

Brand New 961

Chapter 961: Capturing A Cultist

The Majin woman panicked and reacted extremely quickly, someone else that wasn't guilty would have not exploded to this extent, she was certainly the guilty one!

BOOOM!

The explosion of chaotic energy coming from her spear reached us, my shield managed to reflect most of the damage, but the explosion alone made the entire foundation of the building shake. The ceiling collapsed right above us!

Crack, crack...!

CRASH!

RUMBLE!

The Divine Dragons were rather tough, but the Ancient Elves, despite their strong magic, were much more physically frail, getting crushed by rubble wouldn't be good for them either, or it would also distract us as she ran away.

But we weren't going to let that happen!

"Heh, did you thought we would let you destroy the entire walls? Nuh-huh!"

Only one piece of stone fell at the end, which I caught using my roots. The rest of the building had completely merged into a Domain by Lily's powers, and was now held tightly on point, the cracks healing rapidly.

The Majin woman panicked as she quickly started running away, breaking the wooden door and rushing outside. However, while riding Belle, I rushed towards her at lightning speed, almost catching her before she suddenly kicked the ground and accelerated.

"You're not going anywhere, come here!"

I leaped off Belle, as Belle released thunderbolts against her, which the Majin Woman evaded one another another. Using my dragon wings and my ability to skip through space thanks to the Skill I inherited from Mimy, I managed to appear right above her, spreading my roots over her entire body as I gave her a near-lethal hug!

"AARRGH! LET GO OF ME!"

She spun angrily around the floor, releasing shockwaves of deadly miasma that started to slowly infect my body. However, I enchanted it with hundreds of tiny holy light spirits, becoming incredibly resilient. Even more, each golden scale was enchanted with my super amazing Gaia's Armor as well.

"I am not letting you go!"

I quickly wrapped my roots around her entire body and then took away her spear, which quickly dropped on the floor and started moving on its own?! It lifted off the floor and pointed itself at my head, piercing it.

CRASH!

"Hahahah! I got you- EH?!"

However, having my head exploded wasn't going to kill me, I was a being made of wood and plants after all, and as some had mentioned... I had no brain nor any important internal organ either! She kept firing attacks, but I used my Skills to drain her out of her Mana very quickly.

After that, I had to simply separate myself from the wood encroaching her and then conjuring my powerful {Life and Light Chains of Restraint} combined with the {Exorcizing Heavenly Purifying Light} Spells to create the...

"{Heavenly Demon-Sealing Chains of Purification}!"

It was an improved Spell created to purify and seal demons, something I had already used against the Demons I fought against back on Earth. And this girl's demonic and miasmic powers were not only purified, but instantly sealed.

"NOOO! AAGGH! M-My power! The power they gave me...! NO!" She kept screaming with rage. "Let me go!"

I will...! If it has come to this, I won't let you have me! I'll kill myself! I... Eh? Why is it not activating?!"

As I grabbed her demonic cursed spear, sealed it, and then somehow was able to store it inside my Inventory, she realized I had done something to her. The Miasmic Demonic Core in her chest, which allows these people to both transform and conjure their powerful magic was now also sealed.

"It is sealed, you can't use your core's powers, sweetie. Now stay there, backup is coming."

I saw as my friends appeared by my side, accompanied by the researchers and the General. They were left speechless after seeing I did manage to capture someone alive!

"You did it, Planta! Well done!" Elbedo celebrated.

"Now you're going to spit everything you know, girl!" Cecilia said.

"Enough, we'll have to talk to her more privately if possible." Said Mercedes. "There is a relic I brought that'll make her talk."

"N-no, no, no, no! Wait, don't do this! I can't speak!" The Majin woman kept screaming, but we ignored her pleas.

"Finally caught her, well done!" Rita clapped her hands.

"It took you almost no time, you're amazing as always." Mark laughed.

"To be expected of my liege! With this we can advance the scenario further now!" Nieve celebrated.

"Yeah, amazing mom!" Elena said. "I have to admit that your special body makes it really convenient to capture others."

"Bravo for Elayne! She's the bestie best~!" Lily said, hugging me from behind and giving me a kiss on my cheek.

"Naaah~ I did it because I simply could, it was not THAT special though." I shrugged, feeling slightly embarrassed of receiving so much praise. "Anyways, as long as we can extract info from her then we can learn some more!"

Ding!

[You've Completed the Auxiliary Mini Quest: {Find the One That Let The Cultist And their Artifacts Inside the City!}]

[Congratulations! You have finally managed to capture a culprit, something that never happened in the real story! Now extract all their info and learn about this secret cult, their goals, and what they will do to the city.]

[Hurry! You don't have much time left!]

[Quest Conditions]: [Defeat or Capture the targets: Completed]

[Completion Rewards]: [+500.000 Score Points.]

[Current Score]: [2.300.000]

[There are currently one last Mini Quests waiting to be found.]

We brought her back to a special investigation and interrogation chamber in the fortress, where we got the help of many guards guarding the area. In there, with Mercedes, Mark, Rita, Cecilia, Hermes, and Elbedo, we interrogated the woman using a special relic.

This was a relic placed around her neck that made it impossible for her to lie. And also forced her to answer any questions given to her with sincerity and everything she knew about. She answered our first questions with ease.

"What is your goal?!" Mercedes asked angrily.

"Our goal?! Ugh...! Isn't it obvious?" The Majin woman laughed. "Our goal is to reach salvation, and to free ourselves from the control of the Gods! The Demon King... is nothing but the representation of all the mistakes and errors the gods have committed! We are allying him... because we want a change!"

Chapter 962: Lunatic

"Salvation from the Gods? What in the world are you talking about? The Gods give us everything we could ever want!" Mercedes said angrily. "They raised us, they taught us everything, they give us everything, we live in a utopia! Why would you want it to change?"

"Mother..." Brisingra muttered in silence, as if thinking that what her mother was saying wasn't exactly right either.

"Don't you get it, Mercedes?" The Majin woman laughed. "It is exactly because of that! History cannot continue like this; don't you get it?! Our world, humanity, Cloudia... it simply can't continue while we are sheltered and restrained by them. They're sinners, even worse than us! They created him, they created HIM!

Yet you know what they did?! They chose to seal him away! To split him apart! The Yggdragon did most of that, their supposedly perfect creation. The mother of all of us... Yet you know what they did to her? They left her below, turning her into a stupid tree to terraform the devastated continents below!

They're heartless and senseless beings, they don't care about any of us! We are nothing but their rats!"

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

The researchers remained in silence, every single one of them made different face expressions. Some seemed shocked by such blasphemy, while others seemed conflicted with themselves, gritting their teeth. Mercedes was in between both feelings, angry over the blasphemy, and also frustrated, because deep down, she felt slightly the same as her.

"No! Silence! Enough with your personal opinions!" Mercedes roared. "You're simply insane! The Yggdragon was not turned into Yggdrasil by the Gods, it was her last resort, after that battle, our father perished and his body became Yggdrasil, the mother of life. It is completely different!

And Erebus... Is a monster, a being that wants to predate the gods and destroy it all! You mustn't sympathize with him!

"YET I HAVE!" The Maji cried. "And every time I do, and every time I see through their countless, fragmented minds as I pray for their salvation, do you want to know what I SEE, MERCEDES?!"

