

Brand New 861

Chapter 861 Enjoying A Meal While Reaching Max Level

Ding!

[You have progressed in your trial!]

[Craft Equipment of the Unique+ Rank and B+ Grade at minimum]: [300/1000] -> [1230/1000]

[Craft Equipment of the Mythic Rank and A+ Grade at minimum]: [0/5] -> [2/5]

[Craft Equipment of the Legendary Rank and S Grade at minimum]: [0/1]

Wait, what?!

"You guys' advanced way too much! It's already past the one thousand pieces of equipment! I didn't even realize..." I gasped in shock. "My Avatar has really been working non-stop. All thanks to the Wizard Ring that gives me Satiation when spending Mana...!"

"Hahahah! Well, we wanted to work hard. Ambil here told me you had a commission with the King of this Land, Lady Planta." Hammer said. "As our Queen, we couldn't simply let you do all the job, we are your subjects and also members of the society you're building, of course we would help as much as we can."

"Thank you, still, you overdid it today." I sighed. "Ambil, how many weapons did the King commissioned anyways?"

"Roughly five thousand." Ambil said. "There are other blacksmiths working for the Kingdom though, if we were the only ones then we would need to make over a hundred thousand. The King is completely rearming all his men with higher quality equipment. He's preparing for a war at any moment now."

"F-Five thousand...?!" I asked in shock. "Okay... I guess we'll have to keep working for more days then. Well, its not like the pay is bad, and more reputation and trust with the King never hurts, right?"

"Yeah, now I feel bad, I should help you out a bit now." Mark sighed. "I should had stayed behind, maybe."

"Don't say such things, you were a pillar on defeating Magicus." I reprimanded my clumsy boyfriend. "We can work later, another day. There's not too much of a rush I think. We still got one week, and a half left. Though, preferably, I want to get this done by today. I am tempted to just forge three more items of A+ Grade and another of S Grade..."

"Can you?" Wondered Mark, feeling slightly worried if I had the power to do so. "I know you're skilled and all, but won't it take you a lot of time? It could leave you terrible exhausted too. Maybe another day? Tomorrow? I've thinking for a while, you're overexerting yourself too much, Planta. Let's rest, alright?"

"Hmmm... Well, I do feel hungry, and it is getting late. Okay, fine. Let's leave it for tomorrow, but tomorrow it is!" I said, pointing at his nose. "I want to get this done with so we can finally unlock this place fully and see what's inside. I want to get whatever is in there and stop the cultists from getting into it first, somehow."

"True, it would be better to enter first ourselves." Mark agreed. "With your Wards, we don't really have to worry about intruders now though. You're truly like a Guardian Angel." He gently caressed my chin.

"Ahem!" Ambil coughed. "Alright, if we're done here let's go back! How about we cook up some dinner?"

"A-Ah! Sure!" I nodded, feeling slightly embarrassed.

As we moved upstairs and then began to cook some quick dinner for everyone, I checked some new system notifications. Or well, the notifications my other body had received, which were ignored and finally transferred back to me once I fused with it.

Ding!

[You have successfully created with the help of your subjects 930 pieces of Unique+ Rank Equipment and a single piece of Mythic Rank Equipment!]

[Because you've only done the finishing touches, the gained Skill Proficiency and EXP has been reduced accordingly.]

[You gained +140.500 Skill Proficiency.]

[The [Spiritual Cuisine & Alchemy: Lv3] [Hephaestus' Blacksmithing: Lv3] [Hephaestus' Smithing Hammer Techniques: Lv3] [Divine Forging Flame Spirit Furnace: Lv2] Skills have leveled up!]

[You gained +232.500.000 EXP.]

[Level Up!]

[Your Level has increased from level 179 to Level 180/180!]

[All your Stats have increased. You Earned Bonus Stat Points and Skill Points.]

[You have reached Max Level!]

[You can now Evolve and Rank Up once you decide which new Path you want to take.]

[Two New Evolution Options have been found based in your collected Materials.]

[A Third New Evolution Option has been detected, but the materials needed for it are not sufficient.]

[Once you Evolve, you will be able to Rank Up your Class and Subclass based on your previous choices, existing Skills, Titles, and Feats, and the new Evolution.]

So there are three new Evolution Options, two of them are ready with my materials available, while there's a third mysterious Evolution Option that has yet to get all the Materials? Interesting. I would love to check that out, but I am currently eating some delicious paella with my friends.

"What's this?! The flavors are so rich! This rice you got with noodles?! And there's meat, fish, mushrooms and even shrimp! Aren't these little guys expensive?" Asked Ambil while devouring his meal.

"Are they?" I wondered. I didn't even buy those in this world, I just brought them from Earth without any problems. I don't know what to think when I do this though. I'm sure the Gods never thought I would use the power they gifted to me to just bring Earth's meals to Arcadia.

"I love these dumpling things! And this fried rice!" Acorn was eating something I had saved in my inventory before, from an order of Chinese food we didn't eat completely, it was still warm thanks to the inventory's ability to retain heat. "Lady Planta's food's always a bliss to eat!"

"Hmm, without a doubt. I love drinking this coffee we grow back home alongside some sweet desserts she prepares with Lady Titania." Nieve was happily eating her fourth cake slice already, while drinking some hot coffee with whipped cream on top. "They're like a divine blessing."

"T-This is really sweet..." Johanna was shocked once she tried the fruit and cream cakes. "But this one's taste the best!" She loved the cheesecake the most, apparently. Especially the one with a berry sauce. "The berries are so fresh, and cold too! They're tastier than the ones that grow back home..."

"Hahaha! Amazed by my bestie's meals, little brat?" Rita laughed. "Will you admit she's amazing now?"

"Ugh... Well, maybe a bit great..." Johanna crossed her arms, reluctantly.

Several shadows moved across the interior of the Luminous Kingdom's Castle, a beautiful woman with long, crimson-red hair glanced at the approaching figures, as they swiftly stopped their charge, emerging from within the darkness. Their entire bodies were covered on black clothes, though she could see their crimson eyes clearly.

"My shadows, how was it? I did hear a bit from my husband and David, but what did you see?" The woman asked. She was nobody else than the current Queen of the Luminous Kingdom, Camilla.

"Reporting in, milady." One of the shadows spoke. "Lord Magica did indeed create a pact with the cultists. He had become subject to their experimentations."

"He became, according to his last words, the first subject to their new experiment, a demonic heart crystal capable of transforming people into Lesser Demons, not just chimeras or monsters."

"It seems the Cultists true goal is to merge both nether and miasma to create some sort of demonic connection to The Other Side, they are commuting with the Great Forbidden One within its depths, seeking his powers."

"..." Camilla squinted her eyes. "I knew that their goals and ambitions were more than just serving the Demon King of Miasma. The more loyal subjects of this Demon King died alongside him, when they tried to bring him to this continent through the Forest of Beginnings. Planta and her friends managed to stop that, thankfully. However, it seems that their leader is dead set on achieving even higher goals. Are they truly trying to become Demons? But why?"

