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Jonas, sensing his father's hesitation, added, "Father, if what she says is true, this could be our only chance to stop Silas. We need to be very active on this. The safety of the majority of our people is most important at the moment."

Erik sighed, the weight of the decision pressing down on him. "Very well. We will collaborate on this. I already have an idea of where the pick can start."

"Silas obviously will need to have eyes on key figures in my kingdom, so it would be no surprise if his puppets are those dear or near to those key figures."

"I will give you a list of nobles and those I think you should pick out. We will offer no help except for the names, so handle it the best you can and risk not exposing yourselves," Erik said to Iris, who understood his intentions.

"He will give us names and information, but at the same time, he steps back from the action in case it surfaces after a while. The blame can be put on us, not him," Iris looked at Erik with a new appreciation. "It seems he is not that bad of a leader," she thought to herself as she smiled at Erik before nodding.

A few weeks back, up in a place most mortals or beings will never have the chance to set their feet upon, five colossal beings stood with serious expressions on their faces.

Four of the colossal beings were staring at one of their own, a humanoid ape-like creature with forest-like features all over him.

The attention of the Origin gods was turned away when they noticed the presence of their mother joining them.

Ikenga cleared his throat. "I was summoned by someone we all know a few days back and was offered an interesting proposition."

Jaws looked at Ikenga and said, "You have never had an encounter with him, so why did he choose you?"

Ikenga laughed and said, "I asked the same question. He said it was because gods who have a divinity close to nature, like mine, are those willing to sit down and have a conversation with him without immediately trying to kill him."

Flashback to when Ikenga accepted the calling, his divine body was pulled down to the mortal plane. Only this time, Ikenga noticed his area of operation after getting down to the mortal plane was limited.

He was surrounded by thin golden light that didn't look extraordinary, but he felt a small presence of his mother's energy from the light.

Looking at the person who summoned him standing outside the golden light, Ikenga floated a bit closer before looking at the well-dressed skeleton with its skull head on fire.

Before Ikenga could speak, he heard the skeleton speak, "This would be our very first time meeting, Ikenga, god of nature and curses."

Ikenga looked away from the skeleton as he pressed his hand on the golden light, applying force to shatter it, yet it stood firm and gave no reaction.

Looking at the skeleton, Ikenga sat cross-legged midair before he asked, "What do you want, Murmur?"

Murmur's skull head tilted to the side as he began walking away with his bony hands behind his back. Ikenga's eyes followed him until Murmur stopped at the kneeling figures of some humans.

Ikenga noticed the humans were in a formation and how a thin golden light stretched from their kneeling figures before coming together to form the shield/cage holding him.

Murmur began speaking, "For my own safety, I had to use this world-recognized first race as my resources."

Ikenga said nothing in turn, letting Murmur continue. "As the first race, they have some rights. Your world is still young for them to know of these rights. In most cases, this right will never be known by them, until it is forced out of them. For now, I handpicked some humans to exercise this right for my own safety."

Walking back to Ikenga, Murmur stared at him and said, "You feel it, don't you? The energy of this world's consciousness being used to form this shield."

"Far, far back, when this spell was discovered, the gods of those worlds were a menace, had a nasty, twisted nature of feeding on the flesh and blood of living beings after they had been summoned. In order to protect themselves, that world's first race discovered their rights."

"For this spell to work, it means that the race using their right must absolutely fear the being in question, in this case, the gods. In response to their fear, they are able to harness the world's consciousness energy to protect themselves."

A hint of sadness slipped into Murmur's tone as he looked at the humans. "Too bad, they all will soon die. If you had resisted more and tried to break out, their death would have been quicker, but since you gave up, only half their lifespan was spent. But either way, they will still die at the end of our meeting."

Ikenga had many thoughts running through his mind after hearing Murmur's words, but he still remained cold-faced as he asked once again, "What do you want, Murmur?"

"This world," Murmur responded.

"I want this world," Murmur repeated.

"You can't have it," Ikenga said to Murmur.

"I know," Murmur said in turn.

"I know, but I still want it. This meeting of ours is my last try," Murmur said.

A throne appeared beside Murmur, on which he sat with his bone hands on his chin.

"This world means a lot to me; it will bridge the gap between me and those demons who were born at the same time as me from the River Styx."

"I spent countless years inside the stomach of the child of Chaos, missing a lot of time to grow. But luckily, this world came by. Conquering this world would push me to the Abyss Lord level, regaining my mark."

"I could imagine it already: the news spreading through the Abyss of a great demon who survived an encounter with the child of Chaos and, upon his return to his great home, brought down with him a high-level world filled with Origin Gods."

"My peers will all watch in envy as the great Murmur's journey is imprinted and etched into the inheritance memory of all demons in the Abyss. My name will be etched into history for eons," Murmur kept talking, losing himself in his fervor as Ikenga coldly watched, sitting cross-legged mid-air.