The researchers stepped back as they saw the Majin's madness grow.

"I SEE DESPAIR!"

"I SEE PAIN!"

"I SEE AGONY..."

"I SEE DESOLATION..."

"I SEE FRUSTRATION!"

"I SEE... AN ENDLESS YEARNING FOR LOVE!"

"And I see.... I see a child, crying, and asking for help. We simply cannot ignore that; we were not made to ignore those in need of our help." The Majin woman started crying. "The Demon King is nothing but an innocent child, that simply doesn't know what it is doing!"

"Y-You're insane..." Cecilia muttered.

"A child?" Hermes wondered. "No, there's nothing childish about him, only monstrosity and insanity!"

"This is a level of brainwashing I had not seen or expected." Elbedo sighed, crossing his bulky arms.

"She's not... completely wrong though." I said, sighing to myself. "The Demon King, he is indeed a child, someone the Gods created. They wanted to unify their Divinities into a single, perfect being. Yet what they did get at first was Erebus, their elements merged and created Chaos instead. Erebus powers could destroy all the Gods, yet his innocent mind could be made to be good hearted."

As I spoke, the researchers looked at me in surprise.

"How do you know such a thing, Planta?!" Mercedes asked.

"I know because I've also seen him, I've fought him, and I've defeated him..." I sighed. "Erebus and the Yggdragon are not so different from one another, both are creations of the Gods made by the combination of their Divinities. One simply became Chaos, and the other... Creation."

"S-She understand! See?!" Cried the woman.

"However, empathizing with his misfortune does not justify the atrocities you've attempted to do. To kill innocents, to take away the life of people, to destroy civilization. Those are not things I won't approve, and things that, no matter how much I sympathize with someone, I won't do!" I roared. "Now tell me, girl. Where is the rest of your people? Where do you hide?"

"Ugh...!" She gritted her teeth, trying to resist the artifact's powers with her magic, but failing to do so. "T-The underground, outside... the city! To the east- ARGH, NO! Ugh...! To the east below the Sunlit Lake...! Protected by Divine Beasts... careful- UGH!"

Your damned relic fanatics! I hate you researchers the most! You bootlicker of the gods!" She kept barking.

"So those are the coordinates." Mercedes nodded, calming herself. "Did someone write it down?" She asked.

"I did." I said, writing it down on my own bark. "Now, tell me. What is your goal? Are there more like you around? What's your end game?"

"Heheh... Hahaha..." The woman simply laughed. "Hehehehe! Hahahaha! You can't really stop it at this point, it's too late. You can go there if you want anyways! I don't give a fuck!"

What is done is done, while you were distracting yourselves here, we were getting everything done! We're back in the Demon King Continent too, you can't get there, can't you? it's utterly impossible! Go to the lake, see what you can find, it'll be all utterly useless at the end. The end is near. A new beginning will come, one shaped by our true messiah, the Fallen One, shall rise!

He will become the true God... The truest God!"

"Dammit, this woman's insane!" Hermes groaned. "Ugh... Shut the fuck up already!" He gave her a slap in the face, yet the woman smiled back at him.

"Cry all you want... Your Gods, your people, everything... You will all pay." She laughed maniacally. "Hahaha! HAHAAHA! The Gate is already slowly opening! You're all dead, and there's nothing you can do to stop it!"

"Alright, hurry, to the lake!" Said Mercedes. "We can't waste time! General, tell all your soldiers to stay on alert surrounding the city! There might be any attack at any moment!"

"Ah! Yes!" Nodded the Divine Dragon, quickly flying away to gather all the forces.

At the same time, we found ourselves running upstairs and then towards the outside of the city, where Mercedes led us to the East, where the Sunlit Lake was located.

Apparently, there was an abandoned set of ruins there, where the cultists have made their temporary home.

Chapter 963: The Ancient Sunlit Ruins

Even though we've already reached the entrance of the Lake's ruins, there were no new Quests appearing yet, it was rather unnerving, but at the same time, I was preparing myself for almost anything at this point.

Thanks to Belle and the rest of my Familiars, we got here in a few seconds, bringing with us the four researchers, who hurriedly ran past the Sunlit Lake, a beautiful lake made of golden liquid, resembling liquid gold.

"Aah, this liquid, it is Sunlight Spring Water!" Goldie said, drinking some of it. "Hmm! Ah, no, wait, it tastes just like water. Right, this is an illusion, huh?"

"Raaarr!" Silver quickly slammed his fish-shaped head and told him to come along. "Roar!"

"Okay, okay..." Goldie sighed.

As we walked through the lake while ignoring her, as there was little point in trying to extract materials out of a place that wasn't truly what it was, we moved in front of the ruins. Mercedes and the researchers were in silence, looking at the old stone gates.

"I can already sense a lot of dark energies here..." Said Cecilia, sighing. "Dammit, this is really bad. We're going in, aren't we?"

"Didn't she said it had Divine Beasts inside? Won't we get mauled once we get inside?" Hermes asked.

"That's why we're here though!" I said with a smile. "Don't worry, we got your backs, let's go. We're got a whole army over here after all."

"R-Right..." Mercedes nodded. "I suppose we must go then, coming here quickly was my idea. I hope we can find some sort of artifact that could bring us to the demon king continent, or at least give us some other clue about their true plan. Even with the relic on, that woman only told us in the most cryptic ways imaginable."

"She was insane after all; she probably couldn't say the truth properly even with the artifact..." Said Elbedo. "Let's go, there's little else to talk about, we have to hurry! You guys please make sure to watch our backs!"

"Sure!" Nodded Lily. "I'll watch everyone's backs!"

"I would prefer to stay at mother- I mean, at Mercedes' side." Said Brisingra. "Sorry if that is annoying."

"No... It's fine." Elbedo smiled. "Thank you, your magic's really strong, Brisingra. Keep her protected, she happens to be our frailest fighter, haha."

Elbedo stayed in front while Hermes and Cecilia by their left and right side. The gates were forcefully opened after the Ancient Elves used their magic to easily "hack" through the runic system keeping it close.

Creeaaak...!

RUMBLE!

The gates opened, revealing a huge empty hallway, made of black stone. A quick opening of my auras and senses quickly gave me the impression this seemed oddly suspicious. The walls and ceiling were covered on strange runic inscriptions, traps of some sort. But there were no Divine Beasts around here- Wait.

BAAAM!

Suddenly, as we entered, the gate behind closed instantly. I looked behind for a split second, noticing that the gate seemed tightly shut again. I suppose we'll have to break through them once we want to get out.

"The gates closed?!" Nieve said.

"Huh, well, we'll have to just break through that later." Johanna shrugged. "Anyways, you four, where should we get going to?"

"To your deaths." Elbedo responded.

For a moment, we didn't quite register what we heard.

What... did he said?

"Hey, what are you talking about?" Asked Mark. "To our- Shit!"

Before anything else could be said or done, the Divine Dragon's claws moved towards us, a wave of golden and black flames impacted us, a huge explosion happened. Everything surrounding us was set ablaze!

BOOOM!

Not only that, but walls descended from above us, quickly attempting to separate the huge hall into two different rooms. Mercedes, Hermes, and Cecilia were still trying to process what happened before she and Brisingra were trapped inside with Elbedo and the rest!

