

Destiny 1541

Chapter 1541 First Trial Completion

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Nuguro stared at Shin, who was looking at him coldly, while also trying to open his mouth to say something. But despite how hard he tried, there was no words came out of it.

He could only cough with blood as his body was shredded by the apparition of the World Serpents that were crushing him from every direction.

He did not last that long before his body turned into a Mana Essence that was absorbed by Shin.

Naturally, Shin did not immediately absorb this contaminated mana essence since it was mixed with dense demonic energy. He had to filter out the demonic energy before proceeding to absorb the purified mana essence.

As for the contaminated energy, it was attracted to the thing that Nuguro had left behind. Aside from the seven Sea Gems, he had also left a crystalized heart that was dyed black due to the wicked energy that it contained.

Shin did not waste any time as he quickly reached his hand and kept the gemstones. He then hesitated for a moment, considering whether to take the crystalized heart, before finally grabbing it.

After that, he swiftly turned around and headed toward the altar as fast as he could.

He could sense that his body was starting to collapse due to the backlash of pushing himself too hard earlier. Moreover, the burden that he had to carry during the battle was too heavy due to the overwhelming power that the fallen World Serpents had provided him.

Due to this, his body, which was already reaching its limit earlier, was forced further beyond. This made the backlash of these powers much stronger than what it originally had been.

He was bleeding in different parts of his body, making his current appearance more miserable.

After struggling to reach the altar, Shin stood in front of the floating scimitar and stared at it for a moment before taking out the gemstones that he had collected.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Right after the gemstones that he had collected before coming here were taken out along with the ones that he had just gotten from Nuguro, a blinding light was released and illuminated the entire place.

The two sets of gemstones spun above Shin while releasing different lights before slowly merging.

A set of seven Sea Gems floated above the altar for a moment, dyeing the entire place in seven different colors.

Falan and Octo, who were still locked in an intense battle, could not help but pause. Then simultaneously turned their heads toward the altar before wearing expressions that were opposite to one another.

Falan was smiling and nodding his head as he saw Shin standing on top of the altar while Octo wore a grim expression.

"What a useless thing! Can't even defeat such a trash?" cursed Octo before disengaging from the battle completely.

Now that Nuguro had been eliminated and Shin had collected all the gemstones, it would only take some time before this round of the festival ended.

The Champion of the Seas was about to get crowned, so he now had to leave and meet with the rest of their forces before they got out of this independent realm.

"Let's meet again on the other side and settle our score at the main battleground," said Octo as he retreated.

At the same time, he took out an object and crushed it before Falan could even react to it.

Swoosh!

A light quickly swallowed Octo before he disappeared alongside it.

Falan wanted to stop Octo from running away, but he could only watch the latter disappear before his eyes, making him click his tongue with a bitter smile.

He then turned his attention back to Shin, who was watching the Sea Gems merge into a single gemstone.

...

Ding

While Shin was watching the formation of the new gemstone, the familiar sound of the system sounded in his ears, giving him the highly anticipated notification.

System: Congratulations! You have collected all the Sea Gems!

System: The Emerald of the Seven Seas is now appearing!

Ding

System: You have been recognized by God's Emerald as the Champion of the Great Ocean.

Ding

System: You are now qualified to meet the God of the Primordial Waters. Would you like to meet him now?

...

Reading through the string of nonfiction before his eyes, Shin could finally relax and heave a sigh of relief.

"This so-called trial took longer than I expected," he mumbled before turning to Falan, who was currently looking back at him.

"I guess this is a goodbye for now," he mumbled as he pressed the button before him.

Swoosh!

Shin's body was immediately swallowed by a pillar of light that pierced from the high heavens and descended into this realm.

...

Whoosh!

Not long after, Shin found himself in the middle of a white world filled with nothingness.

It was oddly similar to the world within his Sea of Consciousness, where Uno resided along with the Seed of Hatred that had been sealed.

However, there were also some striking differences that he could not explain and one of them was the overwhelming aura that was filling the entire place.

"I have been waiting."

While Shin was trying to adjust himself to this environment, a voice suddenly called him from behind.

When he turned around, he was immediately greeted by a 'familiar' person that he had seen at the start of each trial.

It was that mysterious person, who was sitting on top of a giant whale, hosting the entire festival of the seas.

"Ah-..." Shin tried to say something, but he immediately realized that he could not talk in this realm.

"Don't bother. We are running out of time now. I can't stay in this realm as the current restrictions cast upon me are far beyond my current authority," said the mysterious individual before explaining.

"Since you have witnessed the records of the Great Oceanic War that happened in the era of Gods and Immortals, you will be tied with the fates of the sea creatures."

"I don't know how much time has passed since 'Leviathan' and 'Kraken' have stolen my Divine Authority, so I can't gauge how powerful they have become."

"But I hope that you will give my descendants the inheritance that I have left for them before those two are freed from the restrictions of the current world and come back for what I have left behind."

Rumble!

A clap of thunder suddenly shook the entire place as this God was taking, creating multiple cracks in different places.

"If you want to learn more about the history of the current world, then you can continue looking at it by completing the trials that I have left behind. I just hope that you will help my descendants when the time comes."

Swoosh!

He then paused and pointed forward, sending a beam of light that entered the center of Shin's forehead.

"And as a reward for your efforts, I will leave you with the powers that I used to wield in this realm."

Ding

System: The Avatar of Hydros, the God of Primordial Waters, has given you the authority to control water.

System: Congratulations! You have now the ability to wield the higher form of mana – the 'Primordial Waters'!

...

After that, the avatar continued. "The rest will be given to you once you have passed the trials that I have prepared."

"It may be quite a challenge, but you will gain a lot from your experiences you will get from it just like how from this trial."

"But I must warn you, you must wait until you have grown strong enough to take on those trials, or you will pay dearly for it. Wanting to become stronger has always been a good thing, but being too greedy in exchange for power will always cost you something dear."

"Leviathan and Kraken have sacrificed almost the entirety of the Great Ocean just for it, but they have lost something that they will never see again."

His figure was already starting to dissipate at this point as he stared at Shin with hopeful eyes. "I hope that the next time we see each other, you are still on the side where you currently stand."

After saying those words, his entire figure slowly disappeared into specks of lights.

Ding

Then another string of notifications from the system rang in Shin's ears.

System: Congratulations! You have successfully cleared the Forgotten God Temple's first trail, the Primordial Waters Trial!

System: Your reputation can now be heard throughout the entire Oceanic Kingdom.

System: You have gained a Special Title – the Champion of the Seven Seas.

Ding

System: You have received a special reward for a perfect competition!

- Rewards:

Heart of the Nine-Headed Demon Hydra (Purified)

Fangs of Ouroboros (Mythical Weapon)

Ding

System: You have leveled up x5!

Ding

System: You have acquired a piece of clue from the Era of the Gods and Immortals – The fragment of God's Power in your possession is responding.

System: A new clue about the Great Demon Kings of Hell has been acquired! Your understanding of Demonic Powers has increased.

System: Your second 'Soul' has absorbed this knowledge! The 'Mark of the Evil God' is evolving!

...

Shin could not help but stare blankly at the long string of notifications before his eyes, especially when he did know where to look first as each notification was as important as the other.

It somewhat overwhelmed him before he finally turned his head to the very first notification and thoroughly read them one after another.

Chapter 1542 Yet Another Bountiful Harvest

...

Shin found himself standing in the same spot where he last stood when the trial started.

The surroundings were still the same, but something felt somewhat different when he stood at the center of the temple. It was as if there was a certain connection between him and the temple, making him sense everything that was within the temple.

It was as if he had become one with this temple.

Ding

At this moment, a string of system notifications rang in his ears once again.

System: Congratulations! You have been recognized as the representative of the God of Primordial Waters! You have become the new master of the Forgotten God Temple.

System: Additional features are added to your Management Panel.

System: The Forgotten God Temple has become one of your territories.

Ding

System: The Forgotten God Temple is currently in a dormant state due to a lack of Energy Core to support it.

Please look for a suitable Energy Core to supply support for the temple as soon as possible!

System: Due to the lack of Energy Core, the temple will only be put to default mode and get connected to two places.

Possible destinations for teleportation:

- Awakened Continent, Divine Empire: Divinity City

- Aurora Continent, *** Kingdom: The 'Lost' City

System: All entries from other places will be blocked unless you have lifted it or given permissions to other people.

...

Shin slightly raised his brows as he skimmed through the notifications. "Well, now this is convenient. I can now travel between continents without much problem."

At the same time, he also noticed a bunch of tokens appearing at the corner of his inventory space, which carried an emblem of a whale riding a tsunami.

"This should be the 'permission' that the system is talking about," mumbled Shin as he looked at the hundred tokens in his inventory.

Shin wanted to walk around the temple to see what kind of facilities and features it had, but he had to look for the other rewards that he had gotten from the trial that he had previously cleared.

Title: Champion of the Seven Seas

Rank: Master (Evolvable)

Classification: Ancient

Description: A Title granted to the Champion of the Great Festival of the Seas.

The bearer of this title will be treated with great reverence of any creatures of the sea. Any dark sea creatures will fear you as well as you are the executioner of the Great Ocean.

Bonus Stats:

+5% to all stats

+10% resistance to any water-related spells or skills.

+15% increase control harnessing the Water Element, or anything related to it.

Extra Ability:

Champion of the Seas:

- (Passive): You can freely breathe and swiftly move underwater.

+50% Swimming Speed.

- (Active): You can transform into a Sea Creature of your choosing, gaining all its stats, abilities, and skills.

Default Creature: World Serpent (Sealed)

Duration: 15 Minutes

Cooldown: 6 hours

Note: This Title can be promoted to the next level once all the hidden conditions are met.

[Item Name]: Heart of the Nine-Headed Demon Hydra (Purified)

[Item Rank]: Mythical

[Item Classification]: Miscellaneous

Description:

A special material that came from the Era of the Gods and Immortals. It has been preserved with the power of a Primordial God, making it maintain all its powers.