"Aside from the incredible power they would gain... They might want to rebel against the System set in place, milady. They want to break through the boundaries they've been sealed, or something like that."

"I see." Camilla nodded. "Were there any residual pieces left of Magica we could take to examine in detail?"

"Yes, although Lady Planta purified the place, we managed to stealthily take a few small shards of his chest crystal and some of his flesh and blood." One of them, resembling a little girl, brought to Camilla a crystal glass with the materials.

"Excellently done." Camilla nodded, she seemed pleased, until suddenly, she glared angrily at them, her Shadows suddenly felt a tremendous pressure surging from her body, making them tremble in fear. They felt they couldn't breathe and their bodies were completely paralyzed. "However, you could have perfectly helped Planta defeat Lord Magica before he transformed to begin with. Why did you choose not to aid her, when I explicitly told you to do so when needed? What do you have to say for yourselves?"

Suddenly, several other Shadows that didn't go to that mission appeared around her, dozens after dozens of Vampiric figures, glaring at the ones that went with their judgmental crimson eyes.

"T-That's... Ugh, because we thought it was unnecessary to reveal our presences yet." Muttered their leader, the smaller of them. "Lady Planta and her allies... defeated Magicus, even after his transformation."

"We thought... it would be convenient to see how far he could go, so we could better gauge his... power."

"We apologize for acting on our own... But we did so think about you, milady. We wanted to bring you better results."

Camilla's pressuring aura slowly receded, as she sighed, accommodating on her seat and then crossing her legs, she nodded, as she waved her hand.

"Very well, I understand." She smiled, approaching their leader and caressing her chin, and then grasping her little neck tightly. "Whenever you decide to act on your own, think about the consequences of what your actions will bring, alright? I will not be so merciful next time."

"Y-Yes, understood, milady."

She let them go, as they quickly dispersed amidst the darkness, Camilla sighed, not really liking to play along with the whole merciless and ruthless vampire queen, but if she wasn't like this, her Vampires would do whatever they wanted, so it was better to keep them on check.

Pretty words usually don't work well on them, they're beings of darkness and bloodshed, they will only value those that are strong above all things. Therefore, she always has to show off her strength to make sure they don't try anything funny.

They have been her most loyal NPCs since she started her path to become a Vampire Queen though, and she would rather keep it that way.

"How is the squadron sent to spy on the Magician Tower?" She asked, the shadows surrounding her quickly twisted, four vampires emerged out of them.

Unlike the rest, these four were wearing fancy-looking clothes, showing they were of a much higher rank than the previous group, long silver, purple, or red hair covered their shoulders. Sharp crimson eyes glowing brightly. The one leading them, however, had purple eyes instead.

"Yes, my lady." He said, he was tall and rather lanky, with long silvery-white hair, and long, purple nails. "We've been unable to break through the detection wards set up around it. If we ever dare to enter, we will be instantly found out."

"Hmph..." Camilla sighed. "There should be a way to disable the ward. Or do I need to do everything myself? Are you that useless?"

"W-We apologize..." The man kneeled. "I will do my utmost best to find a way to disable the ward and also to not be detected!"

"You better do, Hendrick. I have a lot of patience, but even you know it has a limit." Camilla sighed. "By working on this, you're also helping the Kingdom, you know? Because if I truly wanted, I could simply rampage the entire tower and find out anyways- But that wouldn't be elegant, especially for a Queen such as myself. Let's do things a bit more... decently, shall we?"

"I am well aware of your prowess, my queen." He nodded. "We will prove to you that we are more than just petty servants. We will bring you results no matter what. To leave you do everything yourself would only make us feel useless after all."

"Good, then go." She nodded. "Hush."

She waved her hand, all the shadows disappeared, seconds before a little child with blonde hair came rushing inside of the throne room.

"Mama! Where are you? Oh!"

"I was just admiring the moonlight, dear. Have you not gone to sleep yet?"

"Aww! But I wanted to practice swordsmanship!"

"It's already getting quite late, time to go to bed, Gustav~"

Chapter 863 A Truth That Hurts

The King admired the capital from the highest floor of the castle, glancing the entire Kingdom he and his ancestors have built over many generations. Arcadia was a world of dangers, magic, and bloodshed, and to forge a place to belong in such a chaotic world was already a feat by itself.

"When I was younger, I used to take all of this for granted... How foolish I was."

Every King that once founded one of the Kingdoms or Empires of this world was a Hero of their own caliber, powerful enough to go against the most terrific of beasts, and some even confronting the Demon Kings that appeared across history.

However, after so many eons since the "Age of Heroes" which was the time when the major Kingdoms and Empires were established and the Demon Kings resurrected one after another for the first time, a seemingly eternal peace was achieved.

Such peace, however, did not last long, with the arrival of the System, Players, and the Gods, whom many believed to be either dead or on a great slumber after many churches never received any more of their messages, the world of Arcadia once more changed.

The "Age of Players" came, people from another world which the Gods blessed with incredible power, capable of reviving even if killed, and with the task of defeating the Demon Kings, whose resurrections came one after another, without even a previous warning from the Gods.

"It has been roughly a century since the System appeared, but Players only started appearing ten years ago..." He thought. "Due to the protection of the System, they cannot harm us, usually. And since their arrival that we've been working together to defeat the menaces of this world. But even then, they're too dangerous on their own right. There are many malicious ones that find roundabout ways, even to the point of employing us people to kill one another, offering the perpetrators money and goods. But, well, not all of them are like this. Some are good, my wife is one, after all."

As she thought these things, the King clenched his fists, thinking about what he had heard from David today. Aside from the battle report, the news about Lord Magica betraying them and turning himself into a demon really impacted him more than he imagined.

It meant that any moment, more nobles could do the same, there was no real safety anymore. The cult was growing too strong too quickly. And above all, what he learned made him doubt even his closest retainers and friends.

"Magica, on his last breath... He said that Herbellstein... My stepfather, was part of the cult- not only that, but he also said he was even more dangerous than him, someone at such a high position he was right below their leader."

David's words, filled of sorrow and frustration, could still echo through his mind. The King felt utter dread to imagine someone so strong and so trusted by the entire Kingdom to be a traitor all along.

Herbellstein wasn't just David's stepfather, it was also one of the King's father figures, perhaps filling the role of a father his own true father never did. He was someone that taught him how to cultivate his body and swordsmanship.

Even more, he occasionally visited them, teaching his own son swordsmanship techniques! The utter dread he felt when he realized someone so trusted and beloved, could be a two-faced demon, planning the death of not only him and his wife, but his beloved child was incredibly overwhelming.

"This bastard... Has he been lying to us this entire time?!" He grasped the terrace's stone handle with his hands, quickly spreading cracks through it. "We've trusted you for years, my own father thought of you as one of his best friends... If you truly are the bastard I think you are, you... you...! I will not have mercy."

He only felt even more rage swell within his heart, the utter maddening rage of someone betrayed by their most trusted and beloved family member, all due to just greed and selfishness! There was literally no reason he could think about over this betrayal at all.