"Elbedo! What are you doing?!" Cried Mercedes.

"I commend you for trying, but..." Before I could hear anything else, the walls closed.

And as if that couldn't be enough surprises, the wall of the left and the wall of the right opened wide, revealing two gigantic creatures resting inside. The moment the walls opened, their eyes did so as well. One pair glowing with golden light, the other with crimson light.

One revealed to be a giant golden wolf, with sharp crimson eyes, and a long, spiraling horn made of golden crystal. The other was a completely silver-colored lion, with a pair of golden eyes, and two black crystal horns.

Both creatures were about twenty-five-meters of height, and their bodies not only overflowed with Mana and Spirit Energy, but with something much higher, a Divinity Spark, and one that has grown tremendously strong compared to my Familiars!

[The Divine Guardians of the Ancient Sunlit Ruins [Golden Wolf Of Sunlight: Lv350+] and [Silver Lion of Moonlight: Lv350+] have been summoned to protect the Ruins from any invaders!]

[Their bodies overflow with Upper-Rank Divinity Sparks!]

[The Divinity Spark of Sunlight embraces the surroundings with burning light!]

[Any foe takes 20% Sunlight Damage per second, and all their non-light elemental magic and skills power decreases by -50%!]

[The Divinity Spark of Moonlight embraces the surroundings with all-consuming draining light!]

[Any foe takes 20% Moonlight Damage per second, and all their Stats further decrease by -30%!]

"SHIT! MERCEDES!" Rita tried to break through, but both giant beasts leaped in front of her, releasing breath attacks that blasted her away!

"RITA!"

I ran forwards, grabbing her before she was to be sliced apart by their super-fast claws, a second later, they appeared behind me as I carried my friend, my body was torn to shreds before I could register their movements.

They were way too fast!

"Elayne?!"

Rita panicked as she saw me being torn to shreds, only for my body to quickly regenerate within a second. I kicked the ground as hard as I could, a shockwave of spiritual energy swiftly spread my Domain and Terrain within a split second.

"Catch them, quickly! We have to save Mercedes!" I left Rita on the ground as she immediately transformed, protecting my back from the wolf's claws.

CRASH!

"These damn fuckers! So the traitor was the dragon this whole fucking time!" Said Rita.

"No, not only the dragon!" I said. "I saw their faces! Either Cecilia or Hermes, or both! They can't be trusted either! They didn't do a single thing when Elbedo attacked!"

Chapter 964: Betrayal

"What is the meaning of this, Elbedo?!"

Mercedes panicked as she saw the stone walls close behind her, fully reinforced with many runic inscriptions on them. Although they closed quickly, she was able to see Planta and her entire party getting attacked by the two "Divine Beasts" that were protecting the ruins.

"The meaning of what? At this point, you should have simply accepted your fate." Elbedo spoke. "I am sorry, Mercedes. I do appreciate the time we spent together, but this must be stopped now. You and your little party have come too far."

"Y-You're...! You're part of the cult too?!" Mercedes couldn't believe it. The friend she had for almost a hundred years was now revealing his true face. "All our memories...! Everything! Did that mean nothing to you?!"

How could you...! Traitor!"

"..." Elbedo remained in silence, looking at the floor with a slight sense of sorrow. "I'm sorry. But it must be done. To bring this world to a better future. To free us from the Gods claws, we must fight back. Mercedes, you are too loyal to the Gods.

We would have never been able to convince you to join us."

"We?!" Asked Mercedes, suddenly realizing that the silence of Hermes and Cecilia was becoming too dreadful, too suspicious. And indeed, both walked towards Elbedo, standing by his left and right side.

Mercedes and Brisingra's eyes only widened more in shock as they saw the scene occur in front of their eyes. Even Brisingra felt shocked, as these characters have been hanging out with them since the beginning.

They seemed so normal, so simple! Yet... At the end, they had such bad intentions behind their innocent personalities, behind their friendly banter. And behind that inconspicuous friendship.

"Hermes? C-Cecilia? What's... What's the meaning of this?! You... What are you doing?" Mercedes was still trying to understand, to process what her eyes were showing to her.

"I am sorry, Mercedes..." Cecilia sighed, looking guilty. "But we had to do this, you... You'll only get in the way at the end."

"What?!" Mercedes screamed. "What are you...?! Cecilia! We've been together since we were kids! W-What are you doing?! Your brother was a victim too!

What... WHAT IS HAPPENING?!" Mercedes began to lose her sanity at this revelation.

"My brother... I had to use him, I was the one that stabbed him with the Demon Knife, it injected a Lesser Demon inside of him." Said Cecilia. "We'll have to do the same to you."

"Sorry." Hermes sighed, clicking his tongue. "You were a good pal since we meet a couple of years ago, Mercedes. But... Things came to this; we can't back down now. The Demon King is someone we must save. He'll bring this world to a better future than the Gods have ever done."

"N-No... This can't be true...!" Mercedes started crying, falling to her knees. "This can't be true... My friends, you were... you were everything to me... Why? I didn't want to even think that one of you would be a traitor... but a-all of you?! Why... Just WHY?!"

"I-If you want to join us, there might be still time!" Cecilia tried to convince the other two. "Right guys?!"

"Sorry, but that's impossible now. The decision has been made; Mercedes cannot be spared." Elbedo said with a stern tone of voice.

"Stop playing around and take this seriously." Hermes said, his often-friendly face changing into one full of bloodthirst. "She will become the vessel of a Lesser Demon and we will use her to break open the defenses of the city before the ritual inside of the Demon King Continent ends, so we can open the way for his manifestation to reach Cloudia."

"Y-You're going to use me?!" Mercedes screamed. "Y-You fucking monsters...! And I thought you were my friends! You would choose a bunch of lunatics instead of me?! Instead of your families and friends?! Elbedo, what about your children and your wife?!"

"They have already evacuated to a safe place." Elbedo sighed. "I appreciate you worrying about them, Mercedes. And I am sorry for this, but it must be done. Cecilia, do it."

"...Don't worry Mercedes, once you become a demon, you will be able to enjoy eternity at the side of our lord." Cecilia smiled gently, with the same gentle smile Mercedes always saw in her friend.

The elf slowly walked towards her friend, with a black knife imbued with a red jewel, pointing it at the weak-willed Mercedes, that couldn't even move due to how shocked she felt.

The knife slowly moved towards her.

"C-Cecilia..." She looked at her friends in the eyes. "I always... I loved you..."

"...!" Cecilia hesitated for a moment, her eyes widening, as tears flowed from her eyes. "I... I loved you too."

Her knife moved at lightning speed, soon to pierce Mercedes heart.

"But it is too late now... friend."

Mercedes had no strength left to fight, letting the knife approach her heart. Whatever were to happen to her, she didn't seem to care. Everything that she cared for had now betrayed her.

Did she even have another thing left, at all?

Yet...

CRASH!

"What?!" Cecilia gasped, as she saw a rainbow barrier blocking the knife.

The barrier kept absorbing Brisingra's Mana, growing thicker as more layers were assembled, quickly forming a bubble protecting her and her mother.

"Don't you dare touch my mom; you bitch!" Brisingra roared. "You fucking traitors! You meant everything to her, and you betrayed her like that?! You should feel ashamed of yourselves, even if you're part of the cult or whatever, even if that "nice future" is somehow real, do you even deserve it after doing this?!"