It can be used to craft a powerful weapon or armor based on the skill of the blacksmith's preference and skills.

Note: This material can only be handled by a Divine Blacksmith, who specializes in handling ancient craftsmanship.

[Item Name]: Fangs of Ouroboros (Sealed)

[Item Rank]: Mythical (Ancient Classification)

[Item Type]: Weapon – Scimitar

Stats (Sealed):

???

???

???

Additional Abilities (Sealed):

???

???

???

Clue: To unseal this weapon, you must look for a Divine Blacksmith to help you find a way to unlock its original abilities.

Note: This item is bound to Player 'Sickarius'.

Shin read through the descriptions of the things that he had gotten from completing the first trial and could not hide his satisfaction.

All of these were just a bonus since the things that he had acquired during the trial were much more beneficial than his current self.

It was also what he needed the most, which greatly accelerated his growth. Anything else was just additional things that he had picked up along the way.

"Now that I think about it, you have also gotten something, right? I remember hearing from the system that you have absorbed some sort of knowledge or such," asked Shin as he directed his mind inside his Sea of Consciousness.

[Do you want to swap and look at it?] asked Uno nonchalantly, signifying that he did not much mind if Shin wanted to switch their consciousness for a moment.

Shin thought about it before shaking his head. "Let's forget about it for now. I still have a lot of things that I need to deal with. Moreover, we will highly likely get kicked out of this place once your evil aura is released."

"Let's look at it later when we leave this place," he added before turning his head around and sweeping his gaze at the entire temple center.

He wanted to look around and understand the factions of this place before proceeding to his next destination. After all, it had been a while since he played with the others.

Judging from the current timing, he felt that the others would most likely finish their initial training right now.

There would be a high chance that they could start hunting in the vicinity of the Divinity City or even accept some quests along the way.

He also had to report to his faction to let them know that he had arrived at the Awakened Continent. "I wonder how much different the Church of the Sun and Moon in this continent compared to the Aurora Continent."

"Maybe I should ask Samuel later. I recall that kid coming along with the group," he mumbled as he walked around the temple.

He found some murals that seemed to represent what happened during the Great Oceanic War. He could also see some of the events that had transpired right after Festival of the Seas in which he had 'participated'.

"I guess this is the records of that war," he commented as he continued to look at them while walking along the corridor.

He then suddenly stopped when he reached a certain section of the wall, where a great battle was drawn.

In the mural, he saw a 'Naga' facing off a group of colossal monsters of the sea alongside someone he was quite 'familiar' with.

"Isn't this Falan?" he commented as he saw the familiar face. The Devouring Whale was currently donned with a set of golden armor while wielding a huge harpoon in hand.

There was also a glowing gemstone embedded on his forehead as he rode a towering tide while charging toward the colossal monsters.

Falan looked quite a hero in the mural as his overwhelming might and majestic aura were projected by the drawings on the wall.

Shin squinted his eyes as he focused on the white gemstone situated at the center of Falan's forehead. It was giving off a powerful aura despite being a part of the mural. It was also emitting the familiar feeling that had gotten when he first saw the Emerald of the Seven Seas, yet also somewhat different.

After observing for quite a while, Shin turned his attention to the other figure, which also somewhat gave him another familiar feeling.

It was a familiar 'Naga' that he had seen during the trial, but also different from what he remembered.

The 'Naga' was clad in a set of crystallized armor filled with mysterious runes swimming on its surface. There was also the familiar ice-crystal sword with a crimson blade, which was emitting a bloody and sinister aura.

There was also a seven-colored gem floating on the other hand of this individual, which was illuminating a great majority of the sea. It seemed to be fighting the black miasma that the colossal monsters were releasing.

Shin did not have to guess to know who this individual was. It was 'him' – or more likely the person that he possessed during that trial.

"So, it is you," he mumbled before turning to the other parts of this mural.

Behind these two individuals were the united forces of the sea. There were mermaids, sea creatures, and other tribes that were under the Sea Palace.

On the other hand, the colossal monsters were leading a huge army of dark creatures and ancient demons to attack the Sea Palace.

The two sides were about to engage in battle based on the mural in front of him.

After that, Shin turned his attention to other murals, but could not help but frown deeply when he could not find the most powerful existence of the Great Ocean that he had heard from the first trial.

Not a single King of the Seas or a Great Demon King appeared in any of the murals, confusing him a little.

"What happened to them?" he mumbled to himself as he continued to wander around.

Then, as he was observing the murals, Solus suddenly interrupted him and said. "My Liege, I think it is time for you to visit your independent realm and check on the little dragon."

"It is also the time to forge a contract with her," she added. But at the same time, she also could not help but look at a certain part of the mural with a complicated expression on her face.

Fortunately, she was currently in the form of a speck of light, making Shin unable to see her.

"Ah! Right! I almost forgot about that kid," he exclaimed while snapping his fingers.

He then took out the special token that he had gotten from Berlin before channeling his mana into it.

He was quite excited to meet the dragon that hatched from that egg and turn them into his next Elemental Spirit Companion. After all, it could let him acquire the power of nature (wood) once their connection was built.

Chapter 1543 Little Dragon Queen

.....

Swoosh!

When Shin appeared in the Reaper's Realm, he was immediately greeted by a newly transformed world.

The sections of the realm that represented the elements of the Reaper's Retainers were still present, but their size and appearance became much larger compared to what they used to be.

The size of each territory was more than twice the original size that he had remembered.

This realm was becoming more and more of an independent world as the time more time passed.

It also seemed to be connected to his strength as the whole place was slowly transforming depending on power. The more he leveled and became more powerful, the greater this world became.

On the surface, the different sections of this realm were still somewhat the same as the original appearance aside from the drastic increase in their size.

He swept his gaze at the surroundings before pausing in front of a dense forest filled with tall trees and a variety of plants.

"Ah! This place must be..." Shin did not have to make a guess which territory this forest belonged to.

From what Solus had told him earlier, the baby green dragon must have hatched from its egg and successfully become an Elemental Dragon.

"Should we meet our little girl?" he mumbled as he flew toward the center of the forest where a tall altar was erected.

This altar was the one that the other Elemental Spirits had built when trying to hatch the green dragon egg. But since Shin was away for quite a while, he was unable to visit it, much less monitor the entire progress.

Fortunately, he was practically the owner of this realm, so his connection with all the beings who resided or would be residing in this place was no different from a master-servant or lord-and-subject relationship.

Swoosh!

Not long after, Shin found the location of the altar and descended on it.

The altar still possessed the traces left behind by the entire incubation process. The runes engraved on the floor of the altar remained intact, albeit losing their original luster.

As Shin was observing the place, he suddenly noticed 'something' in the distance. He knitted his brows and walked toward the center of the altar.

He then found a stone bed in the center where a little figure was sleeping soundly and comfortably.

It was a little toddler, but not of a human race. She had noticeable features that made it easy for others to realize her race.

She had a pair of little antlers sticking out of her forehead, slightly parting her cute bangs. She also had a green air that seemed to be neatly braided to resemble the vines of a tree.

There were also green scales on different parts of her body, particularly her forearms, her shoulders, around her neck, and her legs.

There was also the noticeable reptilian tail on the back of her waist, which wrapped around her as she curled into a ball while sleeping.

This little dragon girl was sucking her thumb as she slept on the stone bed.

"Fortunately, she is wearing a proper dress instead of leaves attached joint with one other, or else the cops will hunt me down," he mumbled while heaving a sigh of relief.

"Hmm?"

At this point, the little dragon girl seemed to have finally sensed his presence, slowly waking up. She drowsily opened her eyes to look at her surroundings while cutely rubbing her eyes.

But when her gaze landed on the figure standing beside her, her eyes suddenly turned wide and quickly pouched at Shin.

"Eh!?" Shin did not know what to do due to the sudden turn of events. The moments of this little girl were a little too fast that it became somewhat hard to avoid her.

Even someone like Shin would have a hard time reacting to her movements.

'She just hatched for a few days, right? A couple of weeks inside the game at most, doesn't she? How can her stats be this absurd already?' Shin could not help but doubt his initial thoughts before quickly realizing the reason.

This was the Reaper's Realm, which was also where the cores of his Elemental Spirits were located along with their Rebirthing Place.

In this realm, their stats and levels would be set at their maximum potential without having any kind of restraints.

Moreover, this little girl was still a dragon despite being a hatchling. Her strength was something he could not underestimate, especially in this place, where she could be at her most powerful state.

Fortunately, he could not feel any ill intent coming from the little dragon girl, which made Shin stay still and not avoid her.

But what he heard from her next stunned him.

"Papa!"

Shin was frozen in place, unable to move. He did not know how to react as the little dragon girl jumped into his arms and hugged him.

"Huh?"

Shin was still trying to recover his composure when the little girl tried her best to wrap her little arms around him while repeatedly calling him 'papa'.

"What the heck is happening?"

To save him from falling into the deep abyss of confusion, Solus suddenly appeared behind him and explained. "My Liege, because of your connection to this realm and her being born into this place, her connection with you is much closer than any of us."

"In a sense, she will see you as her father as it is the more fitting and closest to the relationship that she is currently feeling," she added.

The corner of Shin's mouth twitched when he heard her explanation before turning to the little dragon girl in his embrace. "Did I... become a father just like that?"

...

In the next couple of hours, Shin was forced to play with the little dragon girl as she was too excited and too energetic due to finally seeing her 'father'.

As for how they play-... he was forced to 'spar' against her.

...or more like him acting as a practicing dummy and defending against the magic spells that she was throwing at him.

"She is indeed a dragon. To have such instincts and natural control over her elemental magic despite being so young, only those legendary creatures can achieve such a feat."

"But what kind of game is this!? Just who is the bastard that taught her this!?" cursed Shin as he cut the vines that were besieging from every direction.

At this point, Astaroth, who was training within his territory, felt an intense shiver down his spine for some unknown reason. He quickly heightened his senses and sharply scanned his surroundings while wielding his sword.

But he suddenly knitted his brow when he could not find anyone within his territory, making him doubt if it was just his imagination.