Herbellstein was someone that literally had everything he could ever wanted, he was always respected, he had a beautiful family, he held a great position, riches, a beautiful wife and a concubine. He owned a plot of land in the Kingdom's far north...

What else could he even desire to join the damned cult?!

"Poor David... Not even he could believe it- well, not even I can believe it." He thought, sighing. "We'll have to investigate this thoroughly; I really hope that bastard of Magica was just trying to scare us but... I need to be prepared for the worst."

The King found it quite ironic that the Players, who could not harm them, were now more trustworthy than the people of his own Kingdom. Suddenly, he felt a gently and slightly cold hand caress his face, crimson eyes surging from behind him. Anybody would have been startled of this presence appearing out of nowhere, but the King was used to her doing this.

"Camilla..." He sighed.

Her steps were usually soundless, she had no smell unless he approached her very closely, and she had the power of camouflaging herself, becoming near invisible.

"Dear, are you alright?" She asked with a worried expression.

"I'm fine." He sighed, masking his concerns for himself, he faced his beautiful wife, his queen, a Player he once feared like any other, but that he had grown to love more than anybody else other than his own son. "I was just thinking things... Nothing else."

"It is about Herbellstein, isn't it?" She asked, her eyes sharp.

"That's..." The King muttered, feeling weaker as he heard the name of this man.

Camilla embraced him on a comforting hug, kissing his forehead and caressing her husband's hair, while she looked into the moonlight.

"Don't worry, dear. My shadows are on the move." She said. "We will find his true intentions and identity... If he's good, then that's good. But if he was truly a traitor this entire time... Then we won't have mercy."

"For the sake of our son and this Kingdom... I suppose we have no choice." The King sighed.

As this tension brewed, little Gustav, unaware of the dangers of the world, slept peacefully.

Chapter 864 Unexpected News

Johanna left Planta's group after filling her stomach with delicious food and walked away without saying another word. Planta could have stopped her if she wanted, but she let the girl go. She knew it would be complicated to talk things out, but she also knew that Johanna had slightly changed this day, after all the things she experienced.

"So? How was it?"

Her granny greeted her as she entered the Druid Guild's Building, a few other Druids were sitting around, after having wandered around the entire city in their animal forms.

"You were right, granny. A great darkness that could not only engulf this kingdom, but the entire continent is brewing here. If we don't act and help these people slay it... We will come to regret it."

Granny Austucia nodded happily to learn her niece had learned the truth. She knew that Planta was a good mentor, she had the atmosphere of a good mother after all.

"So it was true, not this old woman's ramblings?" Old man Augustus wondered.

"Indeed, Grandpa Augustus." Nodded Johanna. "Planta and her friends are truly good and welcoming people. Some were annoying but, none held evil intentions at all. They're trustworthy, way too much perhaps. I never thought Players could be this good."

"Since the small village where you used to live was burned by beasts controlled by Players that you've hated them all... I can understand your pain." Sighed Austucia. "But not all of them are malicious. I'm glad you've understood this better now."

"Yeah... Still, I wish I could meet the guys that did that." Said Johanna, clenching her fists. "Well, whatever... I'll go to sleep now. Tomorrow will be another busy day."

"Why?" Wondered Austucia.

"Looks like they don't mind me sticking around, so I'll do that for now, and see what's up." Johanna smiled. "I don't know why but I felt more welcomed than I thought I would feel... These people, they're really like a big, warm family."

"Johanna..." Augustus sighed. "Good night, girl."

"Good night." She walked upstairs and disappeared.

As she went to sleep, Austucia and Augustus continued discussing their plans, preparing for the worst that could happen. Now that Augustus and the other Druids learned Austucia was saying the truth from Johanna herself, someone that hated Players more than anybody else in their society, they finally decided to trust them.

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(Elayne's POV)

After enjoying dinner with everyone else, we decided to finally log-out, as we had to prepare dinner for our real bodies back on Earth now. This was one of the nice benefits of eating in the game- I mean in Arcadia, I won't gain extra weight on Earth, so I can pig out as much as I want, heh.

Once the goodbyes were said, we logged off and then slowly took off the VR headsets, stretching our arms and legs, only to find little Gabriel sleeping right between the two of us. He was cuddling with a big pillow, his long blonde hair spread across the entire bed.

"Wait, Gabriel?" I wondered, feeling slightly shocked to see him here.

"Ah... Good morning..." He yawned, looking at me with a curious expression. "Ah! No, it's night, right? It's good night, not morning!"

"Did you sneak in here while we were connected?" Mark sighed, feeling slightly surprised. "Weren't you sleeping on the couch?"

"Yeah but that's boring and the bed is comfier." He said, patting the bed. "What were you two playing?"

"A game, I guess." I shrugged. "More importantly! Let's go make some dinner, shall we?"

"Dinner!" Gabriel quickly flew off the bed with his little wings. "I was feeling hungry already! Nice!"

"He's really quite the hyperactive child, huh?" Mark laughed a bit.

After washing my face in the bathroom, we began cooking something together with Mark. I called for Elena, until I remembered she was out with her friends. She said they went to the same park she visited with her friends, if I recall correctly.

But it's getting pretty late, isn't it going to be like nine pm now? And they have yet to come back! I should send my daughter a message or something.

I quickly sent her a "Are you coming home for dinner?" message, while I was looking at the tv without really thinking about what was being shown there.

Mark was cutting onions, potatoes, and carrots, and Gabriel was taking out ingredients from the fridge without even thinking about what should go in the stew I wanted to make.

"Breaking News!"

However, the seemingly normal TV shows suddenly changed, as very loud breaking news popped up. The newsreader, a blond woman with a very worried and dreadful expression, started reciting what was happening.

"Just moments ago, a Gate has opened inside of the indoors Méga Park at Quebec, the reports specify that the Gate is pouring Undead and Dark-type Monsters nonstop, it is recommended for everyone to keep their distance from the Park while authorities take care of the situation... Huh? More?"

"Ahem! Additionally, it has already been filmed by several cameras over the presence of various and mysterious awakened wearing strange clothes and costumes. They have been attacking civilians without showing any restraint- Oh my god, what's happening?!"

The news teller panicked just as much as I did.

CRASH!

I ended dropping the plate I was carrying, and also the knife, as I felt my heart beating really fast. The images showing people wearing strange, black-colored wooden armor and holding scepters was only the cherry on top, there were countless monsters appearing everywhere.

"E-Elayne?!" Mark asked. "Isn't that where...?"

"Shit! Elena!"

Without thinking it twice, I dropped everything I was doing and ran outside the house, Mark and Gabriel following me from behind.

"It's where Elena went with her friends! This can't just be coincidence!" I cried, quickly covering my face with a mask and summoning a pair of draconic and angelic wings from my back. "Mark, we have to hurry!"

"Got it!" Mark nodded, swiftly growing phoenix blazing wings and a mask, and leaping into the dark of the night with me and Gabriel who followed us closely.