"Brisingra..." Mercedes muttered, her eyes widening. "You said I am your mom again? Why do you keep saying such nonsense?"

"It's not nonsense! You're really my mom!" Brisingra kept crying. "I come from the future, and this... it might not even be real right now, but a recreation of a dungeon! But I don't care! I will protect you no matter what, mom! I don't care what happens...!"

"A dungeon? T-the future?" Mercedes eyes widened, as she suddenly felt a surge of pain in her head. "Ugh...! W-What is this?! T-This fluctuation of thoughts... What is happening?!"

Suddenly, Mercedes body overflowed with gray light, the essence of time itself, the powerful shockwave sent Cecilia flying away.

FLAAASH!

Chapter 965: Emergency Scenario Quest

FLAAASH!

A gray flash of pure Essence of Time erupted from Mercedes body, it didn't only sent Cecilia away, but it even pierced the walls separating them from Planta and the rest. The wave of time essence hit the two Divine Beasts who were fighting them.

"ROOAAR!"

"AWOOO!"

Both beasts seemed to be agonizing, their bodies began to quite literally glitch, showing corrupted data breaking apart and then reassembling itself. Time Essence disrupted with them and then seemed to slow them down!

"W-What's happening now?!" Rita screamed, as she kicked the wolf away and then overwhelmed it with a myriad of dark void beams from the many Shadow Dragon Heads coming from her Dark Aura.

The wolf was barely hurt though, but it seemed to still be affected by whatever had just happened, disrupting the beast's movements and making it act increasingly strange. However, this wasn't where the strange happenings ended.

The entire Dungeon's structure began to shake. Time and Space merged together, swirling around and forming a huge hole within the fabric of this scenario "reality".

"The entire Dungeon... No, is this Scenario is being disrupted? What in the world is happening in the other side?!" Mark roared, as he swung his sword against the lion's claws.

CLAAASH!

"RAAARR!"

The Lion didn't seem as affected as the wolf in terms of movements, but it had become considerably slower as well. Utilizing this opportunity, Angelina's party quickly assisted Mark, ganging on the giant Divine Beast with all sorts of attacks.

Meanwhile, Elayne, who was expanding her Terrain and Domain and accumulating Spirits to unleash her powers while at the same time heal her friends, saw countless error messages! This wasn't supposed to be happening.

[ERROR!]

[ERROR!]

[ERROR!]

[ERROR!]

[Scenario disruption due to data breach within the internal synopsis!]

[Time Fragment Core corrupted by internal data breach.]

[Internal Data Concept and Temporary Dimensional Reconstruction has been greatly damaged.]

[Issue Detected: Time Memory Fragment has been greatly alarmed and has taken self-consciousness of the situation.]

[Solution Method: Calm down the Time Memory Fragment before it continues to greatly corrupt the Scenario and the Dungeon.]

[A New {Emergency Scenario Quest} has been generated: {Repair Request}

[The Internal System Artificial Intelligence has detected a great damage within the Internal Synapsis of the Special Divine Dungeon: {Cloudia's Fragment: 1/4}, please solve the situation before the Scenario is greatly corrupted.]

[Quest Conditions]: [Stop the Time Memory Fragment from further corrupting the pillars of the Scenario.]

[Completion Rewards]: [Large Quantity of Score Points.] [System Administrator Privileges] [Automatic Scenario Rearrangement]

[Time Limit]: [10 Minutes before Scenario Corruption reaches Critical Levels.]

[Failure]: [The forced destruction of the current Scenario to keep the Time Fragment from being corrupted, possibly killing everyone inside.]

"WHAT?!"

Elayne had little words to describe how she felt about the current situation. From being betrayed, to being attacked by two overpowered Divine Beasts, to suddenly hearing something happening in the other room, to a sudden corruption in the System itself and the Scenario!

Too many things were happening at the same time one after another, but it wasn't as if she had the actual time to deal with them anyways! Both Divine Beast Bosses were somewhat stopped thanks to the Time Essence waves disrupting with their very powers, slowing them down greatly.

However, what shocked Elayne the most wasn't all of this, but the Quest that popped up, and who wrote it down.

"The System's Artificial Intelligence?"

She knew from the System Spirits, assistant of Players, that there might be something similar to them controlling the wide System, but she never thought that there was an actual artificial intelligence behind it all, and that it was now asking for her help.

The rewards were strange, to say the least. She didn't even know what [System Administrator Privileges] could truly mean, and it made her nervous just to think about its true consequences. However, it didn't even end there, as there was also [Automatic Scenario Rearrangement]!

Perhaps with that, the Scenario could be fixed? She had to give it a try. It was already her priority to save Brisingra and Mercedes no matter what. Although this was a dungeon and Players couldn't die either, NPC could die for real.

And she didn't want Brisingra's life to be at risk, even less when her father trusted Elayne on taking care of the half-dwarf and half-ancient elf girl!

"Familiars! Gang on the wolf! Elena's team, help Angelina's team! My team, half of you stay to deal with the wolf! The other half, help me break this wall!" She worked very quickly.

Her commands were orders, as Elena led her party and joined Angelina's party on dealing with the lion. Meanwhile, all of her Families started attacking the confused and still slightly lethargic wolf, while half her team joined them.

Thanks to the Domain of Silver and Goldie, the Domain of the wolf and the lion was greatly weakened, while giving everyone a boost to their regeneration of all energies, including Ki!

At the same time, Elayne, Mark, Rita, and Lily rushed forwards, smashing the walls in front of them with all their strength! With the help of the Great Spirit and her ever-growing stats with all the buffs, skills, and domains activated, Elayne disrupted the thousands of runic inscriptions and destroyed the walls forcefully, with the help of Mark and Lily's physical prowess backing her up.

Crack, crack...!

CRASH!

The walls broke apart, revealing the scene that was occurring in the other side, Mercedes was on her knees, her eyes completely silver, showing countless numbers and data constantly changing endlessly. From within her body, waves of Time Essence disrupted the Dungeon's entire structure.

At the same time, the trio of traitors were attacking Brisingra's barrier, which was constantly shattering against their flurry of attacks, yet the girl kept conjuring more and more barriers, her Mana was already about to end!

"Just stop resisting already, you damned brat!" Hermes roared furiously, conjuring a giant spear of compressed time. "{Chrono Spear}!"

BOOOM!

The barrier shattered one last time, as the trio jumped towards Mercedes and Brisingra, their eyes filled with madness! However, in that very moment, Elayne's giant Lion Club smashed the head of Hermes into the ground. Mark's sword cut Elbedo's wings cleanly. And Lily's giant rocky arms broke Celica's arms, kicking her down!

"L-Lady Planta!" Brisingra cried of happiness to see them.

"Nobody touches Brisingra while I am here!" Planta roared furiously, her body quickly transforming into a draconic form.

Chapter 966: Fighting The Traitors

Catastrophes happened one after another. From Elbedo, Cecilia, and Hermes betraying everyone else, to the two powerful Divine Beasts easily overwhelming everyone, and then Brisingra telling Mercedes what she was, and the truth of this entire Scenario, which caused an error within her "Memory".