Fortunately for Shin, the little dragon girl was not using any powerful spells that were hard to defend. It seemed like she was instinctively aware of the current strength of Shin, making her hold back with her spells.

After hours of playing, the little dragon girl felt tired once again. She went back to the altar while dragging Shin toward her 'bed' once again.

She first her Shin sat on the stone table before lying there herself while using his lap as a pillow.

"She doesn't have a name yet, right?" asked Shin to Solus, who was respectfully standing behind him.

"That's right, my liege. Once you have given her a name and she has accepted it, your bond will be solidified. It is also different from her forming a contract with my liege as a new Reaper's Retainer," she replied.

"A name, huh?" he mumbled as he tried his best to think of a fitting name.

He was also quite careful this time as he did not want to mess up giving this adorable girl a good name.

However, he also knew that this was not his strong point.

As he was trying to think of a good name, his eyes were suddenly attracted to the surrounding trees before suddenly casting his eyes on the entire forest.

He then started smiling as he said. "Silvana-... let's call her Silvana, which means 'of the forest' or 'of the woods'."

The moment he said those words, the little girl, who was originally sleeping on his lap, suddenly smiled and mumbled. "Papa Liege is the best!"

Ding

Right at the same time, a system notification rang in his, informing him that he had already formed a contract with Silvana.

But Shin ignored it as his mouth suddenly twitched after hearing the little girl's words. Everything about this girl was cute until he heard the words 'Papa Liege' earlier.

He did not have to guess where she heard it as he could already see Solus proudly looking at Silvana earlier as she continued to address Shin as such.

"With all the things that you can teach here, why do you have to include-..." Shin could only sigh helplessly as he could no longer change the habit of the little dragon girl, especially when he saw how much she liked calling him that way.

Throwing his complaints at the back of his head, Shin proceeded to the system notifications that he had just gotten.

System: Green Dragon has been successfully named – Silvana.

Ding

System: Silvana has become your Reaper's Retainer!

System: Please set a code!

Shin paused for a moment as he thought of a good code for the little girl before shaking his head.
"Green Reaper sounds lame. Let's settle with Nature Reaper for now."

Ding

System: Congratulations! A new Reaper's Retainer has been registered!

After that, Shin quickly pulled out a virtual screen and looked at the Reaper's Retainer panel to look at this little dragon girl's information.

Spirit Name: Silvana

Status: Reaper's Retainer – Nature (Wood and Plants)

Race: Elemental Dragon Spirit

Bloodline: Green Dragon King

Purity: Dragon (Royal)

Transformation (Sealed): ???

Ability Status: Still in Growing (Hatchling)

Tier: Current 3 (Potential ???)

Level (Growth Pace): Adjusted to 180 (Max: Unknown)

The corner of his mouth rose as he read through the information panel while comparing it with the rest. The stats were already very similar to the other fully grown Elemental Spirits, making him quite satisfied with it.

However, that was when compared to the sealed state of the others given that their full potential was currently held back by Shin's current strength.

Moreover, she was still at her growing pace, indicating that she would be much stronger in the future.

She would be more powerful than what she currently was, making her a full-grown dragon.

What made Shin quite interested in this information panel was the sections on 'Bloodline' and 'Purity'. "Dragon King Bloodline and Royal Dragon Purity? This is somewhat different from what I know about Elemental Spirits."

Hearing those words, Solus quickly explained. "Elemental Dragons and other ancient creatures have a different rank classification from Elemental Spirits, but they are somewhat similar in terms of strength and ability."

"Those from the Royal Bloodline have the potential to become a dragon king of their tribe. They are on a level comparable to the Elemental Monarchs, Supreme Elementals, and Spirit Kings," she added.

"I see," nodded Shin as he wondered. "What is the Bloodline Purity of Arthur's Dragons then?"

He then shook his head and mumbled. "Given that guy's character, I am pretty sure that they all have Royal Bloodline."

After that, he turned to Silvana before carefully removing her head from his lap and gently putting it on a makeshift pillow made from leaves.

"I will be leaving for now as I still have other matters that I need to attend to," he said to Solus as he looked at Silvana. "I'll leave her in your care for now."

Hearing those words, Solus immediately bowed. "You can rest assured, my liege! You can entrust her to me. I will make sure to teach her well."

The corner of Shin's mouth suddenly twitched when he heard those words as he cursed inside. 'I am already getting worried about it.'

'Should I ask Old Hanzo instead? Nah, that will be even more dangerous. The same goes for the others. They are more of a disaster.' After not finding anyone more suitable for the role, Shin left it as it was and forgot about it before sighing helplessly.

'Let's just hope that everything will be fine,' he was already regretting his decision, but he could not do anything about it.

He could shake his head with a bitter smile before taking out the token and activating it again.

Swoosh!

He could only leave it to the hands of 'gods.'

Chapter 1544 Unexpected Discovery

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Shin came back to the Forgotten Sea Temple and continued his exploration of the place. He was not done exploring the entire place yet when Solus interrupted him, so he had to continue looking at the other places and facilities of the temple before leaving.

He also had to join the others now, so he had to hurry over to the Divine Empire and play with them so that they could also organize their coordination before the main stage of the United Cup started.

"Given what we have seen from the teams participating in this tournament so far, I must make haste and familiarize myself with my new powers," he mumbled as he walked along the corridor.

"Eh!?"

Not long after, he suddenly halted his steps as he came across a huge metal door filled with ancient runes that seemed to be forming a magic circle along with the mana stones that were meticulously arranged in a special formation.

He frowned for a moment before subconsciously circulating his energy according to the Boundless Ocean Technique while utilizing the 'Primordial Water' alongside it.

He then reached forward and pressed his palms on the metal doors, pushing them forward.

Clank!

Swoosh!

Right after the metal doors opened, a strong gust of wind quickly rushed inside the room behind them while a dense mana came out from the inside.

Shin felt like drowning due to him being squeezed in between the two rushing forces. Fortunately, he was able to quickly adjust the Boundless Ocean Technique into another version, seemingly turning his aura from a deep and endless wave into a solid lake.

After adjusting himself to the clashing forces, Shin strengthened his back once again and resumed his steps.

As he entered the room, he carefully swept his gaze at the surroundings and thoroughly observed everything.

From his initial observation, the room greatly resembled a praying altar that he had seen from the Church of the Sun and Moon whenever he was doing his class change or class ascension.

"Don't tell me this is a Class Conversation Altar?" he mumbled as he continued forward.

But those thoughts were quickly disregarded when he saw a glowing sphere at the center of the room, floating above a stone ceremonial table filled with multiple runes.

As he approached the stone table, he realized that an ancient-looking formation was drawn on the ground and.

When he followed the series of runes engraved on the ground, he found that the entire magical sequence was encircling the stone table. It seemed to be forming a sealing formation, and the thing that was being sealed was that floating sphere at the center of the formation.

When he squinted his eyes to get a closer look at the glowing sphere, he realized the sphere itself was nothing, but a series of rune circles stacked on one another just to seal the entity with it.

"What's that?" he frowned deeply as he focused his gaze on what was inside the sealing sphere. He even used his True Sight to the fullest along with his other techniques to enhance his eyesight just to pierce through the veil of light that was blocking his line of sight.

"Eh! Isn't that..." Then he finally saw what it was.

Inside the glowing sphere made from multiple sealing circles, an entity that looked like a young child was currently sleeping. It seemed to be a young boy curled into a ball as if he were within the womb of his mother.

There was nothing different between this child and a normal 5-year-old toddler in the real world at first glance. But what surprised Shin was the familiar scales at the corner of the child's eyes and the golden tattoo glowing in different parts of his body.

Those tattoos were oddly familiar to Shin as he had seen them a couple of times already. The first time was during his time in the Trial Grounds while the other was when he was observing the murals drawn on the walls of the temple.

It was the same set of tattoos that he had seen on Falan's body when he was using his bloodline inheritance and racial traits.

"Don't tell me... this kid is from the Devouring Whale Tribe," he mumbled as he tried to peer through the sealing formation and read the information about the child.

But for some unknown reason, he could not see anything. It was as if a certain power was blocking him from seeing further.

But as he observed for a little longer, he realized that the child was not just a member of the Devouring Whale Tribe.

Shin noticed that there were some distinct differences between the two, particularly the auras that they were emitting.

This child carried the appearance of a member of the Devouring Whales, but the aura that he was emitting was somewhat different from them.

As Shin looked a little closer, Shin finally remembered what kind of aura it was. It was similar to the auras that he was feeling from his elemental spirits, particularly the elemental powers that they carried.

He just did not realize it earlier as all his Elemental Spirit Companions were currently inside the Reaper's Realms and not accompanying him on this side of the world.

"Don't tell me that this child is turned into an Elemental Spirit to survive some unknown predicament," he mumbled as he tried to make a guess.

He remembered that a similar thing happened when Solus proposed to be his Reaper's Retainer. She had to survive her dying body at that time, which was the result of her old injuries and gradual loss of powers.

If this young Devouring Whale was sealed in this place to make him survive a similar situation, then something must have happened to the entire tribe.

This kid must have been chosen by the tribe to carry their last hope when there was nothing left for them.

"Given that Hydros have said that Leviathan and Kraken have snatched his divine authority, then the Sea Palace must have lost during the Great Oceanic War. After all, those two have successfully become a Great Demon King of Hell."

As his thoughts went along these lines, something seemed to have struck his mind, making him halt his thought process.

His eyes suddenly turned wide as he swiftly raised his head and looked at the sealed child once again.
"Don't tell me-...!"

Ding

As he reached this conclusion, a system notification rang in his eyes, seemingly confirming his thoughts.

System: You have found a fragment of a Fallen God, Hydros of the Primordial Waters!

Ding

System: You have been recognized as the representative of the Forgotten Sea Palace and the Champion of the Seven Seas!

System: You have met all the requirements to be contracted with God's Fragment.

Ding

System: A Quest has been generated!

...