"I feel the presence of demons!" Gabriel cried. "Far away, over there!"

"Demons too?!" I panicked even more.

FLAAASH!

Chapter 865 Gate

Elena was having the day of her life, after having confessed her love to Anna and becoming girlfriends, she was the happiest girl in the entire city. And after inviting her beloved friends to the same park they went to before; she thought it would be just another day of joy and relaxation.

Perhaps she had just forgotten the things she went through just some weeks ago, when her school was overrun by monsters and everything was engulfed on chaos, while she was unable to fight back, and was captured and left helpless. Maybe it was her own mind trying to block those memories, so she could keep moving forwards.

"H-Hey, isn't it getting a bit late? S-Should we be heading back home?" Wondered Monica, slightly shyly.

"What? Don't be BORING, Monica!" Elisa groaned. "We've just gotten here! Let's go to the carousel now! I want to ride the ponies!" She spoiled girl giggled, while her bodyguard, Steiner, walked behind her carefully.

"B-But it's getting late..." Monica cried. "I've never been outside s-so late."

"Don't worry, we'll go to a few other attractions and then we'll move back home." Elena patted her head. "We are no longer kids, right?"

"H-Huh, fine..." Monica sighed, feeling some sort of strange feeling of dread. As if something was watching her. She turned back, looking around, only to find just normal people wandering everywhere. "Hm...?"

"What's wrong?" Anna asked her, tilting her head. "Are you feeling tired? Maybe sit down around and then we'll come back to pick you up."

"N-No, I'm fine! Really..." Monica sighed, thinking that whatever "bad feeling" she had might have been her own social anxiety, and went along with the girls.

They wandered across the entire indoor park, which was made exclusively because this region of Canada gets very cold through a good part of the year, so people and the children can still enjoy the attractions of an amusement park even in the cold of winter.

They ate ice cream, visited the carousel Elisa really wanted to ride for some reason, and then moved on to a haunted house, where the girls walked out laughing, only Monica had been startled all the time, screaming three times in a row...

"Hahaha! You're so easy to spook, Monica! What the hell?" Anna laughed, teasing Monica while patting her shoulders.

"I-I am not good with ghosts, okay?" Monica sighed.

"Even though you're playing a Ghost in BNLO?" Elisa raised an eyebrow. "Maybe you're trying to get over that fear?"

"I-I guess..." Monica shrugged. She had chosen those due to the guidance of the Goddess of Darkness, Nyx, which had appeared before her as she created her Avatar. So she didn't have much of an option back then, due to her social anxiety, she ended nodding to all suggestions. "Ugh, I would have preferred playing as an elf or something, actually..."

"Okay, okay, go easy on the girl." Elena sighed. "Should we be heading back now? We've spent too much time here... I don't want to worry mom."

"Sure, I was feeling pretty hungry. Is she making some tasty dinner?" Asked Anna.

"I think so? I'll ask her once we're on the way." Said Elena.

"Then, Steiner, guide us to the limousine please." Elisa said.

"Very well, young lady." Steiner nodded, guiding them out of the amusement park, the amount of people there was already quite low, less than two hundred by now, people was already moving back home.

Monica glanced the entire atmosphere, still feeling that strange, dark presence somewhere. It wasn't just her imagination after all, it was something that had come out of her own abilities.

After becoming the vessel of a powerful phantasmal being, her soul had transformed and gained a lot of phantasmal abilities themselves. One of them included incredible heightened senses and sixth sense that alerted her of "dark presences".

"S-Something's wrong..." Monica started to mutter to herself, while walking besides Elena. "I can still feel it- No, it's more than one, why? So many... Is this all in my head or...?"

"Monica?" Elena asked her, worried about her expression. "What's gotten into you? Are you tired?"

"E-Elena, we have to quickly get out of here! Someone- no, somebody is following us around, we have to-"

Before Monica could say another word, it felt as if time stopped. A fracture in the fabric of reality opened, right in front of their eyes, the empty air shattered like glass.

Crack, crack...!

"No!"

Monica panicked, as she quickly tried to drag everyone away, her Aura of darkness grasping them and moving back as quickly as she could!

Crack, crack...!

CRASH!

Only a split of a second after that, a giant crack in space opened, a swirling mass of blue energy erupted, a portal to another world.

A Gate!

And without even waiting a moment afterwards, dozens of skeletal claws surged from within the gates, as a dark greenish fluid began to pour of it, contaminating the entire indoor park.

"ROOAARR!"

The ferocious roar of Undead creatures echoed across the entire park; monstrous skeletal monsters appeared out of nowhere. The people who had yet to experience such things enough to become accustomed to them, felt paralyzed for a split of a second, before hell broke loose.

"A-A Gate?!"

"RUN!"

"Uwaaagh!"

"Shit, shit, shit!"

"Monsters?! RUN!"

The screams of the civilians echoed everywhere, children and parents running away as fast as they could from the indoor park. The beasts began crawling out of the Gate, looking around as if trying to measure which prey they wanted to take down first.

"Wait, what?! A Gate?!" Elisa was the first one to scream, and then looked back at the giant hands made of darkness wrapped around her waist. "Monica?! You got magic powers?!"

"I-I'm sorry!" Monica let them go as she quickly felt scared of her own strength. "But I was so scared I just dragged everyone with me to safety!"

"Shit, this is bad!" Anna muttered, noticing a few beasts staring at them and then quickly beginning to spring towards them! "We have to run, Elena!"

She grabbed Elena's hand before everyone else and attempted to run, but the skeleton beasts were much faster, leaping towards them with their jaws wide open!

"GRAAAH!"

Chapter 866 Awakened

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Seconds before the skeleton beast could attack the girls, the sound of gunshots resounded across the indoor park, three magic explosions blew up one of the skeleton beast's whole head! The creature quickly fell into the ground, collapsing into a pile of bones.

CRAAASH!

"Hahh... Milady, are you alright?!" Steiner, Elisa's bodyguard, sighed in relief, on his hands was a small gun with strange runic inscriptions.

"R-Right, you had a magic gun!" Elisa felt relieved, even if slightly.

Magic Guns were still not widely available in the market and could only be bought by larger organizations, or very rich people. Elisa's family got her covered in that department and allowed some of her bodyguards to equip themselves with some of them.

Now that the threat of monsters appearing out of gates or from the wilderness was becoming a reality, holding guns capable of piercing through their thick hide and tough bones was a must. Normal weaponry didn't work too well on monsters, due to their bodies being reinforced with their Magical Power.

Therefore, magical weaponry was necessary, a luxury that only the richest people out there enjoyed at the moment. Not even normal police were equipped with it yet, meaning that a single gun and a few bullets must have cost a true fortune.

"ROOAR!"

However, although one of the skeleton beasts collapsed, the second rushed towards them fearlessly, Steiner swiftly gunned it down, shooting at the head as he had been taught.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

"GRYEKH!"