"This was how it was supposed to go, yet with each encounter with this world's Origin Gods, I keep taking a loss, and now I am with no skin, deprived of the pleasure of the flesh."

Looking at Ikenga, Murmur said once again, "I want this world. I really do. Which is why I bring a proposal to you Origin Gods."

Ikenga, a bit interested, asked, "What proposal is that?"

"Before I go ahead with the proposal, do you know that worlds level up, increasing their quality?"

Feigning ignorance, Ikenga said, "I do know about other worlds, but I don't know about the leveling up part."

Murmur looked blankly at Ikenga before saying, "If you are thirsty or curious for knowledge, just say that. You don't have to lie to get what you want. It's beneath you to use such petty manipulations."

Ikenga raised a brow at that, then nodded. "Then let me be straightforward. I would like to know more about this leveling up of worlds since I already know about conquering worlds."

Murmur nodded. "Leveling up worlds and conquering worlds are connected in many ways. After a world is taken over by another, it would either assimilate into the winning world or become a subordinate planet of the winning world, depending on the choices made."

"Most worlds with world consciousness are always targeted for assimilation, and those without are always targeted to become subordinates. This is not to say that worlds without consciousness can't be assimilated, only that it brings not much benefit when done," Murmur said.

"Your world is already a high-level world, a new high-level world, and a great target for other high-level worlds. Most worlds like yours, which become high-level at the start, always have an inherent problem."

"This problem stems from inexperience. Unlike a low-level world that grew up and fought to get to a high-level position, gaining a lot of knowledge in the process about conquering worlds, worlds like yours are such a great meal for those worlds."

"Thousands of years will go by and your world will make no progress in its growth, while other worlds with experience will outgrow your world in size and quality under the same thousands of years. Do you know why?" Murmur asked Ikenga.

"Because in those thousands of years, they were finding and conquering other worlds with the knowledge and experience they have," Ikenga answered.

Nodding to Ikenga's words, Murmur continued, "Your world is a sitting duck, waiting to be attacked. If left on its own, it will grow and level up, but that will take millions of years. Who is to guess what will happen in those years"

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"You could, on your own, try to find worlds to conquer, but most worlds you will find will do nothing to help the growth of your world. High-level worlds, while plentiful, are hard to find. That is the case for worlds like yours with no knowledge or experience. But for other high-level worlds with the necessary experience, it's the opposite; all they need to do is pick one and hope the one they picked isn't too strong," Murmur said, chuckling eerily.

Ikenga floated down as he said to Murmur, "Your proposal then has something to do with helping us with the knowledge on finding other worlds?"

Murmur's eyes gleamed with a mix of amusement and cunning as he responded, "Indeed. My proposal is to help your world's growth and turn your current passiveness into action."

Ikenga tilted his head slightly, considering Murmur's words. "And what would you gain from this arrangement? Your help doesn't seem entirely altruistic."

Murmur chuckled, a deep, resonant sound that echoed through the chamber. "It might seem like my help is for nothing, but for me, it gives me a fighting chance in claiming your world as mine."

"After my last defeat at the hands of your sister Keles, I considered self-destructing and exposing your world's location to the abyss. But I couldn't do that in the end since I also need this world for my growth."

"My proposal is my last attempt for this world. If I gain nothing from it, then I apologize for my future actions," Murmur said, chuckling evilly.

Ikenga's eyes narrowed. Murmur frowned as the ground where his throne stood suddenly transformed into a huge plant mouth with sharp teeth and boiling acid further down the throat.

The plant mouth shut quickly, but Ikenga frowned as he looked slightly upward, where Murmur and his throne reappeared after a moment.

"My divinity is locked behind this shield," Ikenga thought to himself. The attack was created purely with mana alone, which was the opposite of what his goal was.

Murmur, meanwhile, was frowning as he thought to himself, "Normal gods aren't able to generate an attack after being held by the world shield, but it seems this means nothing to origin gods."

Ikenga floated again as he sat cross-legged. "How does your help give you the fighting chance you want?" he asked the frowning Murmur.

It took a while as Murmur looked back down at the ground where the plant mouth had been to see it was back to normal, making it seem like the previous attack wasn't real.

Knowing not to provoke Ikenga again, he continued with a smile. "This is because of the method of my help."

"As demons from the abyss, we are the first conquerors of worlds since the beginning of creation. All knowledge about conquering worlds comes from us, and to be able to start conquering worlds, contact with the abyss is inevitable."

"Of course, this contact is inevitable for beginners like your world. After a while, the beginners will create their own method of finding worlds to conquer and avoid contact with the abyss."

"Now, my method of help is the first part, which is me giving you contact with the abyss where you will seek out the knowledge and methods yourselves," Murmur said, looking at Ikenga.