Reading through the string of notifications, Shin practically had confirmed his suspicions. He then proceeded to open his quest panel to read through its details.

[Quest Name]: The Fallen God of the Sea

[Quest Type]: Hidden Historical Quest

[Quest Difficulty]: Special (Default)

[Quest Background]:

After losing the Great Oceanic War, the God of Primordial Waters – Hydros lost his Divine Authority to the Ruler of the Sea Monsters and the Lord of the Ocean Depths, the Oceanic Tribes, on the other, had been forced to go in hiding, trying to survive the hunt of the Hydra Tribes and the Ancient Demons.

The Great Ocean and the Seven Seas were lost and fell into the hands of the Demons and three Absolute Rulers of the Seas.

Unbeknownst to the knowledge of everyone, Hydros was barely able to survive during the ambush of the two Great Demon Kings and hardly managed to separate a fragment of his dying Divine Soul and put it into the corpse of a poor child of the Devouring Whale Trible before sealing it on his sole surviving temple.

He hopes to be revived by a fated individual who will help him in his revenge and protect his descendants.

But a very long had passed during that time, and the consciousness of his weakened Divine Soul had already lost its personality after a long slumber.

After countless eons and the fall of different eras, this soul has become a new soul waiting to be awakened into a new form.

[Quest Condition]:

Find a way to free the new entity and let it be born into this new Era.

[Quest Rewards]:

- Acquisition of a new Elemental Spirit

[Quest Penalty]: Upon failing to release the seal with the right method.

- Birth of a God of Destruction

Shin could not help but raise his brows a little after reading everything about the question. The background of the quest was somewhat similar to what he had guessed.

But when he reached the latter part of the question, he suddenly started frowning as he found it a little troublesome.

If it was something like a gathering quest or something similar, then he would not have any trouble with it. After all, he was quite an 'expert' in this area.

But the problem was the objective was a little too vague and lacked any kind of clue about how to solve it.

He could only guess that this quest wanted him to break the seal, which looked a little too ancient even for Hanzo and Solus, who were the oldest among his people.

After all, Hydros was from that unknown era of the Gods and Immortals, which was too far even from the Ancient Era that this world knew.

"Well, it should also be worth a try," he mumbled before communicating with the two and summoning them.

...

Solus and Hanzo spent quite a lot of time observing the entire sealing formation but could not find the right way to unseal it.

After all, what Shin was looking for was not just a way to release the seal, but the 'right way' of unsealing it.

The system would not tell him about being careful when unsealing the formation for no reason. A single mistake could lead to a God of Destruction, which was not something he wanted.

Just the name itself was so ominous that it could give Shin goosebumps just by imagining it.

"My liege, I suggest you look for a skilled and knowledgeable Rune Master to help you with this sea – preferably someone familiar with all kinds of runes and from different eras," said Solus after observing the entire sealing formation.

"Even with our abilities, it will be too risky if we proceed with our respective methods. It will be better to be safe and look for a suitable candidate to do the entire sealing process," added Hanzo as he walked over.

Shin slowly frowned as he inquired further. "Give me an estimate of the level that will be required to unseal this sealing formation."

Solus was silent for a moment before answering. "Their overall strength is not important."

"What we need from them are their abilities and knowledge about the runes. Everything else is irrelevant since all we need is to possess their bodies and use them as a medium during the entire unsealing process."

"We will be their energy supply when releasing this sealing formation," she added.

"Also, someone you can trust as well since the consequence of failing is a little too serious. It will be a disaster if they sabotage the entire process and release a vengeful spirit instead," added Hanzo in a serious tone.

Shin fell silent before saying. "A Rune Grandmaster should be enough and someone on a Grand Scholar Rank will be the best."

(Counterpart of Saint Rank for Blacksmith and Alchemist)

Hearing that, Shin nodded before thanking the two. "Alright, I get it. I will look for Rune Masters that fits the role."

"You two can go back for now," he said, sending them back to the Reaper's Realm.

After that, Shin turned his head at the sealed Elemental Spirit for another time before turning around and leaving the room.

He also made sure to seal the door properly before opening the management panel of the entire temple to set the defensive and security features to the fullest.

He did not want anyone to accidentally enter this place while he was away. It would be better to make sure that the entire temple would ban the entry of anyone aside from those he had given his permission.

After making sure that he had done everything, he was set to leave.

He then walked toward the teleportation formation and activated it. Fortunately, it was still working despite such a long passage of time had passed.

"I guess the technology of that era is much better than the current one," he mumbled before smiling bitterly. "Of course, it is! After all, Gods could still descend from a higher realm during that time."

Swoosh!

Not long after, his figure disappeared from the temple and was sent to the Divine Empire.

Little did he know that what he just did would cause a huge storm for those powerful factions.

Chapter 1545 Imprisoned

.....

Shin found himself locked inside a prison while looking confused about what happened.

He could not help but sigh as he tried to recall what had transpired when he appeared at the Teleportation Hall of the Divinity City.

...

A few hours prior.

"Who are you!? State your affiliation and objective at coming to this place!"

Right after opening his eyes, Shin found himself surrounded by a huge group of fully armed soldiers with their weapons pointing at him.

The spears were directed at his neck by the NPC soldiers from every direction while the crossbows and arrows were aimed at his direction from the distance.

"What-... the heck is happening?" he mumbled as he froze in a place full of confusion.

He did not know that appearing in this place using that Ancient Teleportation Formation was a form of illegal entry and caused such a commotion.

Fortunately, he did not raise any resistance, or else he would be killed within an instant. After all, these NPC Guards were around Level 200 to 300, so he would not stand a chance fighting any of them even if he wanted to.

But what surprised him in this situation was he did not feel any discomfort when he first arrived in this place, unlike what the others had experienced.

It was most likely because of what he had experienced on the trial grounds previously. After all, the mana density in that place was much denser and more concentrated than in this place.

Moreover, it was underwater, which made him somewhat familiar with being 'submerged' in mana.

He could even fight in that place against powerful creatures of the sea, so this was nothing in comparison.

But he could not help but become depressed as he was cuffed and dragged by the NPC Soldiers. They then threw him at the prison, waiting for the verdict of their commanders.

...

It had been quite a while since he was locked in this place, and he did not even know how to inform the others about his situation within the game.

All kinds of communications were being blocked by the sealing formation covering the entire place, which was why he could not send any messages to the others.

Of course, he could also use the other features of his gaming cabin and use real-world communication to tell them his situation. But he could not do it within the game due to some restrictions that were telling him.

He could just log out of the game while waiting for the so-called verdict, but there was a special quest that was telling him that he could not do it either since it would worsen his 'crime'.

He could only wait silently in this place, hoping that this unexpected 'quest' would somehow help him.

"Sigh~! If I knew that this was going to happen, then I should have chosen my destination to the Aurora Continent instead. Even if the said place is quite suspicious, I will at least not put in this situation."

"After all, my current strength surpassed most of the obstacles in the Aurora Continent. Aside from those absolute monsters, I will be fine most of the time."

He paused when he reached this thought before sighing. "However, given me luck, I will most likely be dropped somewhere filled with such monsters."

"Ah~! Forget it! What happened, happened! Let's just hope that this 'quest' will not take that long to take effect," he mumbled as he sat cross-legged on the ground before closing his eyes.

He was about to start another meditation. Since he was thrown here, all his equipment was sent in his inventory, which was now locked due to the restrictions of the place.

If he wanted to get access to them again, he had to leave this place to escape the suppression of the sealing formation.

He had to thank the system or the NPCs for not taking his equipment and weapons from him, or else he would be in deep trouble.

With nothing but a set of prisoner clothes, Shin could do nothing but meditate in this place. Even if most of his powers were sealed within his prison, he was still able to do some mental practices such as meditation.

By doing this, he was able to reconstruct his Four Symbol Scripture and let the Boundless Ocean Technique completely assimilate with it.

Along with the other techniques that he had already acquired, his Mentalism Method became even more complete and perfected.

He had even incorporated the knowledge that he had gotten from that inheritance tome that he had 'stolen' from the Black Serpent Mafia, further completing the cycle of five elements.

What was left right now was to put everything into practice and familiarize himself with his newly found strength and power.

Fortunately, no one disturbed him in this place despite being a prison. In fact, he had never found any other prisoner aside from him when he was brought to this place. It was as if he was the sole prisoner of this city.

But that was just a suspicion since he was only brought to the first floor of the prison. He overheard from the guards earlier that there were more levels underground galled the prison dungeons, where the most notorious and more dangerous criminals were being held.

"I wonder how strong the criminals are locked in those lower prisons to be considered notorious in a place like this," he mumbled out of curiosity.

After all, this was the Awakened Continent, where monsters and entities more powerful than his knowledge roamed.

Somewhere within the Divinity City, Arthur just finished training with the rest of the Empyrean Talons and currently walking along the streets of the city.

"Huh!? Where the heck is Shin? It has been a while since he last contacted us, telling us that he is already at the Divinity City, yet he is still nowhere to be seen," he mumbled while looking at the message logs.

He had been sending messages to Shin since earlier, but Shin never replied to any of his messages.

He turned to Leonard, who was walking alongside him, and asked. "What about you? Have you heard anything from him?"

Leonard shook his head. "None either. Given the status of his character, it seems like he is in another independent dimension again, doing some strange quest or something."

"Tsk! That guy is always doing things at the most unexpected time – popping out and disappearing whenever he pleases," complained Arthur as he sighed.

He then opened his quest panel and said. "Tsk! I need some help completing my quest as well. I have just gotten a clue where to find one of the pieces of my Divine Armor recently."

"I guess the two of us can do it for now," he frowned deeply as he checked on the details of his quest.

Leonard chuckled as he heard that. "Then why not ask for some help from the others? Diablo and Alucard shouldn't be that bad. Given their current strength, they shouldn't be that far from our levels."

"Especially when they have fully digested their respective inheritances. Diablo has mastered his Martial Manuals completely and is even able to control his Shadow Powers freely while Alucard has upgraded the purity of his bloodline and changed his class as well."