The first shoot ended missing but the two ended hitting the monster's skull, half its head collapsed, but the creature resiliently kept charging. Undead monsters were different than Living Monsters, they did not bleed, and would keep moving until they were grinded to dust or had their cores destroyed.

"Shit!"

Steiner tried to reload the gun, but in the time it would take him, the beast already reached him, swinging its huge claws against him and slashing at his chest!

CRAAASH!

"AARGH!"

The bodyguard groaned in pain, being thrown away several meters, hitting the wall right behind the girls and vomiting blood. As strong and trained as he was, he was still a normal human and not an Awakened.

"S-Steiner!" Elisa started crying while running towards him, looking his chest covered on blood and his face completely pale.

"R-Run, young lady..." He muttered, continuing to vomit blood. That hit most likely twisted all his internal organs to mush. "I was foolish... I should have... let someone else take my role... An awakened could have... taken care of that monster... Ugh, I just... I wanted to stay... by your side... I'm sorry..."

"N-No! Wait, wait, I am not prepared for this! Please don't die, Steiner!!" Elisa cried, hugging her bodyguard. "Don't leave me!"

Steiner was more than a bodyguard to her; he was like her uncle or even a father. Due to the selfishness of her parents and their lack of attachment to their daughter, Elisa grew up most of her life surrounded by servants and bodyguards, her mother and father always "too busy" to remain at her side.

Steiner was someone that knew her since she was three years of age, he had feed her, washed her, taught her many things, played with her, and had accompanied her to literally anywhere she went, always supporting her and protecting her.

"GROOOOAR!"

The skeletal beast rushed towards Elisa, while Anna panicked. She didn't know what to do, her only instinct told her to grab Elena and run, she had to prioritize her love even before her friend, as painful as that feeling was.

"Shit! We have to run, we have to run, ELENA! LET'S GO! HURRY!"

"No..."

"E-Eh?"

Anna stepped back, as Elena let go of her hand and quickly started to change her appearance, her skin turned blue, and horns grew on her forehead, while her black hair became silvery-white.

"There's a secret I've been keeping from you, Anna... I'm sorry."

A mass of Mana emerged on her hands, taking the shape of a sword. Without a doubt, this imagery was the very same of Anna's Avatar in BNLO!

"E-Elena?!"

"I'm an Awakened too."

Elena's eyes shone with crimson light, making Anna's entire being feel paralyzed on the spot. With a flash of blue flames, Elena disappeared from the scene, rushing towards the Bone Beast attacking Steiner and Elisa.

"ROOOAAR!"

"Steiner!"

As Elisa cried over her dying bodyguard, Elena appeared above the bone beast, a split of a second later, her sword descended towards its neck, cutting through the head!

SLAAASH!

"GRYYAGH!"

The beast's skull exploded into pieces, while the rest of its body swiftly stepped back, its phantasmal senses were still there, guiding the creature and swiftly attacking Elena again!

"I-Is that you, Elena?!" Elisa couldn't believe what she was seeing either.

"..." Elena didn't answer, fully focusing on slaying the bone beast. "Just like you always do it in the game, move the sword like that! Your footwork too!" She whispered to herself.

"SHAAAAH!"

The monstrous bone beast continued attacking Elena with a barrage of claw attacks, while Elena kept evading while moving through the incredibly footwork she learned back BNLO, changing her stance constantly.

CLASH! CLASH! CRAAASH!

She felt the intensity of the hits more than ever before, it was a completely different experience than fighting the frail and slimy Hollows. However, through the change of her stance and her magical sword parrying the hits, she was getting there!

"RAAAAH!"

With her Will was fueled by her desire to protect her friends. Her whole body erupted with phantasmal flames, which harnessed their prowess into her blade made of darkness. Each slash of her blade cut through more and more bones, weakening the creature in seconds.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

"ROAR!"

The monster quickly leaped into the air and then descended towards Elena with all its might, attempting to crush her with its weight alone!

BAAAM!!

However, Elena managed to evade the attack, leaping just in time, before her Aura emerged out of her body once more. This time, it resembled dozens of blades.

"[Pseudo Sword Ki Aura]"

The swords flew off, piercing the monster's body, as one just managed to slash through its crystal core, moments before all the blades exploded.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Amidst the sea of blue flames and darkness, Elena stood valiantly, glancing at the bone monster's remains... Anna couldn't help but skip a beat.

"S-She's fucking awesome..."

At the same time, a group of mysterious people that were lurking around, wearing armor made of black wood and covered on poisonous herbs and mushrooms, glanced into the distance, noticing her.

They wielded strange scepters made of this cursed, malefic wood. Their eyes glowed with dark green color, and their auras exuded an aura of corrupted nature and decay...

"We found her."

"So this is the daughter of their new goddess?"

"As we talked before, we'll be taking her life. I presume you don't mind, Demon."

The trio glanced at a single handsome man, as tall as three meters, muscular, with a small black beard and long black hair, wearing sunglasses. He looked completely normal, but exuded a tremendous, demonic aura.

"Yeah, I don't mind..." He smiled. "I'll take care of the rest. This'll teach her a lesson, to not mess with us anymore."

"Then let us begin, Blighters. While those damned Druids are not here yet." The leader of the strange people laughed. "By our Lady of Decay, Kalma, we shall feast on Nature's Life!"

Chapter 867 Blighters

The Gate continued trembling, more Bone Beasts poured from within, alongside tall human skeletons wearing armor and weapons. Elena had little time to think, the monsters kept coming endlessly.

"We have to get out of here, quickly!" She said, grabbing Elisa and Steiner, she remembered the potions her mother gifted to her, in the form of small vials, and took one and feed it to Steiner. His wounds instantly began to heal and close once he drank it.

"Hahhh... T-Thank you..." Steiner forced himself to stand up, but that only healed his outside wounds, the inside was still very badly damaged. "Ugh!"

"Wait, Steiner, don't force yourself to walk! I'll carry you!" Elisa tried her best to carry someone several times her weight, failing miserably.

"Enough, we'll carry him together." Elena said, joining with Anna and Monica, who seemed to have become paralyzed the moment she saw the Undead approaching.

"Elena... Y-You had these powers this whole time?!" Anna asked.

"I just got them last week." Elena shrugged. "I'll tell you more later... Sorry for keeping it a secret."

"Okay, sure... Hey Monica, you're awakened too, right? Huh? What's gotten into her?!" Anna muttered.

The girls rushed towards Monica, who was on her knees, her dark aura fluctuating constantly as she saw the Undead approach her, they whispered to her, as if they knew her all along...

"You, one of us..."

"Your soul, full of phantasmal power!"

"Are you the child of Thanatos? Join us."

"Why are you with the living? You belong with us."

They didn't harm her, but were trying to force her to switch sides, speaking into her soul through their own phantasmal abilities!

"No! Get away from me! Don't speak into my soul! I am not her! I AM NOT HER!"

Monica continued crying, as if she was suffering from a terrible post traumatic stress, the trauma of having been possessed by Dorothea, the Princess of Nightmares, was still lingering within her.