Ikenga leaned back slightly, absorbing Murmur's words. "So, your assistance involves providing us with initial contact with the abyss. And what exactly does that entail? What risks does it pose to our world?"

Murmur's chuckled, sensing Ikenga's curiosity. "The abyss is a vast reservoir of knowledge and power, but it is not without its dangers. Contacting the abyss means opening a channel through which information and energy can flow. However, it also means exposing your world to the malevolent entities that reside there. These entities will see your world as a potential target, much like how you view other worlds for conquest."

Ikenga frowned. "I'm guessing that isn't what you want, Murmur, so what other method of contact do you have?"

Murmur's smile widened even further which should have been impossible with his current appearance but the light glimmering in the place of his eyes shows well his current emotion. "Indeed, the first

method of contact isn't beneficial to me, which is why for the second method, it will be you origin gods taking a journey to the abyss yourselves to establish contact."

Ikenga's eyes narrowed as he considered Murmur's words. "So, you're suggesting that we, the origin gods, venture into the abyss ourselves?"

Murmur's smile remained, but there was a glint of cunning in his eyes. "This method allows you to control the interaction, minimizing the risk of exposing your world to malevolent entities."

Ikenga frowned as he said, "This is your fighting chance, making an offer we can't reject. Our absence gives you the opportunity you want to claim our world."

Murmur's mouth widened, revealing sharp, glinting teeth as he inclined his head in acknowledgment. "Precisely. With the origin gods journeying into the abyss, your world's primary defenses will be considerably weakened. This would indeed give me the opportunity I seek. However, it is also your world's greatest chance to gain the knowledge and power needed to protect itself from future threats."

Ikenga's eyes flickered with a mixture of suspicion and contemplation. "You're playing a dangerous game, Murmur. You risk much with this gambit."

Murmur's expression turned serious, the malevolent amusement in his eyes tempered by a cold, calculating resolve. "I am well aware of the stakes, Ikenga. But so are you. Without significant advancement, your world will remain vulnerable, perpetually on the defensive. This is an opportunity for a leap forward, albeit one fraught with peril."

Ikenga's mind raced as he weighed the risks and rewards. He currently knew nothing of the abyss, but it was undoubtedly a place of unimaginable danger, filled with beings of immense power and malevolence. Yet, the promise of the knowledge and strength needed to secure their world's future was almost irresistible. He knew that Murmur's proposal was a trap, yet it was a trap they might need to spring into for the sake of their world's survival.

Ikenga looked around the golden shield surrounding him. He wasn't in danger, as he felt he could return to his realm anytime he wanted to. His only problem now was that the shield was preventing the connection he had with his siblings.

He knew that only his mother knew of what was going on here, but she wouldn't be of much help as the decision wouldn't fall on her but on them, her children, the origin gods.

Ikenga wanted to gain a bit more information from Murmur. As his gaze bore into Murmur's, seeking any sign of deception beyond what was already laid bare, Ikenga knew Murmur's resolve was unyielding; he truly believed this was the best, perhaps only, chance for both their agendas. This meant that he wouldn't help any further as he gained nothing from it.

Ikenga stared at Murmur before speaking, "This isn't a decision that can be made by me alone. I will have to consult my siblings first. How do I get in contact with you to give you an answer to our decision?"

Murmur's hands clapped together with joy as he pointed at the humans holding the shield. "They still have some weeks before they die. The call will hold up till then; all you need is to respond to get back to me."

"Why did you choose me and none of my other siblings to call?" Ikenga suddenly asked. Murmur was taken aback before responding.

"I already offended two goddesses. As for the other two gods, experience has always shown that gods with their divinity aren't favorable to beings like me, especially the sun god. As for the god of storms, it can go two ways: either he is calm enough to hear me out or he is full-blown angered at my presence."

"I don't want to deal with both extremes, which leaves the only option: you, the god of nature and curses. The former was a big reason, and the latter brings me a sense of closure as curses, no matter how they are laid out, are understood as evil like us demons."

Ikenga said nothing in return as his body disappeared from the shield. The humans who were holding it visibly relaxed as if a weight had been taken off of them.

Murmur looked at them, his eyes shining. "It seems my calculation was wrong. They still have about five years. It seems the absence of holding a divine being makes a big difference."

Back in the present, Ikenga explained his encounter to his siblings. The air crackled with divine energy as his siblings, the gods, all stayed silent while he narrated his conversation to them. Nana remained silent the whole time.

"What do you all think?" Ikenga asked after his explanation.

"We have to take it," Jaws said in response. Crepuscular nodded in agreement. "The offer is too good to decline, even though we know it is a trap."

Keles spoke up, "I detest Murmur's existence, but his offer indeed is of great help to us. Maybe we have already fallen in sight of other worlds. The only reason we haven't been invaded might be the element of luck, but who is to say how long such luck will last?"