There were too many questions within everyone's minds, but there was no time to ask for questions, and even less to receive proper answers.

Everyone entered the Dungeon believing this was nothing but a simulation of ancient times, but things were continuously becoming too complex to be just simulations anymore. Especially when Elayne learned the existence of concepts such as a "Time Fragment Core", and a "Time Memory Fragment".

"Could it mean that this entire Scenario is somehow a fragment of time itself? Then it is reality, yet it is not?!" Elayne thought to herself as she saw the messages one last time.

[ERROR!]

[ERROR!]

[ERROR!]

[ERROR!]

[Scenario disruption due to data breach within the internal synopsis!]

[Time Fragment Core corrupted by internal data breach.]

[Internal Data Concept and Temporary Dimensional Reconstruction has been greatly damaged.]

[Issue Detected: Time Memory Fragment has been greatly alarmed and has taken self-consciousness of the situation.]

[Solution Method: Calm down the Time Memory Fragment before it continues to greatly corrupt the Scenario and the Dungeon.]

[A New {Emergency Scenario Quest} has been generated: {Repair Request}

[The Internal System Artificial Intelligence has detected a great damage within the Internal Synapsis of the Special Divine Dungeon: {Cloudia's Fragment: 1/4}, please solve the situation before the Scenario is greatly corrupted.]

[Quest Conditions]: [Stop the Time Memory Fragment from further corrupting the pillars of the Scenario.]

[Completion Rewards]: [Large Quantity of Score Points.] [System Administrator Privileges] [Automatic Scenario Rearrangement]

[Time Limit]: [10 Minutes before Scenario Corruption reaches Critical Levels.]

[Failure]: [The forced destruction of the current Scenario to keep the Time Fragment from being corrupted, possibly killing everyone inside.]

"And this was provoked because Brisingra continued speaking about the past and the present... Mercedes somehow couldn't handle all of that, and made this "simulated" memory within time to doubt its own existence?" Elayne kept thinking. "Agh, no, no time to think about anything now! I have to save Brisingra and help Mercedes snap out of it!"

Hermes had enough of Brisingra and Mercedes or anything they were talking about, quickly using his Time Magic and conjuring a giant spear made of Time.

"{Chrono Spear}!"

BOOOM!

Brisingra's barrier, which was protecting her mother and herself, was shattered, as the trio of traitors jumped towards Mercedes and Brisingra, their eyes filled with madness.

"Stop right there!"

However, in that very moment, Elayne's giant Lion Club smashed the head of Hermes into the ground. Mark's sword cut Elbedo's wings cleanly. And Lily's giant rocky arms broke Celica's arms, kicking her down!

"L-Lady Planta, everyone!" Brisingra cried of happiness to see them.

"Brisingra! Are you alright?" Planta asked with a gentle tone of voice, despite giving a furious draconic roar as her body started to transform.

The ceiling of this temple could only reach as high as fifty meters, so she was quite limited on her transformation. Nonetheless, she still went all-out once more, there was no time to waste, and no time to think!

Her body quickly transformed like before, as her already slightly tired Dragon Spirits once more channeled their power into her. To complement their exhaustion, the Great Spirit of Harvest added her own power too, and to add even more, Elayne called upon the strength of the Verdant Green Domain!

Ding!

[You have activated several skills, spells, and abilities and combined them together alongside Hundreds of Lesser Dragon Spirits, Holy Light Spirits, and your tamed Dragon Spirits! You have further strengthened the convergence of abilities and spells with the Divine Essence of the Verdant Green Domain!]

[You have temporarily transformed into the {Three-Headed Holy Yggdragon Goddess} form!]

[All your Stats have further increased by +550%, all of your Spirit and Dragon-type Skills and Spells Power has increased by +350%, your HP and MP Regeneration Speed has increased by +1.100%, and you have gained the ability to activate the Divine Skills: {Holy Yggdragon Domain}, {Divine Dragon Spirit Army}, and {Celestial Draconic Weapon Creation}!]

As her body transformed, the trio of researchers were shocked, stepping back. Their plan was not to confront Planta and her friends at all after all. They would have never guessed they could be so strong as to break that giant stone wall, which Elbedo had made sure to reinforce with many Runic Engravements.

They knew that Planta and her friends were very strong, and therefore wanted to leave them to the Divine Beasts to handle.

FLAAASH!

[An Aura of {Holy Yggdragon's Domain} has spread everywhere, your Domain and Terrain has gained the {Immunity} status, becoming incapable of being destroyed as long as your transformation remains.]

[Duration: 7 Minutes.]

As Elayne transformed, a powerful domain extended everywhere. This was the combination of most of her abilities into one, an ultimate form which contained even divinity itself! Elbedo instantly kicked away Mark with his divine draconic strength, all while gathering his flames to burn the domain.

"As long as you can burn her domain, she's not that strong!" He roared. "Burn it!"

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

However, although golden and silver flames spread out across Elayne's domain. The plants were not dying, and more Spirits kept appearing everywhere. The entire ruins were already filled with hundreds within seconds! And her Stats kept increasing based on how many spirits were around, to boot.

"You damned lizard, her domain's not burning!" Hermes kept conjuring basic fire spells.

"What?!" Elbedo muttered, a second before Elayne appeared before him, her club unleashing its power at full strength.

"{Nemean Lion's Rampage}!"

"Shit!"

Elbedo gritted his teeth as he started transforming to take on the hit, but because he started too late, Elayne's whole attack hit his head and the rest of his body on a barrage of lion claws slashing through him.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

"RAAAH!"

Elayne overcharged her weapon with as much Mana as she could inject to it, releasing an explosive, fourth strike, smashing Elbedo's draconic head and crushing it over the floor.

CRAAASH!

Chapter 967: Intense Battle!

Ding!

[You have dealt Critical Damage to the [Demonic Dark Gold Divine Dragon: Elbedo: Lv325]!]

[Elbedo] has been inflicted with [Stun]!]

Stun, a powerful yet short status effect that Elayne could inflict by using farming tools through her Spirit Farming Tool Mastery Skill.

But that wasn't all, the moment she struck down Elbedo and the Divine Dragon was about to stand back up, a gigantic shockwave of elements surged.

Wind, Light, and Ice converged together, encompassing Elayne's weapon and filling it with Elemental Spiritual Energy.

The shockwave of elemental and spiritual power impacted Elbedo with a loud explosion, blowing him away once more the moment he tried to stand back up!

BOOOM!

"Ugh?!" He groaned. "J-Just how strong is she?! She's no mere mercenary or guard at all!"

The Divine golden scaled dragon's draconic form quickly gained a demonic appearance as Elayne felt demonic energy coursing through his body. The stun effect was finally gone, and he could move his body well.

Only for Elayne to appear right in front of him again, his eyes widened as he conjured a wall of black and golden flames, which were futile as Elayne's club was covered on ice!

"Ice too?!" He muttered.

BAAAMMM!!!

And it was all thanks to one of Elayne's Farmer Skills.

[Spirit Farming Tool Mastery: Lv15 (Evolved) (Max Level)]

The upgraded version of [Farming Tool Usage]. By using Farming Tools, you're able to enhance the richness of the soil and also the growth of plants, and you can take care of your plants' health, so they grow stronger, and there's even the possibility of granting spiritual blessings into the soil and plants.