"Both of them have become a great asset to our adventurer team," he added, praising the two. "With them alongside Cloe and Alice, our lineup shouldn't be that bad for this quest of yours."

Arthur clicked his tongue as he heard those words. "Tsk! Do you think I don't know about it? The problem is they are already doing their faction quest after completing their initial training."

"An NPC organization scouts Diablo, which is called Penumbra or something. He is currently undergoing a special test to become one of them."

"Alucard has discovered a vampire circle within the city, which is from a different branch of the Vampire Families. He is currently investigating them right now."

"The priests of the Church of Light suddenly drag Cloe. As their Holy Maiden, she seemed to be undergoing an additional training."

"Alice, on the other hand, is summoned by the council of elves for some reason and has been busy ever since. It is also quite hard to contact her. Fortunately, she still regularly appears during our training sessions."

"With all of them busy with their things, we are the only ones left," he sighed, feeling somewhat dejected.

He then asked. "How about you? Have you found any clue about your Divine Armor?"

Leonard shrugged his shoulders as he replied. "Nothing much as well. I have been investigating for as much as possible, but the only clues I have gotten are quite limited."

He then paused for a moment as he added. "But one thing is for sure. I can't get my hands on any of the required materials with our current strength. Those three mighty beasts are way beyond our level."

"Then how are you going to get your Divine Armor?" Arthur frowned.

Leonard recalled the clues that he had gathered before answering. "But I do have found something. It seems like there is a fragment of the original Divine Armor somewhere in the Beastmen territory in this continent."

"If I manage to find and bring it to a Saint Blacksmith for repairs, I can have a prototype of my Divine Armor, which can also act as the main frame when I have collected all the materials."

As the two were walking down the streets and chatting, they suddenly overheard something from the pedestrians walking alongside them.

"Have you heard? Someone seemed to have tried to enter the city through illegal means."

"Yeah! I heard about it as well. It seems like they even use the Teleportation Formation through a special means."

"Hah! They are foolish enough to think that they will be able to use the Teleportation Hall without being noticed."

"Apparently, the said person is thrown in the underground dungeons."

The two could not help but halt their tracks when they heard those words. Then they exchanged glances with each other with wide-opened eyes, seemingly sharing the same thoughts.

"Don't tell me-...!"

"There is no way, right?"

Chapter 1546 The Mysterious Villain (Part 1)

Inside the Head Office of the prison of the Divinity City, an NPC who was wearing a Warden's uniform was sitting behind a wooden desk while busily looking at the reports piled up in front of him.

He was having trouble dealing with the reports as there were more and more thieves and escaped criminals from the other districts creating trouble for them.

"What are those idiots doing? Our hands are already tied with guarding such a notorious criminal in our dungeon while waiting for the verdict of the council, so we are currently lacking in manpower."

"Yet they want us to send more support to deal with these criminals that they have failed to contain!?" the warden was cursing while reading the reports and requests pilled on the table.

Bang!

As he was massaging his temples, one of his subordinates suddenly rushed inside the office, forgetting to knock.

"How many times do I have to remind you to knock before entering my room, Hano? Even if you are my nephew, you can't just use it as an excuse to be disrespectful. What are you going to do if I happen to be hosting an important guest?" scolded the warden while pinching the center of his brows.

"You are right, uncle! We do have some important visitors!" said the soldier who entered the room.

The corner of the warden's mouth twisted when he heard that before complaining. "Who is it this time? I have already told them our office any lend them any more people as we, ourselves, are also lacking that much manpower due to the high-profile prisoner that we are guarding."

"But... uncle... these visitors are not from the other districts," said Hano while hesitating.

The warden raised his brows in confusion as he asked. "Then who is it this time?"

Hano was still hesitating whether to continue or not but still did in the end. "They are the rumored Otherworld Individuals that arrived in our city."

"So, what is the problem?" asked the warden.

"And they are requesting for a visitation of the prisoner that we just have captured," replied Hano.

"That guy!?" frowned the warden as he also knew that this certain prisoner was also a quite sensitive topic. "Why do they have to visit that person? Is it because it is a fellow Otherworldly Individual? Are they together?"

Reaching this point, the eyes of the warden turned wide as if he 'realized' something. "They must be together! Capture them as well! They may be spies sent by the Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches!"

Hearing those words, Hano suddenly felt troubled as he carefully responded. "I don't think that it is the chase, uncle."

The warden frowned deeply as he growled. "Are you questioning my decisions now!? Just do what I ordered you and I will handle the rest!"

"But-... but-... those two Otherworldly Individuals are esteemed guests of our city. Both of them have a very special status," said Hano stutteringly.

Bang!

The warden could not help but hit the table when he heard this and started scolding his nephew. "What do you mean special statuses!? No matter how important they are, so long as they committed a crime, we are to capture them!"

"That is the duty of the Protectors of the Divine Empire! How many times do I have to repeat it to you to understand!" he said.

Still hesitating, Hano carefully opened his mouth to further explain. "But-... one of them is the Champion of the War God Temple while the other is the Representative of the Dragon Sanctuary-..."

He was still in the middle of finishing his words when his uncle, the warden, suddenly calmed down and slowly sat back down to his seat.

"Eh!? Is that so? Then they can't be spies. Maybe they are here to interrogate the prisoner-..." the warden started mumbling, seemingly trying to 'figure out' the purpose of these 'esteemed' guests.

Hano could not help but look at his uncle with a strange expression. The sudden hundred-and-eighty degrees turn took him a little off-guard.

The warden then looked at him and instructed. "Then you can guide them to the cell where that prisoner is being held."

Hano hesitated once again before adding. "But that is not everything, uncle."

The warden raised his brows when he heard those words, particularly the solemn tone behind what his nephew had said.

"What is it?" he asked carefully as he could feel that something was not right.

"We..." Hano was having a hard time talking as he did not know where to start. But he still managed to force the words out of his mouth after an intense internal struggle. "We have also received a letter from the Church of the Sun and Moon and the Secret Divine Army."

"Huh!?" the warden jumped in fright when heard those words as both factions were among the most influential forces within the Divine Empire. "What-... what did the letters say?"

"The-... the Church of the Sun and Moon claimed that we have captured their envoy and locked him in prison. They are demanding us to release him as soon as possible," said Hano with trembling hands.

The warden suddenly shivered when he heard those words. "We... we captured their Envoy? Since when we have-..."

He was in the middle of digesting the message within the letter when he suddenly realized something. "Eh!? Could-... could it be that the illegal -..."

His nephew immediately confirmed it for him before he could even complete his words. "That-... that also seemed to be the case since it is what the letter has told us."

The color on the warden's face immediately turned white as if blood left his head. "Ah-...!"

"Then-... then what is the Secret Divine Army said in their letter?" asked the warden in great caution, seemingly having an ominous about this one.

Hano gulped hard as he relayed the message from the second letter. "They have told us that we have taken a Lieutenant Colonel from one of their secret units and demanding us to explain what has happened-..."

Hano was still in the middle of relaying the message when his uncle suddenly collapsed on the ground, seemingly having his soul left his body.

"Uncle-...! Don't die yet, uncle! You must take responsibility for the mess you have created first! I don't want to die yet as well!"

"The council will come after me instead!"

"Don't die yet, UNCLE~!!!"

...

A moment later, Shin was released by the soldiers while also removing the strange seal that was cast on his body.

Shin felt a little strange as the hostility that the NPCs originally had against him suddenly disappeared and was swapped with intense hospitality.

The sudden turn confused Shin, making him want to ask what happened.

But as he walked toward the reception room while being led by Hano, Shin was immediately greeted by an odd scene. He saw his pair of brothers comfortably sitting before a luxurious table along with the fancy meal laid on it.

"What are you guys doing here?" he asked with a twitching mouth.

"Tsk! Where is the gratitude? If not for us, you would be rotting in that place now," said Arthur as he grabbed a huge chicken leg in front of him.

Shin knitted as he looked around before voicing out his suspicions. "Are you sure you come here to set me free from the prison and not to have a feast? It sounds the latter to me if you ask."

Leonard chuckled as he signaled Shin to come and join them. "It is not like that, Shin Bro. These guys just acted like this because they learned our statuses within our respective factions."

"That may also be the reason why they are acting like that around you," he pointed at the guards, who were walking on eggshells around them.

"Capturing an Envoy of a church as big as the Church of the Sun and Moon and even mistaking him as some spy from the Evil Factions, I am sure they will do their best to make up for that mistake," he added as he also joined Arthur to eat.

Even if this was just a game, everything that they ate here felt so real, which was why no one would refuse such a huge and fancy feast.

Moreover, the food laid in front of them was no ordinary food. They were all made by a Master Chef from this continent, so most of them gave different kinds of buffs.

"We are sorry for our behavior, Great Envoy and Sir Lieutenant Colonel! We hope that you forgive us! As a token of apology, we have prepared this feast just for you. The personal chef of the Headquarters even prepared it. We hope that it is to your liking!" As Shin was walking toward the table to join them, Hano suddenly walked up to him and bowed.

He also extended his hands while handling an envelope. "This letter is from the Church of the Sun and Moon. It is mentioned in the other letter that I will hand this to you, Sir Envoy."

Shin glanced at the envelope and saw the familiar seal unique to the Church of the Sun and Moon. He could also sense that there was a certain seal cast on it, preventing other people from opening it.

"I see," Shin briefly nodded as he took the envelope before gesturing to Hano that he could leave.

When the three were the only ones left in the room, Shin injected his energy into the envelope, making the seal to be released.

Upon opening it, the expected or unexpected notification rang in his head.

Ding

Chapter 1547 The Mysterious Villain (Part 2)

.....

As Shin read through the contents of the letter, a system notification suddenly rang in his ears.

Ding

System: Due to the commotion that you have created by using the Ancient Teleportation Formation, a lot of factions were now paying attention to your movements.

But because of your sensitive status, which concerned both the Church of the Sun and Moon and the Divine Secret Army – particularly the God-Slaying Army, none of these factions are planning to take any actions.