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Ikenga's gaze shifted to Nana. "Do you have an opinion to share, mother?"

Nana smiled, shaking her head. "This is a major part of your existence, and while I birthed you, I have no opinion on this. Whatever decision you all make is what it has to be, and I stand by it."

Mahu looked at everyone before asking, "So we all agree on taking the offer?"

In response to her words, the other gods nodded. Then she asked another important question. "Which of us is going to the abyss? Knowing Murmur's plan, it's best if some of us stay behind to safeguard the planet."

Ikenga nodded at Mahu's words as he spoke. "I volunteer myself. I am curious to see the world outside and how much it has to offer to me—I mean us and our world."

The gods rolled their eyes at Ikenga before Crepuscular spoke up. "Normally, I would jump at the opportunity to leave, but the current situation on the western continent demands my attention. This situation is at a critical moment; me leaving now isn't a wise decision."

Ikenga nodded at Crepuscular's words and looked at the other gods. Jaws took the moment to speak. "My situation is similar to Crepuscular's. My son and daughter think they have dealt with the demon on their side, not knowing there's still one lurking in the deep. My mind won't be at peace if I leave them to the unknown."

Now, only Keles and Mahu were left. Mahu looked at Ikenga before sighing. She wanted to speak, but Nana's form shimmered, causing her and the other gods to stop and look at Nana in confusion.

Nana wanted to say something, but she knew she couldn't. She pointed at her lips and then tried to point at Mahu, but a force held her down. All she could communicate to the gods was, "I can't speak."

Ikenga's eyes flashed as he looked at Nana and Mahu. Obviously, Nana didn't want Mahu to join him. "Why though?" Ikenga thought to himself in confusion.

"Absence?" Ikenga said uncertainly, looking at Nana, who smiled at his words. This confirmed Ikenga's thoughts.

"Mahu can't leave because of the effect her absence will cause in our world," Ikenga said out loud to his confused siblings.

Lightning flashed across Jaws' eyes as he looked at Mahu before nodding. "Her divinity of motherhood is prevalent for our world, maybe even the most important."

"We don't yet know how much her absence could affect our world, but it is certain that the population would drop without her," Crepuscular added, now fully understanding. "Mahu's presence ensures the cycles of life and birth. If she leaves, the natural balance could be disrupted. Fertility rates could decline, and the birth of new life may slow to a trickle. The essence of growth and renewal of different lifeform hinges on her."

Jaws nodded in agreement. "Without Mahu, the nurturing energies that sustain families and communities will weaken. Her influence extends beyond mere birth; she fosters the bonds that keep our society cohesive. Her absence could lead to a decline not just in numbers but in the quality of life and harmony among the people."

Keles spoke thoughtfully. "If Mahu's absence can cause such profound effects, we must consider the impact of anyone else leaving. Ikenga, your role as the god of nature and curses is vital as well. What will happen if you are absent?"

Ikenga pondered for a moment. "My absence could disrupt the equilibrium of nature. The forests, rivers, and creatures might not thrive as they do with me here. Furthermore, the curses I manage could become unstable, potentially causing chaos."

Thinking of something, Ikenga said, "It might not reach that level yet, as my two treants are about to become spirits. They can manage any issues that may arise due to my absence."

"As for the curses," Ikenga continued as his tattoos and eyes glowed purple, "there will be a change soon that will lead to the awakening of Osi and Boros, so they can both manage the curses once I am gone."

Keles spoke up, her voice calm but firm. "If Mahu must stay, then I will accompany Ikenga to the abyss. I have nothing much holding me back. My children still need a few more years before their creations become impactful, and like Ikenga, I have Wardenwild, who will handle things in my absence."

Crepuscular nodded thoughtfully. "Having the Treants and Wardenwild as spirits to manage the natural world, and Osi and Boros to handle the curses, will indeed mitigate some of the impact. However, we don't know how long Ikenga and Keles will be gone before their absence becomes noticeable."

Jaws nodded in agreement. "While the spirits can be helpful, there is only so much they can do before the weight becomes too much for them, which in turn will leave us to bear the burden."

Looking at Ikenga, Jaws said, "Remember your words about weight. We three can share it, but how long before it forces us to sleep like it did when you bore all our weight?"

Ikenga frowned upon hearing that, "It did slip his mind of the weight they bore as gods. Normally, it's unknown and even hard to notice, but when one or two become absent, the weight we each bear will be reminded to us immediately."

Keles shook her head. "It seems we have to be quick on our journey and make sure to be back before any severe consequences arise."

Nana looked around at her children, pride evident in her eyes. "You all have grown into remarkable beings. Your dedication to preserving our world is inspiring. After you leave, remember to think of home often; it will connect us more."