The scent of dead and their phantasmal souls made it all come back, the helplessness she felt when she possessed her, and when she forced her to do all these awful things.

"Monica!"

Elena rushed to her aid with Anna, Elisa, and Steiner, the Undead swarming the girl were constantly roaring and groaning, but not hurting her.

"You have to fight back, Monica!" Elena roared, summoning two swords of darkness on her hands and rushing to attack the Undead. "If you don't fight back, you will never be able to overcome your fears!"

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

With a ferocious roar, Elena kept slashing at the Undead, cutting through their bones. They quickly set their gazes into her, immediately attacking her while a few surrounded Monica. Perhaps because Dorothea's Darkness and Phantasmal Powers remained within Monica's soul, it made them feel like she was their ally, even if her appearance was different.

"You're one of us..."

"Please, join us and lead us."

"Princess Dorothea..."

"N-No... I am not your fucking Dorothea! She's dead! SHE'S FUCKING DEAD!"

Monica finally snapped as the swarm of bone beasts was beginning to overwhelm Elena, her Aura of Darkness exploded out of her body, blowing away several Undead from her vicinity.

BOOOM!!

The Undead glared at her in surprise, quickly realizing she was not truly an ally! They swiftly changed their stances, attacking her, dozens of skeletons armed with weapons attempted to gang on her.

"Get away from me!" Monica cried, her Aura transforming into chains. "[Accursed Abyss Chains]!"

FLASH!

The chains spun around her body, protecting her from their attacks and then wrapping around their bodies, which then she connected with another powerful spell.

"[Soul Draining Curse]!"

Her dark chains suddenly drained her phantasmal powers and then started to burn the souls of the five undead she trapped with them, which slowly were devoured by her Aura.

FLUOSH!

"Gryyyaaarrgh!"

The screams of the Undead echoed across the entire area, the people running away couldn't help but stop and glance at the situation. Some bold enough were filming what occurred, pointing their phones at the undead, the girl, and also a strange trio that was rapidly approaching them.

"Hahh..." Monica fell to her knees, feeling slightly exhausted. Using her curse more than once would always bring her some exhaustion, all due to its large Mana Consumption.

"Monica!" Elena slashed her way towards Monica, helping her stand up again by giving her a hand. She had slain another two more Bone Beasts, while the rest seemed to have run away once they sensed the power of Monica's curse, even if now she was weak enough they could sneak an attack. "Are you alright?"

"I-I'm fine now, sorry. We have to get out of here now..." Monica sighed. "Let's go!"

"Yeah!" Elena agreed, quickly running with her group, evading Undead and kicking or slashing them away from their path...

Only to be stopped by three figures, standing tall in front of their path. Their faces could not be discerned, all three of them were wearing armor made of black wood, covered on poisonous vines and mushrooms.

From what Elena could see of their skin, it looked pale, darkish green, with black tattoos covering them, in the shape of plants and vines... She was confused, were these people humans or monsters?

The Auras they exuded weren't the same as the Undead. While Undead were the embodiment of Death, this trio's Auras were the Embodiment of Nature's Decay, a strange type of corrupted spirit energy born from hatred towards nature.

"W-Who are you?!" Elena asked, pointing her sword of darkness against them. "Why are you getting on our way?! Let us pass!"

"So this is the girl, isn't it?"

"Interesting, are you sure she's the daughter of a Nature Deity?"

"Our Goddess Kalmas assured me so, that Demon King from another world told her this valuable information. It cannot be a lie if it came from her."

The three strangers spoke with one another, looking at Elena as nothing but a source for their power.

"I don't feel much Nature Soul out of her... But if our Lady says so, then she definitely must me."

"I bet she's just saving that power deep down, isn't it, brat?"

"Now, be a good girl and stand still while I drain your Life Force."

The leader of the trio pointed her scepter at Elena, harnessing a dark power that surged like countless vines made of dark green energy.

"[Nature's Devour]!"

FLUOSH!

"What the...?!"

Elena tried to block the magic using her swords of darkness or her Aura, but they all proved to be useless, breaking apart the moment they touched the mysterious vines!

Crack, crack, CRASH!

"My Magic's ineffective?!" Elena muttered, a second before the vines were about to wrap around her body. "Shit!"

"Hahahaha! You think such feeble magic can affect the power I've grown for over a century, little divine child?" The woman attacking her laughed out loud.

Monica attempted to help her, but her dark aura didn't respond to her anymore, too exhausted to use it right away once more.

"E-Elena!"

FLASH!

However, before the vines could wrap around Elena and drain her Life Force, something within her shadows emerged, a giant scythe, overflowing with Dream and Nightmare Power.

"I really thought you could solve things on your own, but it seems an enemy like this cannot be easily defeated!"

Chapter 868 The Power Of A High Rank Spirit

The leader of the Blighters sensed a powerful presence, something that only a high ranked spirit could exude. She reflectively stepped back several times, her scepter gathering her dark, corrupted nature's essence, her eyes glowing sharply.

"A High Rank Spirit? And not a normal one! What is this?! Dreams and Nightmares? Such an abstract element, into a Spirit protecting a mere child?!" She roared furiously. "That goddess must have casted that spirit to protect her! Be careful, my siblings."

"W-What the...?!" Elena stepped back, suddenly realizing she was being shrouded by the essence of nightmares and dreams in the form of black and purple clouds.

She quickly noticed it took the form of a black scythe with a skull on top, glowing with a crimson aura. And it talked! Not only Elena was shocked, but Anna, Steiner, and Elisa all gasped as they saw this phantasmal being appear.

"Hahh... That aura, feels familiar, somehow..." Monica looked into the scythe.

"I really thought you could solve things on your own, but it seems an enemy like this cannot be easily defeated!" The scythe spoke.

"W-Who the fuck are you?!" Elena asked the thing.

"Such manners..." Sighed the entity. "My name is Morpheus! I am a Spirit of Nightmares and Dreams created by your mother. She has given me the task to protect you from all danger- well, and your friends too, if possible."

"What? Really? Mom did that...?" Elena was surprised. "B-But even then... Why did you appear so late?!"

"I was trying to see how far your strength could carry you. It wouldn't have been good to see you being helped right away, right? After all, why did you even gained that power if you were not even going to test it?" Laughed Morpheus. "However, these foes are no mere monsters anymore... It seems there are multiple factions of enemies working together. This is bad. I never thought my Master would make this many enemies by just living her life..."

"They're all mom's enemies?!" Elena asked, suddenly growing furious. "W-Why? What has she done to them anyways?!"

"Those Blighters... No idea. But she did kill a Demon, so that guy blocking the way out must have been his friend, or something. Not like demons have friends but, well, you get the idea." Morpheus spoke with a lugubrious voice.

"The Demon that tried to kill Gabriel... Mom killed it, right..." Elena sighed. "Wait, does this means she's an enemy of all Demons now?!"

"Maybe. Depends how stupid they are to mess with her." Morpheus laughed. "Now, I doubt this lady over here will wait for us any longer."