But to clear your name and free yourself from suspicions, you must do something for the Council of the Righteous Churches and the Hall of Heroes.

System: As you have been in the Head Prison of the Divinity City, Cardinal Ronald wanted you to investigate the notorious criminal being held in the deepest level of the dungeon prison.

System: This particular prisoner holds important information that all the factions within the Awakened Continent.

Ding

Quest Update: Get information from the prisoner and relay it to Cardinal Ronald of the Church of the Sun and Moon.

Note: This quest does not have a time limitation but clearing it as soon as possible will give you extra rewards.

...

After reading through the string of notifications, Shin raised his brows before glancing at the two, who were still busy with the feast before them.

"Do the two of you have any ongoing quest?" he asked as he kept the envelope inside his inventory.

Hearing that, the two could not help but pause their actions before turning at him with great difficulty, moving as if their necks were like a broken robotic neck.

It took a while before they recovered themselves and Arthur quickly protested. "Hey, hey! Don't tell me you have another annoying quest! It should be our turn this time! I've just gotten a clue where to get a piece of my Divine Armor!"

Shin smiled awkwardly when heard those words before scratching his cheeks. "But it seems to be not that hard given the quest conditions."

"So-...! You do have another annoying quest!" shouted Arthur while pointing the drumstick he was holding toward Shin.

Shin shrugged his shoulders as he added. "Since we are already here, how about we take a look at it? It's just some interrogation or something from a certain prisoner being held at the deepest part of this place."

Arthur glared at Shin while gritting his teeth before asking. "Are you sure that it is something that simple?"

Shin continued to shrug his shoulder as he answered. "I am not that sure either. The quest conditions are quite simple, but you will never know since we are in this place. Everything here becomes very complicated even the simplest quests out there."

"Tsk! We should have left you to rot in this place!" complained Arthur before continuing to eat.

"So, what do we need to do?" asked Leonard after listening to the two.

Shin glanced at the quest panel for another time before replying. "There is nothing much into it aside from investigating some prisoner. But given that it was a high-profile criminal who is quite well known around the continent, this is not going to be that simple."

"In the end, it is another one of those annoying quests of yours," injected Arthur, still complaining.

Shin chuckled as he signaled to them. "Let's finish this first, then we can take a look at it. The earlier we start, the earlier we can clear it."

"Probably," he added with some uncertainty.

...

Not long after, Hano was back at the office of his uncle once again with a troubled expression on his face.

When the warden saw that, he felt that his stomach flipped along with the breakfast and lunch that he had gotten, making him feel nauseous. He was having a bad feeling about this when he saw his nephew.

"What is it this time?" he asked very carefully and with great difficulty. It was as if a sense of foreboding washed over him.

Hano gulped hard as he hesitated before carefully replying. "The esteemed guests seem-... to want to visit 'that' prisoner."

The expression on the warden's face suddenly contorted when he heard those words. He felt like having a hard time breathing due to what he just heard.

He then looked at Hano with a grim expression before asking. "Do they know what kind of existence we locked in there?"

Hano slowly nodded as he replied. "I think they do, given that it was the Envoy of the Church of the Sun and Moon is the one who asked us about it."

This time, the warden suddenly became suspicious.

Seeing that look, Hano quickly added. "The envoy said that it is a special mission given by the Church of the Sun and Moon, and it is issued by Cardinal Ronald himself."

"How sure are you about that? We can't just trust their words about it," asked the warden in return.

"He carried the seal of the Sun and Moon along with the order of the Heroes. He is tasked with investigating that prisoner," replied Hano.

"How did he get it?" asked the warden, seemingly talking to himself.

Hano quickly answered as well. "It was given to him along with the letter that we have received from the Church of the Sun and Moon."

"Now this is troubling," mumbled the warden as he repeatedly tapped his fingers on his table. "We have been investigating that prisoner for quite a while and even interrogated him with all our means, but we still failed to get any information."

"Yet they wanted to leave that task to these newcomers, who are still wet behind their ears?" he added along with a deep frown.

"What are those from the higher-ups thinking?" he asked himself, trying to figure out the plan of those from the higher rankings.

He was now having a headache due to this matter.

"Is that all they want? To meet that prisoner?" asked the warden.

Hano shook his head he was also not sure. He was only relaying the words of Shin.

The warden went silent for a long time before sighing. He then waved at Hano while giving his instructions. "Alright. Tell them that they can see that prisoner, but they have to follow our rules strictly!"

"Also tell the guards about this matter and put the 'Watchers' to secretly observe them. If they show any signs of suspicious movements, then capture them and put them at the deepest level of prison as well."

Hano tried to open his mouth to ask some of his doubts, but he quickly swallowed his words back after seeing the grave expression of his uncle.

"I understand," he said as he bowed before exiting the room.

The moment when Hano left, the warden suddenly turned his chair to face the window and looked at the slowly darkening sky. "Let's just hope that those old foxes know what they are doing. If that existence is set free and let loose in the continent, then chaos will befall us once again."

With a sigh, he turned to the side and pulled out one of the drawers of his desk before taking out a bottle of liquor. "My stress is growing rapidly since we have captured that envoy. Maybe I should send him as soon as possible."

At the same time, in the Real World, something happened at the Headquarters of the World Gaming Organization.

Weng~! Weng~!

Alarms were ringing nonstop in one of the offices of the head departments, particularly the Monitoring Department.

Carlos, who was planning to take a quick nap, could not help but sigh as he stood up from the sofa. He then walked out of his office to find out what was happening.

"What is it this time?"

Lohengrin quickly rushed at him this time and immediately reported. "We are in trouble, Department Head! One of the major quests of the Awakened Continent has been triggered!"

Carlos frowned as he heard those words before saying. "Is it a big deal? Shouldn't be about time for those guys to finally do some quests after adjusting themselves to a new environment?"

Lohengrin hesitated for a moment before continuing. "But... Sir... the quest that has been triggered is the Code-666A1."

"What's wrong with-..." Carlos was about to brush it off when he suddenly realized something. His eyes turned wide as he snapped toward Lohengrin. "Say that again! Which code is it!?"

"Code-666A1, Sir," repeated Lohengrin, seemingly expecting such a reaction.

"That-... Quest?" asked Carlos once again.

Lohengrin nodded solemnly and confirmed seriously. "Yes, Sir. It is 'that' Quest."

Carlos took a deep breath when he had gotten the confirmation before mumbling. "What are those guys doing? Aren't they supposed to explore the Divine Empire after adjusting themselves to the mana density of the place? Why are they trying to have a trip to Hell instead?"

He massaged his temple as he asked. "Who triggered the quest?"

Lohengrin hesitated for a moment before answering. "It is our 'favorite' miracle player, Sir – Player Sickarius."

The corner of Carlos' mouth suddenly twitched when he heard that. "Why do I even bother to ask? I should have expected that this kid would give us trouble as soon as he arrived in the Awakened Continent."

"So, which stage are they now?" he asked.

"It is just the initial phase for now, but given our experience with this player, it is better to prepare for the worst," reported Lohengrin.

Carlos briefly nodded, making him calm to a certain degree. "That there is not much of a problem for now."

"This quest is unlike the others that they have cleared in the Aurora Continent. It will take them a long time before they can progress into it," he explained before continuing. "However, this will accelerate the timeframe for the succeeding in-game content."

"Keep an eye on their progress for now. I will inform the other departments about this so that they can prepare for it," he instructed before turning around.

He felt someone relieved that they were not caught off guard this time.

"It looks like forming the special 'task force' and investing in it is quite worth our time," he mumbled as he exited the room.

Chapter 1548 The Mysterious Villain (Part 3)

.....

The trio of Shin, Arthur, and Leonard was led by Hano to the deepest parts of the prison dungeon, which was filled with nothing but eeriness.

"Is this a little too desolate to be the highest level of prison within the Divinity City," commented Arthur as he looked around.

The place was filled with prison cells, but they had never found anyone up until now. But what was strange was the number of guards patrolling through the corridor and standing at their designated posts. The guards were too many for such an empty prison.

The eeriness filling the entire place was even affecting the three of them. It was as if the silence in the air was trying to overwhelm them. There was also a strange dark aura mixed with it that was attempting to invade their minds.

"This place seemed to be not as simple as it seems," commented Leonard as he was keener when it came to sensing such hostile auras due to his enhanced Bestial Instincts.

Arthur and Shin were not far behind him, but Leonard was more sensitive when it came to sensing it.

Shin slightly nodded but also added. "It is not just because of the place. The entire prison is being affected by something... or more like someone."

The other two did not have to guess what Shin was trying to imply as they could already guess what it was.

That mysterious prisoner being held at the deepest part of the prison should be the reason.

"What kind of existence are these guys locked in this place for it to have such a huge effect on the environment," commented Arthur as he looked around the place.

Shin also nodded as he started to sense a somewhat familiar energy from the environment. He was trying to figure out where he sensed such dense dark energy when Leonard suddenly turned to him.

"Shin Bro, don't you think that this energy is somewhat familiar?" asked Leonard as he also found something odd. "But it is also somewhat different at the same time. It feels much denser and more-.... Wicked?"

Shin already knew what Leonard was talking about, but he did not dare to confirm it yet since there were still a lot of possibilities.

"More than that-..." he paused their topic as he swept his eyes at the surroundings, particularly at the dark shadows enveloping the entire place. "Aren't your hidden guards showing us a little much hostility?"

The moment he mentioned this, Leonard also turned his head to the side while adding. "Now that you mentioned it, they have been sending these stinging gazes for quite a while now."

"I thought some mosquitoes were biting me up until now," commented Arthur with a somewhat provoking tone.

What surprised Hano, who was accompanying them, was not the fact that these three were able to notice these Shadow Watchers of the prison. It was because of the fearlessness and competitive spirit that these three were emitting.

These guards who were keeping an eye on them might be way ahead of their league for now, but the three remained unfazed and faced the pressure directed at them with full calmness.