"Coming back to our world will be a struggle. You need to fulfill some conditions while you are away. Once the conditions are fulfilled, all you need to do is think of home, and I can bring you back," Nana said, smiling at both Ikenga and Keles.

The gods nodded before leaving the space. Mahu extended a hand to Ikenga, who took it before they both disappeared together.

Once they appeared back in Mahu's realm, she threw herself into Ikenga's arms, and he didn't hesitate to hold her firmly. Mahu's teeth managed to reach his ear as she bit it before whispering, "Leave me with something that reminds me of you once you are gone."

Her palms intertwined with Ikenga's as she clenched them, looking up at him. Ikenga smiled as his lips made contact with hers, and Mahu melted into his arms.

Carrying Mahu as he walked up the stairs, Ikenga said, "I did a good job with Ikem and Maul, but I could have done better. A beginning to me doing better is not leaving you with a child and being absent as a father."

Mahu wrapped her arms around Ikenga's neck as he kicked open a door. "Then stay with me until your day of departure."

Ikenga, already committed, answered, "I have no problem with that."

Down on the Northern continent, Yuki could be seen in the sky; alongside her was Finn in his werebeast form. Their expansion of the Church of Björn was going great.

They expected a bit more hindrance from the godling race, yet they got none, which was a disappointment for Yuki and her plan. If the werewolves had made a move to stop her, she had planned to use it to her advantage, but she got no reaction.

Today, her target was the most important port for the humans on the northern continent. Humans had started their great voyage over the sea in the past five years.

Yuki's target was the port that managed to stand out among the others. Yuki knew the reason this port was exceptional was because of the hidden hands pushing it—the demigods.

They used the port to gather riches from the humans eager to get their hands on the products of the godlings. Yuki's aim today was to push the hands of the demigods and force them to take action against her so she could justify her actions.

The port was also her gateway to spread the teachings of Björn's religion to other continents apart from theirs. The bustling port lay sprawled along the northern coast, its docks teeming with activity. Sturdy wooden ships, bearing the banners of different human kingdoms, rocked gently in their moorings as dockworkers hustled to and fro, unloading crates filled with exotic goods and loading others bound for distant shores. The salty air buzzed with the cacophony of commerce: the shouts of traders haggling over prices, the clink of coins exchanging hands, and the creaking of wooden beams under the weight of precious cargo.

Among the throng, a merchant from the Kingdom of Eldoria waved his hands animatedly, trying to sell a batch of finely woven silks to a discerning buyer from the coastal city of Velora.

"Look at this quality!" the Eldorian exclaimed, holding up a shimmering bolt of fabric. "You won't find craftsmanship like this anywhere else. Your patrons will pay double, no, triple for such elegance!"

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The Veloran buyer, a tall woman with sharp eyes, inspected the silk critically. "Triple, you say? Perhaps if it were imbued with magic. But as it stands, this is merely fine cloth. I'll give you half of what you're asking."

Nearby, a group of sailors from the Kingdom of Yarrow laughed raucously as they recounted tales of their recent voyage across the treacherous northern seas.

"I swear, the waves were taller than the masts!" one sailor boasted, gesturing wildly with a mug of ale. "But we held steady, and here we are, with our cargo intact and pockets full of gold."

As the port thrummed with life, a sense of unease began to ripple through the crowd. Overhead, the sky darkened, and a chill wind swept in from the north. At first, it seemed like a sudden storm, but the truth was far more sinister.

High above, Yuki and Finn surveyed the scene. Finn, in his werebeast form, his fur bristling with anticipation, let out a low growl. Yuki, her eyes gleaming with determination, nodded.

"It's time," she said softly. "Today, we force the demigods to show their hand."

Without warning, the tranquility of the port shattered. A deafening howl echoed through the air as an army of werebeasts, their eyes burning with feral intensity, stormed out of the nearby forest. Panic erupted among the port's inhabitants. Traders abandoned their goods, sailors scrambled for weapons, and the air filled with screams of terror.

"Defend the port!" a voice rang out above the chaos. It was the port's commander, a burly man with a scar across his face, rallying his men. "Protect the ships and the people!"

Meanwhile, at the home of the port owner, both the owner and a tall giant figure covered in a dark robe watched calmly as chaos began to unfold over the port.

The dark-robed figure looked at the commander who was rallying his men. Turning to the port owner, a deep voice spoke, "You have kept him in the dark for this mission. Hope you don't plan on letting such a good man die."

Robin looked at the dark figure before a smile blossomed across his face. "It seems your highness also cares deeply for his pawns."

The dark-robed figure gave no response, to which Robin shrugged as he put his hand to his ear where a small magic circle appeared.

"The time has come," he said. A voice came through the magic circle, saying, "We are ready."