Farming Tool Proficiency increased by +25.000, Farming Tool Power increased by +34.000, Farming Tool Mastery increased by +250%. The mastery, proficiency, and power increases with each level. Damage increases based on Proficiency, Tool Power, and Mastery.

There is a 100% chance of inflicting [Stun] and [Paralysis] on a foe when hitting them with a Farming Tool for 5 Seconds, and there is a 100% chance of unleashing a [Shockwave] that spreads 100% of the damage you inflicted with the attack that triggered the effect, the shockwave can spread out up to 21 meters surrounding the target of your hit and hitting the ground with a Farming Tool has a 100% chance to turn it into [Spiritual Soil].

Additionally, there's also a 90% chance to acquire the "Spiritual Blessing" of a certain element (Earth, Fire, Wind, Water, Ice, Light) into the Farming Tool at random for 5 Minutes, which will unleash an [Elemental Spiritual Attack] imbuing any attack with that Elemental Damage and increasing Farming Tool Power by an additional +30.000. All Elements can stack together.

Not only was she gathering Elemental Spirits inside her weapon and obtaining their blessings, making any of her blows an Elemental Spiritual Attack now, but every hit released shockwaves that constantly deal even more damage, and expanded her domain everywhere! It even expanded on the walls and ceiling. Nature was everywhere, quite literally.

"How come each of your attacks is spreading this annoying Domain?!" The Divine Dragon cried. "A-And how I can't burn it?! These cursed flames should be able to burn everything!"

"Do you think I'll sit around to answer your stupid questions, you traitor?!" Elayne roared, rising her legs and kicking his stomach, before leaping into the air and spinning with her gigantic, wooden and draconic body. "{Spiritual Attack}!"

The power of the Great Spirit was activated as well, as Elayne's club smashed Elbedo once more into the floor, one of his eyes finally popping up and making him scream in utter agony and pain. Only for his head to gain a huge wound, his skull was about to gain a crack at any moment now!

"YOU DAMNED WOMAN!"

With a furious and monstrous roar, the once calm and composed Divine Dragon showed his true nature. He opened his jaws, greeting Elayne with a devastating Draconic Breath of Black Demonic Flames and Golden Dragon Flames. The explosion seemed to consume her entirely, blowing her away several meters.

BOOOM!!

"Hahhh... Hahaha! I wanted to do this for a while now!" Elbedo laughed monstrosly. "Since the moment I saw you fight that I knew you were a strong divine dragon! Let's see who's the strongest divine dragon between the two of us, Planta!"

"I'm sorry to break your bubble, but I am not willing to compete with someone like you."

However, Elayne's voice emerged from within the smoke, Elbedo was shaken the moment he heard her completely fine, and in fact, without sounding tired at all. His eyes widened the moment he saw something in front of her, a giant shield made of rainbow crystalized spirits and dragon spirits.

[You have activated the Divine Skill: {Celestial Draconic Weapon Creation}! You have merged your Divine Dragon scales with hundreds of Lesser Spirits and Lesser Dragon Spirits to create the {Celestial Rainbow Draconic Spirit Shield} with a durability of 500.000!]

[The {Celestial Rainbow Draconic Spirit Shield} unleashes a powerful {Divine Spirit Dragon's Protection Aura} around you and your allies, enhancing all your Total Defenses by +500% and decreasing Damage taken by -50%!]

[Duration: 4 Minutes.]

"A shield?! Where did you...?!" As Elbedo was trying to process this while conjuring dozens of projectiles made out of golden and black flames, Elayne charged forwards. Elbedo panicked, enchanting his fists with layers of Dark energies, clashing against her. "Tsk! Come at me then!"

"{Heroic Parry}!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

However, Elayne easily parried all his blows with a single shield bash, Elbedo saw his own dragon claws shattering into pieces. He was incapable of believing what was happening right now.

But without a doubt, he had to accept it!

He was being overwhelmed!

BAAAMMM!!

"Uagh!"

His face was crushed once more, as his entire body was forced against the wall. Elayne's many arms attacked him with stunning blows using her giant club and sword techniques with Gram at the same time.

"{Nemean Lion's Rampage}! {Holy Blade Dance}! {Consecutive Dashing Strikes}!"

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

Blood and pieces of flesh and scales kept splattering everywhere as Elbedo screamed in utter and horrifying agony. Hermes and Cecilia were unable to believe their eyes.

Their strongest member was losing!

"S-Stop! STOP! GRYYAAGH!"

Elbedo attempted to defend with his flames and claws, and any other technique he knew, but it was all futile.

"Pay for your betrayal with your life! {Divine Execution}!"

SLAAASH!

Chapter 968: Kill The Traitor

Elayne was being completely merciless, the amount of anger she felt for having been betrayed by the trio was immense, even more when knowing they intended to not only kill Mercedes, but her daughter Brisingra, the girl that her father let her take care of! The anger and frustration she felt for almost having let the girl die was immense.

"Stop! You damned woman! Enough! Stop you- AGH!"

Elbedo kept trying to fight, but he was incapable to defend against Elayne's endless flurry of attacks. Her giant shield was crushing all his body against the wall, making it unable for him to move properly. His claws were slashing her body as he could, but she was regenerating endlessly with her wooden and plant-based body.

And his flames were of no use either, an armor of divine light reflecting it.

Elayne battered him with attacks, her club crushing his scales and then her sword piercing his body not once, but several times at the same time. The power of Gram's ability allowed the sword to release several slashing blows at once randomly, which triggered more than once thanks to Elayne's very huge Luck Stat.

"STOP! RAAAH!"

Elbedo went insane, trying to destroy Elayne's shield, and somehow managing. His breath attack blowing away her shield after its one million durability finally ran out.

Crack, crack...!

CRASH!

However, what greeted him was Elayne ready to finish him off. She knew that, unlike the other bosses, he didn't have a ridiculous amount of health points.

And right now, it was her opportunity to get the strongest of the trio out of their way!

"Pay for your betrayal with your life! {Divine Execution}!"

SLAAASH!

With a single slash of her Level 5 Sword Art, Elayne cut through the entire body of Elbedo. The dragon gave a loud, fortifying scream of utter, maddening agony. The sword descended incredibly fast and with a single, powerful wave of pure holy light. His darkness was immediately burned, dealing even more damage against a former wielder of light.

"T-This can't be happening...! N-NO...! GRYYYAAGH!"

Somehow, Elbedo kept resisting even when his head and most of his body was split in half, stopping Elayne's sword as she noticed countless tentacles surging from his wounds, and crimson eyes! Demonic, Miasmic, and Nether energies pouring out of his blood constantly.

"I won't die...! I CAN'T DIE! NOT UNTIL... MY LORD IS...!"

"I'm sorry, but this is it, Elbedo!"

Elayne strengthened her resolve as her two weapons suddenly fused together into a giant rainbow sword made of crystalized spiritual power. A portal behind her already summoning Divine Dragon Spirits

that were not only helping Mark, Lily, and Rita deal with Hermes and Cecilia, but also helped everyone else take on the Divine Beasts much more easily.

These Divine Dragons quickly merged with her weapon, as Elbedo desperately attempted to stop her. His tentacles growing larger and larger, dozens of them at a time, growing long bone spurs and rushing towards her.