"Heh, you might be strong..." The Blighter woman said. "But through my life, I've killed many High Rank Spirits, and devoured their Essence. I am a Sorceress of the Nature Eaters Society, Priest of the Goddess of Decay, Kalmas! And we walk in her name. As we shall consume all Nature in her name!" The woman began floating in midair, her Aura of Magic growing larger.

"S-She's actually a magician of Earth, right?! Not a player... Holy shit, there's people that strong out there?!" Elena panicked. "She started floating, that's not good news! She's going for an ultimate spell or something! Morpheus, what can you do?"

"I can do a few tricks, but I am not all-powerful either. My job here is to buy time and protect you." He spoke. "And that is what I'll do! First of all, we have to take care those small fries don't sneak in!"

[Summon Nightmarish Skeleton Knights]

Morpheus' magical aura erupted from his body, turning into a liquid black miasma made out of nightmares, which started to cover the floor and stretching out around the group. From within them, black skeletons surged, slowly rising from the nightmarish miasma.

Dozens of skeletons wearing black armor and black weapons, from swords, to shields, to spears, and to bows appeared out of the miasmatic shadows. Quickly pointing their weapons at the incoming Bone Beasts, that kept pouring out of the Gate that the Demon King of Death had most likely created.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

The clash between the skeletons echoed, sparks of black flames erupted each time the weapons from the Nightmare Skeletons hit the Bone Beasts. The monsters from the Gate were slightly stronger and had larger bodies, but the Nightmare Skeletons were smart, and knew how to fight.

They cut through the bone beasts' claws and legs, making them trip and then ganged on their chests, until they were to manage to pierce their cores and kill them once and for all. However, as this happened, the Blighters didn't stand still.

"Oh mother of Decay, bless me with your curse!" Laughed the Blighter woman, as if in ectasis. Her aura of dark and corrupted nature surged from within her, a putrid smell surging from it as the appearance of a zombie woman wearing a black dress, with long white hair emerged, glaring at everyone with crimson red eyes. She opened her mouth, revealing her falling teeth. "[Breath of Decay]"

FLUOSH!

The putrid zombie goddess manifestation released a wave of green smoke. Anything that touched this smoke weakened. The Bone Beasts were not spared, their bodies instantly falling and beginning to rot their bones. Their cores cracked; their souls were feed to the Aura of the Blighter.

As the decay spread, Morpheus panicked. He quickly conjured a powerful mass of Dream Energy and distorted space itself, opening a Dream Portal. He couldn't bring the girls inside though, it would be too dangerous to be confined inside a random Dream Realm.

"Your Spell is powerful, but useless if it never touches us." He roared. "Open!"

[Dream Portal]

A portal to a small Dream Realm opened, absorbing the Breath of Decay like a black hole, and saving everyone behind him from dying by rotting to death. However, not only Bone Beasts died, but a couple of bystanders nearby were affected, their arms or legs beginning to rot.

FLUOSH!

"Hahaha! Is this all you can do?" The Blighter woman laughed. "My siblings, get them!"

As she kept her Breath of Decay active, Morpheus realized two other Blighters had sneaked behind him and his summons, rushing towards Elena's friends.

Chapter 869 Desperate Survival

"You're trying to do too many things at the same time, filthy spirit!"

"You've opened the way for us, gahaha!"

The two Blighters suddenly glowed with black light, their entire bodies undergoing a transformation. As they became thrice as large and started to smell like rotten corpses. Their humanoid shapes changed.

The one to the left became a giant black wolf with black and gray fur, with only a single crimson eye, the other was empty, with a black flame coming out of it. And the Blighter to the right transformed into a giant gray bear, decaying and with one hand made of bones, roaring furiously.

"They turned into Undead?!" Elena reacted, quickly leaping into action to stop them. "Stop!"

Her Aura transformed into the shape of three blades, which flew towards the Blighters as fast as possible. One of them pierced the wolf's back but seemed unmoved by it. The other two missed hitting the larger bear, who moved incredibly fast for its size, evading the two attacks. At the same time Elena tried to touch the ground, expanding her phantasmal flames into the ground.

"BURN!"

With a ferocious demonic roar from her transformation's effects, phantom flames surged, trying to stop the Undead Beasts from touching her friends. And it seemingly worked. She focused with all her might, and then changed the phantasmal flames into walls of blue fire.

FLUOSH!

She shaped a spell into another, she was grasping the true power of Magic! The Blighters were forced to step back, only for them to smile and leap back towards her!

"Fool!"

"We just wanted you to expose yourself!"

While laughing maliciously, the two powerful Blighters attacked Elena. The wolf kicked her head with its back legs, blowing her away. Her nose almost broke. The bear ran towards Elena and then swung its skeletal claw, almost managing to slash her into pieces before a cloud of black and purple dream energy stopped him.

CLAAASH!

"Tch, begone, spirit!"

The two Blighters furiously attacked Morpheus, destroying his cloudy body, the scythe, however, remained untouched. It quickly rushed down to slash the two of them. But the Blighters simply evaded his slashing attacks with their superior speed and animal senses.

"Dammit, you bastards!"

As Morpheus distracted himself dealing with the two, their leader smiled, her body descended towards Elena as fast as she could. Her sharp black wooden claws pointing at Elena, as she grasped the girl's magic aura.

"You're one handful of a girl. But the harder it is to get to you, the more worthy is the hunt."

Her claws imbued her Decaying powers into Elena's aura, who tried to escape from her, only to feel her entire body become incredibly exhausted. Her Magic Aura was absorbed completely, leaving her with no Mana at all. A strong backlash hit her, making her fall to her knees while vomiting blood.

"Ugh... AGH!"

"Yes, squirm." The Blighter woman smiled. "That only makes it more fun~"

"ELENA!"

Anna's voice echoed right in front of Elena, as she saw her girlfriend running to her side. She was but a mere human, no magic powers, no spirits, no nothing. She ran towards her help, even if she knew it could all be in vain.

"N-No... Run! Run, Anna...!"

"Leave her alone!"

Anna cried, quickly grabbing a nearby chair and throwing it to the Blighter woman, who quickly grabbed the chair with her claws and then threw it away. Her sharp eyes squinted at the girl.

"You are of no importance. Leave now if you do not want to become my lady's offerings." She said.
"What is more important? Your life or the life of another person? Even if you happen to love her...
Emotions are but a passing thing. You will end up realizing it was all for naught at the end."

"What are you talking about?!" Anna cried angrily, quickly trying to grab Elena, only for an invisible force to stop her from moving. "Ugh... AGH!"

She felt her breath had emptied; her body became completely paralyzed. The gaze of this sorceress alone was like an incredible pressure, something she couldn't fight. Tears streamed from her eyes as the sorceress lifted her off the ground.

"If you want to become her offering so badly, so be it." Laughed the woman. "Now, join us, decay and rot!"