The commander at the walls, with the few men he had, stayed ready to meet the army of werebeasts coming at them. Suddenly, he heard the sound of heavy footsteps coming from behind the wall.

Taking a moment to look back, the commander was met with the sight of a huge army moving out from the owner's home. Along the way, many whom the commander thought were traders pulled apart their clothes, revealing the armor underneath as they joined the army.

By the time they got to the gate, the army's size already filled the port. The commander's mouth hung open in surprise as he looked at the army. He also noticed how advanced the soldiers' armor was.

The commander wasn't the only one taken aback. Yuki and Finn were also surprised by the army. They never could have imagined there was an ambush waiting for them.

The werebeasts they had as an army weren't the original force of the Björn kingdom. Instead, they were a group of believers who were told that the port blocked the teachings of the gods.

In devotion, they took up arms, eager to worship Björn in battle. They had no qualms joining the plan brought up by Yuki to attack the port, as for them it was only a massacre feast they planned on enjoying.

Yuki watched as the army parted, making way for Robin, all dressed up in his armor, riding a horse from his manor to the front of the army.

Once he got there, he shouted, "Open the gates."

The port's heavy gates swung open with a creak, revealing the disciplined ranks of soldiers ready to defend their home. Robin rode through the opening, his demeanor calm and resolute.

"Who are they?" Finn growled, his eyes narrowing as he assessed the unexpected threat.

Yuki's gaze was steely, her mind racing to adjust their strategy. "It seems we've underestimated the humans and their allies."

On the ground, the werebeasts hesitated as they saw the army, their feral instincts picking up on the shift in the tide of battle. These were not simple villagers they could overwhelm with ease; this was a well-prepared force, ready and waiting.

"Commander," Robin addressed the burly man, who still stood in shock. "Our enemy has underestimated us. Today, we show them the strength of our resolve."

The commander snapped to attention, his earlier despair replaced with newfound determination. "Yes, sir!" He turned to his men, barking orders to form up with the newly revealed army.

A tall werebeast that looked like a lion, armored up and armed with two blood stained axes walked out from the hesitating werebeast army. He made a dropping motion as his two axes fell to the ground the sharp edge slicing through the earth.

The lion werebeast dropped to one knee as he began praying with eyes filled with madness and devotion "Oh mighty Björn, Lord of Madness, we stand upon the brink of chaos, our hearts pounding with the rhythm of war." As he said that, he hit his heart with a heavy thud that was heard by the werebeasts.

"With your fiery gaze upon us, we embrace the madness. We welcome the battlelust that surges through our veins. Björn, we call upon your strength. Grant us the fury of a thousand storms. Let our enemies tremble at the sight of our ferocity."

"In the face of this unexpected horde, we are not shaken, we are not afraid. For we are your chosen warriors, bound by blood and destiny. With every clash of steel, with every roar of battle, we honor your name, oh Björn the Unyielding. Fill us with the relentless desire for victory. Guide our blades to strike true and deep."

"In the heart of chaos, we find our clarity. In the madness of war, we find our purpose. Björn, imbue us with your indomitable spirit. Make us vessels of your wrath and warriors of your will. As we charge into the fray, with blood and fury, let the battlefield be our altar, our enemies our offering. We shall emerge victorious, drenched in glory, for we fight with the fire of Björn burning within us."

"By your power, we shall conquer. By your madness, we shall prevail. Björn, god of battlelust and madness, be with us now, in this hour of reckoning!"

As he said that, a loud lion-like roar spread throughout the port, rattling the armors of the human army. In response to his roar, the army of werebeasts followed through, roaring as well.

Robin, who was at the front of his army, was taken aback by the roar. He could feel the momentum they had built diminish with just the roar. He himself was also starting to feel scared.

Looking at the eager werebeast army, Robin's mindset began changing. Before, he was a bit mad at being used as a pawn to ambush this army, but now, seeing their behavior first hand made Robin fully understand that Björn's religion needed to be stamped out immediately before their whole continent fell into chaos.

"This is madness," Robin thought to himself. A normal army under ambush should be scared, uncertain, yet in front of him was an army defying this logic. The whole situation now seemed like the army was a prepared meal for the werebeasts.

Yuki, who was in the sky looking down, glanced at the lion werebeast, then at Finn, and said, "You have such a good vice general."

"If he survives this battle, maybe we should think about promoting him to have an army of his own," Yuki said as Finn nodded, looking at the lion werebeast with a smile on his face.

Meanwhile, down in Robin's army, he could feel the increasing fear in his soldiers as the werebeast army approached. Thinking of the visitor in his home, Robin took a deep breath.

From the ring on his hand, a harpoon-like weapon appeared. Because of his profession, Robin's main deity of worship was Jaws, and right now he was connecting with the blessing.

Lightning covered his harpoon as he made a thrusting motion to the sky. A thick lightning shot out from it into the sky, followed by a brief delay, and then a loud thunderclap.