"DIE, PLANTAAA!"

Ding!

[You have activated the Divine Skill: {Celestial Draconic Weapon Creation}! Your two weapons have been used as the base, while the rest of the summoned Divine Dragon Spirits have been fused into them, further materializing into the {Celestial Draconic Spirit Blade}!]

[The {Celestial Draconic Spirit Blade} combines the stats of both weapon bases, plus a +300% boost to all of their stats and ability effects! Additionally, each consecutive blow will release {Draconic Spirit Flame Explosions} that will deal +100% additional damage with each blow, for a maximum of +1000%!]

The enormous sword shone with rainbow flames, as Planta completely focused entirely on her weapon. Gram and her Gaia's All-Purpose-Tool Abilities merging together, transforming and fusing into something new at the same time as she attacked Elbedo.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Each slash generated explosions of draconic spirit flames, clashing against his spear-like tentacles and completely burning them to ashes. Even after beginning to transform into an Aberration, it wasn't enough to deal with Elayne's ever-growing powers and abilities!

"Just... Who... WHO ARE YOU?!"

Elbedo screamed in horror as his entire body was being cut off and blown up to ashes. He started fearing for everything he had built to crumble down before him!

"I am the one that'll take you down, you traitor! I should have never trusted you nor anybody else! Deep down, I was really hoping it wasn't you guys! But now... I simply can't go easy on you!" Elayne kept attacking.

"Wait...! PLEASE! AARGH...!" Elbedo fell into the floor as his monstrous body kept trying to regenerate back, but Elayne's attacks were faster and stronger. "I have a family...! I have children, please!"

Elayne's eyes widened only for a split second. But she kept attacking anyways. The damage continued accumulating more and more.

"If you truly cared about your family, you wouldn't have betrayed your people and your friends like that." Elayne's eyes shone with bright, golden light. "Your crocodile tears won't convince me, ELBEDO!"

"SHIT! DAMMIT ALL!"

Elbedo's entire body became a massive jaw, attempting to eat Elayne with a single bite.

"I'LL EAT YOU UP, YOU DAMNED FUCKING- Ah!"

However, the moment he was about to reach Elayne, her sword slashed through his body one last time. The abilities of Gram, once more, activating in that moment. The dragon slaying sword by itself was already super effective against Elbedo, who was a dragon.

However, once an Aura of overflowing Divinity and Spiritual Essence surged from the sword's fused state.

It was over.

"{Spiritual Heroic Sword Fusion Aura}!"

Ding!

[You have exchanged 1000 Durability and activated the {Spiritual Heroic Sword Fusion Aura}, increasing all Spirit and Blade Skills Power and Effects by +300%, Boosting All Stats by +30%, alongside allowing the

user to summon {Spirit Sword Illusions} which have a high chance of increasing the strikes of the sword against a foe by 5 times for 10 Minutes.]

With a single slash, five Spirit Sword Illusions appeared above Elayne, made of golden and rainbow-colored spiritual essence, and piercing Elbedo on several parts of his body. Each part that was pierced was immediately blown to ashes.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

"N-No...! W-Wait a second!"

Elbedo's memories of his family passed through his mind, as his entire body was reduced to ashes, barely a single eye left behind, which shed a small tear.

"My family..."

"I'm..."

"Sorry..."

BOOOOMMM!!!

Chapter 969: Mark's True Power

After only one minute of arriving here, Elayne killed Elbedo in front of Mercedes, Cecilia, and Hermes. The two last traitors felt an immense horror and fear, as they saw their comrade in arms die a horrid death.

"ELBEDO!" Hermes screamed.

"N-no... NOOOO!" Cecilia cried.

"Now you cry, huh? But not when you were about to kill Mercedes?!" Mark roared, clashing against Hermes and kicking him away.

"Tch, shut up!" Hermes screamed. "Elbedo was our leader, without him, our purpose and- No, shit, shit!"

Before he could say another thing, a gigantic blazing fist reached his body, within a split second, he managed to conjure a gray-colored barrier of Time Essence, yet still, like a balloon, he was blown away, hitting the wall right behind him.

BAAAM!

"Did you heard me asking for your opinion?" Mark said, his wooden body turning pitch black. The wood of his body slowly gained a metallic sheen, as every single fiber that made him was strengthened and metalized.

Dozens of Beast Spirit Totems were infused into his body, as his body size kept increasing, but keeping itself moderately small, at only three meters of height so he could fight and faster than if he became gigantic.

His appearance now resembling a combination of a blazing golem and a mecha. His giant, blazing phoenix wings spreading out over his back, completely made of this black metallic wood and covered on crimson spirit flames.

A dragon head-shaped helmet decorated his head, resembling more like the skull of a dragon made of the same black metallic wood that made the rest of his body.

This was Mark's strongest ability, his Divine Skill created from the fusion of three different Skills.

"I am not going easy on you! Now, either give up, or get crushed to death." He pointed his giant fists at Hermes.

The Ancient Elf gritted his teeth, quickly conjuring more magic around his body, suddenly, as he took away his robes, his muscular upper body was revealed, completely covered on countless runic engravements.

Over his chest, there was a red colored jewel incrusted, which had many crimson veins spread out of it, and into the rest of his body.

"You'll die for underestimating me, walking piece of crap..." He muttered with all his rage.

"Finally showing your true self, bastard?" Mark asked, his blazing fists growing a second pair from above his shoulders. He also wielded the Berserk Blade with his first pair of arms, which thanks to Elayne, he had been able to upgrade to a much stronger, strengthened form.

"I'm going to reduce you to smithereens!!!" Hermes leaped towards Mark fearlessly, his runes activating as he was suddenly covered by an insect-like armor of red and black color, his fists covered on spiraling spheres of Time Essence.

CRAAASH!

Mark's blade clashed against his fists, as he suddenly noticed something. His blazing eyes widened as Hermes was somehow able to block his attack with those skinny arms of his!

"Surprised?"

But that wasn't all.

The spheres of swirling Time Essence within Hermes fists started spreading Time Decay through Mark's sword, and then his hands.

In mere seconds, his metallic wood started rusting and falling apart into pieces!

"W-What?!"

Mark stepped back as his fists quickly stopped decaying, beginning to regrow anew. But in this time, Hermes stepped forward, his black exoskeleton, which seemed to be the ability the red jewel granted to him, shapeshifted, his hands suddenly growing a pair of long, black spears, still overflowing with Time Essence!

"DIE!"

"Ungh?!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

CRAAASH!

Hermes unleashed a barrage of attacks against Mark, each blow pierced through his Spiritual Barrier and hit his body. Most of the blows didn't even pierce his mighty skin, but left more and more areas corroded with Time Decay, making his entire body oxidize rapidly.

"Wood, Metal, even living beings. It doesn't matter." Hermes laughed. "You're nothing against the power of Time, you useless piece of shit! I'll avenge Elbedo and take his place in the cult!"

Hermes laughed and celebrated his victory as his spears regrew rapidly, about to unleash a last attack on Mark's body, as he had suddenly fallen to his knees while seeing his oxidized body fall apart.

BAAAM!

His body suddenly exploded into countless pieces, leaving behind a huge mass of flames which spread everywhere, although they were unable to burn Elayne's domain.