A green flame surged from the woman's other hand, as it rushed towards Anna. Elena's eyes widened, her heart beating faster than ever before. Her Soul flared as if it were a flame, fueling her powers. She began to instinctively use the power of her own Soul, consuming it bit by bit to gain more Mana.

"STOOOP!"

With a desperate and roar, Elena's hand materialized a sword. One she had never seen before, made out of her own Soul, flashing with bright golden and blue light, slashing right through the Blighter's long arms, slicing it off with ease. A splatter of red blood covered the ground, accompanied by the deafening scream of the Blighter's agony.

SLAAASH!

"W-What the- GRYYAAGH!"

The woman screamed in agony, as if she had ever suffered pain in hundreds of years. Desperately stepping back, Elena didn't let her even move, her Soul Sword flaring with powerful light and darkness, she moved swifter than the wind.

"DIE!"

With a ferocious roar, the Blighter's eyes widened. For a split of a second, she felt utter fear! She underestimated the girl and was going to pay for such a foolish act! She stepped back again, evading another slash attack, and realizing the girl's sword was her soul itself.

"Soul Magic? You're putting your soul out, just to protect your friend? How cute!"

Mocking her, the Blighter moved swiftly, turning into a giant black crow and flying up, opening her sharp black beak and releasing a sonic beam, hitting Elena and blowing her away. Elena quickly hit the ground, her sword was dispelled and so was her transformation, rolling on the floor right next to Anna.

BAAAM!

"Ugh... Fuck...!"

"E-Elena!"

As Anna tried to help Elena somehow, the woman appeared above them once more. Her lost arm didn't hinder her, replacing it with one made of black wood and fungi.

"I lost an arm; your life force better be tasty enough..."

Her claws were about to reach her, before a green turtle almost fell over her body.

TRUM!

"We see again, Blighter."

"Filthy Druid!"

Chapter 870 The Goddess Of Decay, Kalmas

A three-meter-big green turtle rolled down from who knows where and smashed the Blighter Sorceress into the floor. The power of the impact alone shattering the ground below and creating a huge fissure. The Blighter roared, her crow-like body struggling to get out of the enormous size and height of Elena and Anna's saviors.

"A-A giant turtle?!"

"What the hell..."

Both girls were left speechless, and that wasn't all, as a huge white owl descended in front of them, being at least two meters tall. It conjured a bright light from its eyes, healing their exhaustion and wounds.

"You've fought well, but this is a conflict between us and them. Stay here, children." The white owl spoke with a gentle female voice, quickly glaring at the crow.

"You came because of us, didn't you, Aria?!" The owl asked furiously.

"Hahaha... I have not heard of such a name in a long time." The Blighter woman slowly broke down into rotten wood, surprising the turtle, who quickly noticed her body had turned into a cloud of black spores and then reformed itself back to normal in front of them.

"How much have you corrupted your Nature Soul now?!" The Turtle asked. "Aria, this is a conflict between us Druids and Blighters, do not get involved innocent people into your game!"

"You've crossed the line not even some of the most corrupted sorcerers do." Said the owl. "And... That Aura. Don't tell me you've become the slave of a wicked god?"

"Don't you dare call the Lady of Decay as a wicked god!" Roared Aria. "She is the one that gave me hope, she was the only one that was there when my forest was burned, when my guardians were slaughtered, and when our last God abandoned us! She gave me a new purpose... When my Nature Soul shattered, you only mocked me and left me behind! And now, I am stronger than ever, all thanks to her blessings!"

"Kalmas is not a goddess that would help others without wanting something out of them, foolish Aria." The turtle said, with the voice of an old man. "You're being used by her!"

"I don't care! I will serve her to my death!" Laughed Aria, her claws growing larger. "And the children of the goddess you worship will be a worthy sacrifice for her! Now move, Jose! Janny! I will have no mercy, even if we were once family!"

Aria's body erupted with a black and corrupted aura of nature, giant black wooden roots grew out of the ground around her, attacking the two giant beasts, the owl evaded the attacks, while the turtle rolled towards them, crushing them before they could pierce him. Aria kept attacking them with a variety of spells. Giant mushrooms popped out of the ground, releasing deadly poisonous smoke, in which the owl responded by flapping her wings rapidly, cleaning the air from the spores.

Elena and Anna were left speechless as they saw the battle occur. From what they were able to catch, there was a conflict between local Druids and Blighters. The Druids worshiped... most likely her own mother as some sort of goddess, no less! And the Blighters, who hated them, came to make them suffer by targeting Elena, the daughter of this "goddess".

"Anna, we have to get out of here..." Elena quickly stood back up, grabbing her girlfriend.

"I don't know what the fuck is going on, but yeah!" Anna helped Elena stand up too, both girls crawling away.

They saw in the distance that Elisa was using Steiner's magic gun to keep the two other Druids away from her, although she was already running low on the bullets. At the same time, Monica had her energy restored slightly thanks to Morpheus doing, somehow. And she was now fighting by firing beams

with curses, weakening the undead and making the Blighters wary of her. Morpheus did his best to protect them, with both summons and his cloud-like aura, but that only could get them so far.

The Blighters that accompanied Aria weren't mere small fry, but incredibly strong. And were able to take on many hits without even looking tired. Their Undead Wild Shape Spell, a twisted version of the Wild Shape Spell Druids used, turned them into Undead Beasts, incapable of feeling pain, with endless stamina, and immune to most curses and status ailments.

"For how long you can manage to protect them, Spirit?!"

"A Spirit doesn't have endless mana, you're running low on it already, isn't it?"

The two Blighters laughed as they cut through the skeletons Morpheus created, his Mana quickly beginning to go down quickly. He could get more Mana if Elayne was closer to him. Their connection did provide him with it, but not enough for all the things he had to do at once. He was seriously beginning to think he would soon crumble down.

"Dammit, if only the entrance wasn't blocked by those demons!" Morpheus roared, glaring far away. "I can't risk confronting those things, even less when bringing all these people with me. The other would be to use my remaining mana and throw them inside a Dream Portal, but I'm not even sure what could happen then!"

As he started to wonder what he should do, Elena and Anna ran towards them, Elena materializing a sword of shadows after feeling her Mana recovering a bit faster after being healed, and throwing it at the wolf that was gnawing at his summons.

CLASH!

"Another pointless little projectile."

The Undead Wolf glared furiously at Elena, only for the sword to glow brightly, phantom flames surging from within it before it exploded! The explosion itself blew up the wolf's back, his bones visible. The flames spread into the rest of his body.

"Uuurgh?! Dammit!"

"I've learned a few tricks now."

Elena smiled, without transforming to not waste all her Mana, she loaded shadows and phantasmal essence into three of her fingers, using her Mana carefully to not waste it all as it recovered.

"RAAAAR!"

The wolf roared, rushing towards her and Anna, Morpheus managed to materialize a hand made of dream energy, grasping the wolf by his tail and dragging him back. The wolf fought back, pushing forwards. In that moment, Anna pointed her three fingers in front of the Undead Wolf!

"What are you doing...?!"

"Improvising."