...

"Wow..."

It almost made me feel shocked to the core, as if my whole life had been nothing but insignificant to this being, to what the universe could truly make.

This was without a doubt, a beautiful being, something that surpassed all I've seen before.

I ended up being rapidly moved towards its gravity field.

Slowly, my own body became a falling star, shining brightly across the darkness of the cosmos.

Until I reached it and touched it for a second.

FLAAASH!

An incredibly bright light consumed my entire soul and body, as I felt something within me rapidly grow larger.

What was hidden within me began to blossom, as the enormous tree seemed to even baptize me with this power.

"W-What is happening anymore? Who are you? Can you talk?"

"I can."

"E-Eh?!"

That scared me for a bit, I really didn't expect the tree to talk back.

"But only now, that we've made a connection, my child."

"C-Child? Who are you exactly? What's going on? Wait, are you Yggdrasil?"

"Quite so, or something like that."

"S-Something like that? Do you not even know what you are?"

"What a rude child you are, asking such questions... out of nowhere."

"A-Ah! I'm sorry... I didn't mean to-"

Her voice sounded like an older woman, perhaps what would belong to a strict grandmother with a very serious tone.

"What I am or what I'm does not matter right now. But you could say I am many things at once, and yet I am none. I might've once used to be a tree, or maybe not."

"..."

"I am nothing and I might be something too, do you understand?"

"...No."

"Well, maybe one day you'll get it, it is not yet the time anyway."

"The time... for what?"

She remained silent for a moment, as I asked her another thing.

"Um, are you from outer space? Does this mean there's aliens out there? Wait, no, I mean... of course, Arcadia is an alien world already but... I thought that there wasn't much else after all, there's..."

"To explain it to you would take millions of years, your questions are not simple."

She seemed very strict and also didn't seem to like talking as much as I imagined.

"Are you connected to Arcadia and Earth?"

She remained in silence for a while, as I saw the souls fly towards her.

"I am the one that connects."

"T-The one that connects?"

"Arcadia and Earth are two faces of the same coin."

"W-Wha...?"

I felt speechless, what did she mean by that?

I am fairly sure that if you see them from space they're two whole different planets!

And yet...

"The many Realms and Planes that exists, they're all worlds of their own. Who do you think connects it all? Me, of course."

"Oh wow... So you're like a super god!"

"I am nothing, and yet I might be something. A "super god" is no title fitting for my existence, my daughter."

"Um, then what... are you? And why do you call me your daughter?"

She remained in silence for a moment, and then responded again.

"Because you are my daughter, perhaps not of flesh and blood, but of soul. You and your family were born from me after all. And so they gave birth to me once more."

"...Huh?"

"You've gone through a Soul Metamorphosis after what happened to Arcadia and your family. I suppose you no longer remember even your original name."

"M-My original name?"

"It matters not... that identity has already been taken by someone else, an earthling at that."

"H-Huh?!"

I seriously don't understand anything right now!

Why can't these divine beings stop talking so cryptically all the time?