"Mark...?! Shit, he got killed!" Rita panicked, as she was clashing against a lunatic Cecilia that was constantly trying to stab her with Demon-Infused Daggers.

"He'll respawn later, right?!" Lily panicked. As she was generating walls to stop Cecilia's rapid advance while constantly helping the other half of the party on dealing with the Divine Beasts.

"Don't worry, he's fine!" Elayne said, rushing to their aid. "Mark got this."

Elayne's confidence didn't come from nothing.

"That was easy... Now you three are left." Hermes walked away, looking at Elayne. "That idiot of Elbedo didn't have the power of Time at his hands, this is but a gift only us Ancient Elves are gifted with. Divine

Dragons are only the muscles of our society, but the truly strongest ones have always been US, the Ancient Elv-"

"Hey."

FRSSH...

Suddenly, Hermes felt a horrid burning sensation coming from his shoulder, which quickly melted his exoskeleton and started burning his skin below, reaching his shoulder bones in a split second.

It was a gigantic hand made of pure, spiritual flames, it had feathers made of fire decorating the entire arm, and the hand itself had sharp claws, like those of a bird's talon.

"I am not dead yet."

"GYAAGH! Get away from me!"

Hermes screamed in utter agony as his shoulder burned horrible, he attempted to escape Mark's grasp, only for another of his arms to embrace him in a hug!

"W-What?! AAGH! H-How are you alive?! What are you?!"

Hermes hadn't realized before what was happening, but it only took him three seconds to quickly make sense of the situation.

Mark's entire body was now made of just Spiritual Flames, and countless of Beast Totem Spirits fused into him.

Mark's long feathered wings spread out from his back, as he revealed his true form, his head resembling a fiery, divine bird.

"I am a Phoenix."

Chapter 970: The Flames That Burn Through Everything

Hermes was sure he had destroyed Mark's body before he could fully regenerate, he had broken him to smithereens, completely! And even if some pieces of him were left, they were decaying and rusting away.

Yet...

YET!

He was right behind him, and now made of just flames. There was nothing solid within him, he was a being made of pure spiritual fire. Mark had simply let behind his "shell" and become an entity of flames.

And not just any, he was a Phoenix. His evolution allowed him to claim such a thing. Having absorbed and fused with a mighty Phoenix Spirit and also using the materials of a Phoenix, he became somewhat of one.

And through leveling and developing this power, and acquiring a myriad of mighty Skills, he could proudly claim to be one.

Especially with the secondary effect of his Divine Skill [Divine Black Metal Phoenix Sentinel Transformation]!

Its primary and active effect was to transform his body and gain a metallic body from his wood's metalizing itself.

But this... It was a step beyond.

A unique ability within the Skill that only triggers when his HP reaches zero.

{Blazing Rebirth}!

"A Phoenix?!" The Ancient Elf screamed. "What are you talking about?! Weren't you some sort of Majin of the Wood Tribe?!"

"Don't be ridiculous!"

Mark roared, clashing against Hermes with lightning speed. His flames exploded all around Hermes body, as he kept hugging him tightly. The elf's armor melted rapidly, the flames burning his skin and flesh. The agony he felt was excruciating!

BAAAM!

"ARRGH! G-Get away from me!"

Hermes screamed, as he used his Time Magic to regress the time of his wounds before they were burned, barely managing to regenerate rapidly. He kept trying to get away, but Mark was not letting go of him, even as his arms were being stretched several meters.

"How did you even revive?! It doesn't make any sense! Your life force was completely gone!"

"I came back like a Phoenix, I told you!"

{Blazing Rebirth} allowed Mark to not only revive after his health points reaches zero, but also to receive a boost to all his stats based on all the total HP he lost before rebirth multiplied by two for the next ten minutes.

And above all, for that very time frame, his entire body became completely made of the spiritual flames of a phoenix, alongside all the spiritual bodies of his Beast Totem Spirits, unified into a giant, Blazing Spirit Phoenix Giant.

"T-That's bullshit!"

Hermes didn't want to believe Mark's words, as he had only heard legends about Phoenixes, legendary divine beasts that only lived within the Divine Realm of Flames. However, the truth was right in front of his eyes.

Mark's blazing body quickly took an even more Phoenix-like form, grabbing him with his talons and flying high into the skies, before rushing down, about to pummel him down with an explosive blow.

"How about this for bullshit?!"

"STOP!"

Hermes attempted to free himself, using his Time Decay and covering Mark completely with it. His arms and legs only melted away the moment they touched his endlessly blazing body, Time Decay had little to no effect on his endlessly burning flames.

"Nothing... works?!"

"Burn!"

BOOOOMMM!!!

An explosion of flames engulfed Hermes completely. His Time Regeneration Abilities could only extend so far, as his exoskeleton burned to a crisp and then his body.

"Gryyyaaggh! N-No... stop! STOP! I can't die here! I have so many ambitions!"

Hermes desperately tried all kinds of magics, yet compared to Elbedo, he had little physical strength to compare with Mark, the blazing sentinel easily overpowering him!

"I don't care about your ambitions."

"Uuaaggh!"

Mark then used his blazing sword to cut through his neck, beheading him on the spot, and then splattering his burnt head into pieces mercilessly.

"Hahhh..." Mark's blazing eyes were quickly set on the two Divine Beasts. "Planta, I'm going to help everyone else, they're still struggling a lot!"

"Got it!" Planta nodded. "Let us handle the rest!"

At the same time, Cecilia found herself surrounded. She was constantly trying to get to Mercedes at the very least, to inject her with the Demon Knife. But everything was going downhill really fast. Elbedo died, and now Hermes. The only one left of the three was her!

"Mother! Please snap out of it! Mom!" And Brisingra kept trying to help Mercedes who was constantly screaming, her surroundings growing distorted.

"Uughh...! M-My head! Aaaagh! What am I? Where am I?! Am I truly... Am I Mercedes?!" She kept screaming, ignoring the intense battles that happened around her.

"Brisingra, stay away from her!" Said Planta, rushing to grab the girl before a crack in space where to suck her inside.

"Uwah!" Brisingra screamed as she was grabbed by one of Elayne's arms, which stretched like a giant vine and grabbed her away, Planta still on her draconic form.

"Lady Planta! My mother...! What is happening to her?!"

Planta sighed as she looked at Brisingra panicking. If it wasn't because she ended telling her that she was her daughter and all of that information, this might have been prevented.

But it wasn't as she could help it, after all, it was understandable the girl would react in such a way after finally meeting her mother. She thought that, if she were undergoing the same situation as her, she might have done the same.

"Brisingra, remember that this is a Scenario, your mother has sadly passed away many years ago." Planta told the girl, looking into her eyes. "Please, keep yourself calm and don't lose your mind. I know it hurts, and I know you wanted to meet her, to talk to her, and so on... But still."

Brisingra looked back at Cecilia fighting against Rita and Lily, the elf woman seemed much stronger at Time Magic than Hermes and had a myriad of cursed knives imbued with different demons, pushing both women constantly.

Then at the two Divine Beasts clashing against the other half of the party, the wolf and the lion were incredibly strong, and only continued becoming stronger with each passing second.

And then, at Mercedes.

As she shed a tear, she nodded.

"I understand... Please, tell me what I need to do, Lady Planta."