'As expected of the selected individuals of those fearsome factions. These three are worthy of their titles at the very least,' mumbled Hano as he swept his gaze at the three before quickly putting up an awkward smile, trying to appease the three. "Please don't misunderstand, Esteemed Guests. This is just a protocol that we have to follow."

"As you can see, this place is already in such a state, so it will be quite troublesome if something goes wrong. We have to be on our full alert at all times to prevent any accidents," he added as he gave the Shadow Watchers a signal to further hide their presence.

The three also saw those coded signals and somewhat understood what they meant. Given their background in the real world, especially when they regularly went on undercover missions, they were very familiar with such things.

But since they were only here for the quest, the three ignored those signals and continued to follow Hano to the deepest level of the dungeon prison.

The deeper they got into the dungeon, the darker it became. Moreover, the sinister aura that was filling the prison was also becoming denser.

Movements in this place were becoming harder, making the trio somewhat uncomfortable.

Due to this, the three entered the Combat State of Reality Manifestation and started circulating their energies through their respective techniques.

They had also enveloped their bodies with their unique energies, protecting themselves from the dark aura that was filling the entire place.

Noticing this, Hano could not help but raise his brows, somewhat impressed. Even if he expected that these three possessed decent talents and somewhat strong for someone of their levels given their respective backgrounds, he still did not expect that their abilities would reach this extent.

'I am originally planning to lend them a hand to withstand the Demonic Air filling the air, but I guess there is no need for it,' he thought to himself before continuing to lead the trio.

"The 'scent' is getting filthier as we go on," commented Arthur with a solemn tone.

"It is indeed similar yet also somewhat different," added Leonard, recalling his experience of meeting an existence with a similar scent.

Shin remained silent, but one of his elemental spirit companions was showing some violent reaction. 'Keep it down. This is not a place for you to go out of control.'

Shin was quite confused at what was happening, but he could only suppress his elemental spirit and prevent it from going berserk.

"We are here," said Hano as he stopped in front of a pair of metal gates. These gates were so tightly shut that even the air seemed to be unable to pass through them. But for some reason, there was a dense dark, and sinister aura leaking out from unknown gaps in the gates.

"These gates are quite thick and very solid. Are you sure that thing can still be opened?" said Arthur as he observed the metal gates with his Dragon Eyes.

Shin had also used his True Sight to observe the gates. He could feel a very powerful magic formation protecting the gates, keeping them intact, and preventing others from opening them through normal means.

"From now on, I ask the esteemed guests to stand behind him at all times and don't leave the ten-meter radius away from me," said Hano with full seriousness before adding. "If you wander around on your own, no one can save you, so please keep close to me."

Given the tone of his words, the trio immediately realized that whatever was behind these gates was way beyond their powers.

For someone to be locked in a single prison and clear the entire place, not leaving a single prisoner behind, Shin could tell that such an existence could corrupt the minds of anything within the vicinity.

If not for the special formation that was protecting the entire prison and the special technique that the NPC guards were using to defend themselves from the corruption, then this place must have turned into a slaughterhouse filled with mindless monsters.

After seeing that the three readied themselves, Hano suddenly released his aura and formed a Mana Dome around them.

Swoosh!

The trio raised their brows when sensed the visible mana coming out from Hano. Not only the aura of the latter was so strong that it could overwhelm everything in his surroundings, but he also possessed a firm control over it.

Shin and the other two could visibly see how Hano manipulated the mana in his surroundings. It was not only skillful but very domineering as well.

"Now, we can see why he is the right-hand man of the prison warden," commented Shin.

Clank!

Not long after, Hano proceeded to open the metal gate. He first injected his mana into the Magic Formation acting as the lock of the gates, unlocking it.

Not long after, Hano took a deep breath before pushing the gates with one hand.

Bang!

The giant metal gates were sent inside, opening a path for them.

Boom!

But right at the same time, a very powerful pressure suddenly descended on everyone seemingly trying to crush the entire place.

The trio could see that the entire prison seemed to be vibrating due to this pressure. They could also see very dense miasma that was slowly creeping outside the cell, but they were immediately blocked by an invisible wall, which prevented them from going anywhere.

"Follow me closely," repeated Hano as he stepped inside the cell with the trio following closely behind.

Ding *Ding* *Ding*

Not long after their foot stepped into the opened cell, Shin and the other two were immediately bombarded by a series of warning notifications from the system, seemingly discouraging them from advancing.

The notifications were buzzing in their ears repeatedly, making the three to be somewhat uncomfortable. Due to this, they had no choice but to mute them for the time being.

But before that, they first glanced at it to see what was causing the system to act this way.

System: Warning! Warning! Warning! Warning!

System: You are in the presence of a high-level existence, please reconsider entering this place.

System: Warning! Warning! Warning! Warning

System: Your mind is being overwhelmed by a powerful mind invasion!

System: Checking for the mentality level!

System: You are being protected by a powerful Psychic Barrier and exempted from the Mentality Level Check!

Seeing the long string of notifications that were repeatedly buzzing in their ears, the trio could not help but turn in front of them, trying to know the cause of all these.

Then their eyes suddenly turned wide and their pupils greatly contracted after adjusting to the darkness.

"What the...!?"

Chapter 1549 An Ancient Demon

.....

"Hey, Shin! Are you screwing us over? How can such a quest be so simple as you said? Do you want to interrogate such a thing? This is definitely beyond our current capabilities!" cursed Arthur while looking at the existence in front of them.

The corner of Shin's mouth also could not help but twitch uncontrollably as he could not take his eyes from the existence before them.

What they were seeing was a colossal existence that possessed a humanoid form. It looked like a Giant or a Titan from the legends but carried a lot of different features from what they had heard or read from the lore of the game.

But the size of this giant alone far surpassed any monster that Shin had encountered even in that trial ground. Its overwhelming size was way beyond those colossal sea monsters that he had met in that place – or at least those younger sea creatures within the independent realms where they fought.

This existence also possessed a pair of horns sticking out from its forehead and a sinister face that made the three of them think – "How can such an ugly face exist in this world." –

There was also a pair of giant wings on its back that was tightly bound by some chains filled with golden runes.

The surface of this giant's body was also filled with obsidian scales that seemed to act as its main armor.

Its hands and feet also resembled the destructive claw of a colossal monster, particularly with those pointed nails.

The eyes of this colossal being seemed to have been dug out given the wounds that were left behind on it. There was also a special seal that was preventing it from recovering those wounds.

"This is a Demon, right? A bona fide demon," mumbled Leonard as he realized why the aura that he was sensing earlier was somewhat familiar yet also different.

"From which tribe does this demon belong to?" Shin asked, somewhat mumbling to himself.

The two of them had already encountered a real Demon before. That larvae of a Grand Centipedeus of the Bug Tribe also carried such a dense demonic power, but even that powerful monster was nothing compared to this being in front of them.

The difference in aura was so big that it was similar to the gap between a human and a tiny bug.

"Just how strong is this guy for it to emit such a horrifying aura passively," commented Leonard as he stared at the colossal demon in front of them.

Arthur nodded in agreement as he also found it astonishing. Even with the help of his Dragon Eyes, he was unable to see any information from the demon aside from its race – an Ancient Demon. Everything else was a bunch of question marks.

Shin squinted his eyes as he tried his best to focus his mana. But despite all his efforts, he had only gotten a similar result as Arthur.

Hearing those words, Hano suddenly explained. "This Demon is one of the Ancient Demons that managed to survive the previous war during the Repelling Era. It is even one of the Demon Generals leading the great demonic army under the banner of a Great Demon King who is trying to invade our world."

"A Demon General, who is under the direct orders of a Great Demon King? This guy should be very powerful then," commented Arthur, stating the obvious.

Hano chuckled when he heard those words before continuing. "As you can see its demonic powers are so strong that even the Divine Seal that the Great Sages of the Mage Tower and the Saints of the Divine Church is barely able to suppress it."

"It is even starting to affect the entire prison due to the slow corrosion that it caused. That is the main reason why we have no choice but to transfer most of the prisoners of this place."

He then paused, took out a talisman from his pocket, and showed it to the three. "If not for the protection provided by the talismans blessed by the Divine Oracle, all the guards within the vicinity will most likely have lost their minds."

He then glanced at the three with an odd gaze before continuing. "I am actually quite impressed that none of you require one."

Shin and the other two raised their brows when they heard those words. They first looked back at Hano with suspicion, seemingly trying to see what he was thinking.

— "Is this guy trying to harm us? Letting us walk around such a dangerous place without handing us that protection talisman?" —

Fortunately, the three had their respective means to ward off such a powerful mind corruption that was leaking outside this fortified prison cell.

Shin always wore that badge that he had gotten from Longinus, which provided him immunity to any mental attacks under 'Divine Rank'.

Meanwhile, Leonard's Lion Helmet, which was his Sacred Relic, provided him a strong defense against such mental attacks on top of promoting his mental strength to a certain degree.

Arthur, on the other hand, was in possession of a special talisman with a Dragon Blessing, which had a similar effect to what the two had.

Seemingly understanding the meaning of those gazes, Hano smiled awkwardly. "It is a misunderstanding. I am just surprised by your ability to ward off the mind corruption in the higher levels of the dungeon, which is why I have forgotten about this matter."

The three rolled their eyes at him while shaking their heads.

While they were talking, the Demon General before them seemed to have been awakened by something and turned his head toward that direction.

[Interesting~! Someone has opened a hole in the 'shell' of this world and is in the middle of building a Dimensional Bridge toward one of Hell's major regions.]

[I can also sense the presence of the Bug Tribe gathering on the other side of the Dimensional Bridge. Is the Glutton Demon King of the Flies launching another dimensional invasion?]

Shin and the other two could not help but groan in pain as they heard the Demon General 'mumbled' to himself.

His voice was like a clap of thunder that erupted inside their consciousness.

This Demon General was not talking through normal means as he was using a Telepathic Message to talk, which made it worse for the three to endure his words.

Fortunately, Hano was quick to act and activated another technique that enhanced the defenses of his barrier.

However, he was also taken aback by the situation as he did not expect this Demon General to talk. After all, they had spent quite a lot of time and effort just to interrogate him, yet nothing yielded any results.