The thunderclap covered the roar of the werebeasts and made the human army immediately straighten up as they clenched their weapons.

Robin, whose harpoon was covered in lightning, began praying, "Great mighty Jaws, Lord of the Depths, we call upon your power in this hour of need, as we stand ready to face the tempest of war. You who command the waves and the winds, grant us your strength and fury. Fill our hearts with the relentless surge of the ocean's might."

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"We beseech you, let your storms rage within us. Let your waters shield and empower us. With the roar of the sea in our ears, we stand unyielding against the tide of our foes. Guide our hands as the currents guide the waters. Make our strikes as inevitable as the rising tide."

"With every crash of our weapons, with every roar of our voices, we honor you, Jaws, god of sea and storms. Be our strength, be our fury, and let us claim victory in your name!"

It was subtle, but after Robin's prayer, the human army felt a tingle of power increasing their strength and courage, which in turn made them begin stomping the ground, mimicking the sound of heavy waves.

Robin, seeing this, smiled as a helmet appeared, covering his head. Using the opportunity, he began speaking again, "Warriors of the Sea, today we face an unexpected storm. But do we fear the tempest? No!"

"The enemy stands before us, thinking they can overpower us, thinking they can drown us in their numbers. But they do not know the strength that surges within our veins. They do not know that we are the tide that cannot be turned!"

"Look to the sky, feel the power of the storm, feel the spirit of Jaws within you. As the waves crash upon the shore, so too shall we crash upon our enemies. Relentless, unstoppable, and full of wrath."

Robin pointed his harpoon at the army of werebeasts. "Attack!!!" he roared as he began moving with his horse.

Both armies moved at the same time, clashing as the human army advanced in practiced formation, working together to take out the enemy. Meanwhile, the werebeasts paid no mind to formation; they all just wanted a piece of the enemy in front of them.

The fight took an unexpected turn as the human soldiers found that the enemy they had encircled was somehow becoming much tougher, almost like amateurs facing off against an elite force.

The werebeasts grew stronger with each kill, blessed by Björn's divinity. Meanwhile, the humans, with the sea god's divinity, still had momentum on their side, but as the fight progressed, their enemy got stronger while they did not.

Finn, watching the battle from the sky, was very tempted to join the fray as he felt the exceptional increase in strength each soldier gained with each kill.

The only reason Finn could think of was that those killed were blessed by the sea god, so in turn, Björn was easily handing out blessings.

Looking at Yuki beside him, Finn calmed his rushing blood. Even though Yuki had proven herself useful, Finn and Olaf still hadn't fully trusted her yet. Besides he needs to keep his cool in front of a lady especially one as good looking as Yuki.

"Here it is," he was taken out of his thoughts when he heard Yuki speak. Looking down, a familiar sight appeared in front of him. "We have won," he said with certainty.

Down on the battlefield, a red mist with a distinct scent began spreading. The werebeasts, seeing the mist, got even more excited and began pushing each other aside, even stomping on one another to get more kills.

The humans, seeing the mist, began frowning. They had been informed about something like this happening, so almost on command, their helmets closed in on themselves, protecting them from inhaling the red mist.

Yuki raised a brow at this and frowned; the humans seemed too prepared for them, and she didn't like that.

The mist, as if it had a mind of its own, ignored the soldiers' helmets and began seeping in through the openings in their armor. A muffled cry of pain escaped the soldiers' mouths as they felt their bodies fighting against themselves.

Jaws' blessing on the soldiers was combating the mist, ensuring it didn't achieve its effect, but this in turn caused pain to the soldiers as two forces fought within them.

This had a negative effect as the humans found it hard to focus on the opponents in front of them. The werebeasts, seeing the opportunity, took their chances, breaking the formation.

The fight turned from being equal to a one-sided massacre as the werebeasts began slaughtering the human soldiers.

Back at Robin's manor, a figure in a dark robe could be seen watching the war through a floating mirror. "I still have to interfere. Luckily, that was taken into account, and a shield has been placed around the manor to prevent prying eyes."

The dark figure began floating before sitting cross-legged in the air. Behind the figure, it was almost like the space was torn open, revealing a view of sparkling stars arranged in a distinct shape.

Back on the battlefield, the armor the humans wore began to display the shape of the similar star behind the dark robed figure. The human soldiers' screams of pain stopped at once.

Almost as if their minds were connected, a new formation was formed as they began taking down the werebeasts. The precision with which the army moved changed. Their physiques were pushed to their limits as they began fighting back, surprising the werebeasts.

The tide of battle began to turn in favor of the humans. Yuki and Finn, who had been certain of their victory, now frowned.

"Interesting," Finn muttered, narrowing his eyes as he observed the battlefield below. The once chaotic scene now seemed more like a chessboard, with each piece moving with uncanny precision. "It appears our enemies have some tricks up their sleeves."