They had even used all kinds of torture against this Demon General, but he never opened his mouth up until now.

As the three were trying to recover, the Demon General turned in another direction, seemingly able to pierce through all the obstacles and 'see' everything despite his missing eyes.

[Hoh~! It seems like the other side is also reaching its ripeness. I wonder what those are living in the void thinking. Regardless, it will be a good advantage to us.]

He then started smiling creepily, enough to send shivers down the spines of anyone who saw it.

On the other hand, the expression on Hano's face immediately changed when he heard the latter words of the Demon General.

It was because those words concerned the very information that the Council of the Righteous Churches and the Hall of Heroes wanted to hear about the crack deep within the Abyss Brink.

The Heroes that were sent to investigate that crack before told everyone that the existence behind that crack was emitting an aura similar to the Demons from Hell but also somewhat different.

This was why they were trying their hardest to get some information from this captive Demon General.

"What did you say? Beings living in the void? What do you mean by that?" asked Hano, unable to contain his mixed excitement and anxiousness.

Hearing him talk, the Demon General finally turned his attention to their direction. But instead of answering Hano, he ignored everyone else and focused his 'eyes' on Shin – or to be more precise, someone deep within Shin's Sea of Consciousness.

[This is getting more and more interesting. An Evil God candidate without that Evil Aura? What a special existence we have here.]

Hano was quite confused with these words, but it was a different case for the three.

Given those words, Shin knew that this Demon General must have discovered something about Uno, who was hidden deep within his Sea of Consciousness, which also somewhat surprised him.

Arthur and Leonard, who were aware of Uno's existence, were also taken aback by those words. They looked at Demon General with a serious expression on their faces. They knew that this Demon General was quite strong, but they did not expect that he could see through even to this.

At the same time, someone talked to Shin through his telepathic connection with his Elemental Spirit Companions.

[Host, let me talk to that Demon. I have something that I must confirm.] – sounded impatient and agitated.

Chapter 1550 An Ancient Demon (Part 2)

.....

Silence filled the air as Shin and his group stared silently at the Demon General, who was looking back at them with a scary grin on his face.

A speck of light seemed to have pieced the void and appeared beside Shin before turning into a pool of blood on the ground. Then it suddenly grew into a humanoid figure before turning into someone wearing a set of noble clothes with crimson color.

This was Vladimir, who was currently wearing a grim expression on his face instead of his usual narcissistic attitude. Moreover, this Crimson Noblesse Spirit was currently emitting an intense bloodlust as he glared at the Demon General.

Hano was slightly taken aback by the sudden appearance of this Elemental Spirit, but quickly recovered himself as he somewhat understood that these there possessed their respective Elemental Spirit Companions since they all were Transcendent Beings.

The Demon General fist ignored the additional presence in front of him. But as he was fixating his 'eye' on Shin – or rather Uno – Vladimir suddenly attracted his attention. "It has been a while, Noir of the Eternal Darkness and the right-hand man of Great Demon King Balanar – the Primordial Night that predates even the 'Day' itself."

This time, the Demon General named Noir finally showed some reaction and was unable to hide his astonishment. He did not expect that any would know not only his real name but the true name of his master as well.

He was not the only one as Hano, who was standing at the forefront of the group, could not help but turn around while looking at Vladimir with an astounded gaze.

The entire Council of Righteous Churches had done everything they could to investigate this Demon General, but they did not even get anything from the latter.

Even with the help of those individuals from the Hall of Heroes, who led the victory of the Altas World against the invasion of the Demons during the repelling Era, were unable to uncover that much from this Demon General, much less his true name alongside his master's.

Now he had to re-evaluate Shin and the rest, especially with such a piece of crucial information that he just acquired.

He now understood why those old men from the council had given their permission to let these three meet the captive Demon General.

Little did he know that this all was just a coincidence.

Noir, on the other hand, fell silent as he 'stared' at Vladimir while trying to recall where he had met the latter. It was impossible for someone of this era to know anything about him when even those from the frontlines during the Repelling Era were unable to dig for any information.

There could only be a single reason for this to happen. It was as if the latter was someone who fought against him and his master during that war and managed to survive in the end.

But that would be impossible since everyone he and his army had encountered all died including Transcendent Beings and powerful heroes that they had encountered.

Seeing that Noir was trying to recall anything about him, Vladimir took the initiative to introduce himself. "You may have forgotten about us, but we will never forget what you have done to our kingdom, especially the curse that your master has cast upon us."

"We have promised to avenge our kingdom and make your master for what he has done," he added as an overwhelming killing intent filled the entire place – strong enough to fight against the dark miasma corrupting the surroundings.

Hearing those words, Noir seemed to have recalled something and started grinning. "I see. You are among those lucky ones saved by the True Fallen at that time."

"To think that you will be able to survive up until now despite your kingdom being completely corroded by my master's curse," he paused for a moment as he finally noticed the current appearance of Vladimir and commented. "I see, so you have abandoned your original form that has been corrupted and used the power of the curse to turn yourself into an Elemental Being."

'The True Fallen? The Phantom King Kentas?' Hano, who was listening up until now, could not help but raise his brows with this information.

'Sir Kentas is among the oldest heroes of the Atlas World, but he does not belong to any faction. Aside from the Supremo of the Supreme Temple and the Divine Seer related to the Martial Alliance, no one knows how to contact him. This is going to be a little tricky,' he thought to himself, trying to think how he would report to the higher-ups later.

Noir, the Demon General, on the other hand, was starting to get more interested in Shin.

He then glanced at Hano and said. "I know what you people want, but you never negotiate with me. How about I give you a chance for it?"

"I will give you everything you want and tell you whatever you have to know about 'that' place. But in exchange for my freedom," he added with an evil grin.

"Hah! You are asking too much for a mere prisoner. I guess you don't know what situation you are in now," said Hano skeptically before adding. "The only reason why you are alive up until now is because of the possible information that you possess. But that doesn't mean that you are of utmost importance."

Hearing those words, Noir started laughing out loud, making the entire prison dungeon shake as if there was an intense earthquake shaking it.

Shin and the others could even see the barrier protecting them shaking intensely due to the pressure that Noir was producing with just his laughter alone.

It would not be hard to imagine how much destruction this Demon General could cause given that even its laughter could cause such a commotion.

It took a while before Noir to recover himself before saying in full contempt. "It seems like you people don't know what kind of situation you are in. Those existences beyond that dimensional crack are different from us, Demons."

"Us, Demons from Hell desire nothing but to become powerful, which is why we plunder the resources of other realms. Some of us do whatever we want just for the sake of their entertainment, but that was all into it."

"Those existences, on the other hand, desired nothing but devouring everything they encountered – regardless of if it was a planet, star, or even an entire realm."

"Even those, what you call Gods, will be having a hard time repelling those existences of the void, much less a lesser realm like this world."

He then paused and started grinning once again as he continued. "If you wanted to prepare properly against this calamity and survive the upcoming disaster, you will have no choice but to make a deal with me."

The cunning tongue of a demon and the temptations that it whispered started to take effect as Shin and the others listened to his words.

Fortunately, their mentality and willpower were strong enough to withstand those temptations. Hano even smirked. "Heh! Do you think we will let a walking disaster as yourself free in exchange for such information?"

"It will be no different from stabbing ourselves with our knives," he added as he shook his head.

Their worries were understandable, after all, who would let such an ancient demon on the loose in the world?

Noir continued to smile as he looked at the group. "It seems like you don't understand what I have just said."

"We, Demons, are doing everything we want for the sake of our purpose. Regardless of whether it is for our pursuit of power, our entertainment, or due to our boredom, we do it just for the sake of it and nothing else."

"We will even turn our backs to our kind so long as the choices in front of us coincide with our purpose. Aside from those weaklings at the bottom of the barrel, who are tied with the absolute authority of their masters, anyone can betray anyone."

"One of the absolute rules of Hell is not to trust anyone other than yourself," he added with a mystifying tone.

But the group was still unconvinced.

Arthur even added. "That is more than the reason we can't trust your words. This also doesn't change the fact that you are nothing but a walking disaster."

Noir continued to smile mysteriously at them before adding. "Don't we already have a way to make sure that we can't betray each other right in front of us?"

The group was quite confused by his words at first, but they later realized what he was trying to imply and simultaneously turned to Vladimir.

"You-... you also want to turn yourself into an Elemental Being and make a contract with-..." Hano said with widened eyes as he looked at the Demon General full of disbelief.

In response to Noir, Vladimir also bore his fangs as he could see through what Noir was planning. "Do you think that I will let you form a contract with my host?"

Noir looked at Vladimir with full contempt as he answered. "But you are not the one to decide whether to accept me or not."

Realizing this, Vladimir quickly turned at Shin before shooting a piercing glare at his contractor. But he was also confident that Shin would not agree to such a proposition, especially when his contract with Shin clearly stated that he had to deal with Balanar and his generals for his revenge.

Shin was also aware of this, so he also could not just accept Noir.

"Moreover, I am also not interested in your host, but the other 'soul' that he is keeping," added Noir with a profound gaze.

Shin had also somewhat guessed it, so he was not surprised. After all, Noir had a sudden change of attitude and started to pay attention to them after discovering Uno's existence.

This made the situation a bit trickier.

But as Shin was having a predicament of what to do, a voice rang inside his head while carrying a greedy and frenzied tone.

[Let me devour him!]

This voice was from another Elemental Spirit Companion that he had.

Hearing the words of the nutjob, Shin's mouth suddenly curved into a devious grin as a plan started to formulate inside his head.

When the two saw that grin, they could not help but exchange glances at each other as they already had a 'bad' feeling about this.

This grin was too familiar to them as it was what Shin usually wore whenever he was up to something or about to cause trouble.

Realizing this, they suddenly felt 'bad' for the Demon General.

There was a saying that was telling everyone not to trust the words of a Devil. But telling who the 'real' devil between Shin and Noir, the two would always choose the former whenever he wore this grin.