Yuki nodded, her brow furrowed in concentration. "The star pattern... it's a powerful enchantment. They must have a very strong mage supporting them from afar."

"We need to identify and neutralize that mage," Finn said decisively. "Without their support, the humans will crumble."

"Agreed," Yuki replied, her voice tight with determination. "But locating a hidden mage of that caliber won't be easy. They must be far from the battlefield and well-protected."

Finn's eyes glinted with fierce resolve. "Then we'll flush them out." Saying that, a shockwave drowned by the sound of war on the ground was left behind as Finn began flying around to locate the hidden mage.

As Finn zoomed back and forth across the sky, the human soldiers, now enhanced by the celestial enchantment, fought with renewed vigor. Their movements were almost mechanical, each action perfectly synchronized with those of their comrades. The werebeasts, initially taken aback by this sudden shift, quickly adapted, their primal instincts pushing them to fight with even greater ferocity.

Yuki was also searching for the mage, and her attention was soon drawn to the manor. She noticed a blank spot in her senses, which coincided with the manor's location.

Pointing at the manor, Yuki said with certainty, "That's where the mage is." A boom was heard, blowing Yuki's hair and clothes to the side as a furious Finn appeared beside her, looking at the manor she was pointing at.

His bow appeared in his hand as a feather fell from his body into his clawed hand. The bow grew in size, and so did the feather as he began pulling back the string.

The light surrounding Finn and Yuki, as if attracted to something, began flowing into the feather. Soon, the feather glowed like a huge rod of light.

A loud sound followed through as the bowstring was released, as the rod of light began descending upon the manor. A magical shield appeared, blocking the huge arrow. Finn's bird-like eyes glowed as he pointed at the arrow, causing it to break apart and fly to different locations on the shield where a few weakness was found. The shield held for a while, wearing out the arrow's power before breaking apart.

Seeing the shield break, Yuki smiled eerily and kicked the air, ready to descend upon the manor. However, she stopped herself as she began sweating.

Finn remained in the same position, frozen and sweating. In their eyes, a very cold gaze was watching them, daring them to make a move. "Retreat," Yuki said immediately as she began flying away.

Finn nodded immediately and followed behind her, letting out a loud bird cry that was heard by those battling below. The werebeasts, on signal, began falling back.

On the same continent, on the colder side, a massive figure could be seen on a huge icy throne, watching the war at the port and the retreating figures of Yuki and Finn.

The star sign on the human soldiers vanished at the same time, and their body fell to the ground like puppets with their strings cut. Their bodies ached and were in pain, so for a while, the only sight on the battlefield was of human soldiers clutching their weapons for support to avoid collapsing.

The dark-robed figure felt the same cold eyes staring at both Yuki and Finn descend upon him. In response, the dark figure smiled wryly and spoke to the open air as if conversing with someone. "It was reckless, but I had to interfere."

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The dark figure no longer felt the gaze as he floated back down, the view of the stars behind him disappearing as if it had never been there.

The window in the room the figure was in blew open as the figure vanished. Back on the battlefield, Robin was leaning on his harpoon for support when he felt a hand touch his shoulder followed by a whisper, "You did good. I am leaving. You can take care of the rest. You can have the armor and weapons; take it as an apology for putting you in your current state."

Raising his head to say something, Robin found no one behind him, but the coldness coming from his shoulder where he was touched assured him that everything was real.

That was the last straw for Robin. He let go of his weapon, falling to the ground as he laughed weakly, "We won."

The dark figure zoomed across the plain, matching Finn's flying speed. Soon, the sight of the ever-cold side of the northern continent appeared before the figure.

Without hesitation, the figure rushed into this side of the continent, a place most humans found hard to endure. The winter wind blew the cloak covering the figure, pulling back the hood.

A werewolf with dark hair streaked with white took a deep breath of the cold air, smiling. Wulv grabbed the cloak covering him, absorbing it into his space.

His massive form stood out clearly in the surrounding snow-white world, a smile on his face. Howling to the sky, his form shifted as he turned into a wolf the size of a truck. His claws dug into the snow as he sprinted further into the distance.

Wulv was feeling a bit of a high from experiencing his first war. His people had never had any reason to be at war, so all these years, all he had done was play simulated war games with the soldiers under him.

Today, he led an army to victory in a war. Even though he didn't personally participate, it was no doubt his strategic planning that led to the victory for his side.

What made him most happy was that he was finally able to apply his constellation in real-time. The constellation he comprehended was one of the reasons his father made him the chief general of their kingdom.

The Draco Insight constellation gave him the ability of "Tactical Intuition." Basic usage of the ability enabled him to assess situations quickly, anticipate opponents' moves, and make strategic decisions with remarkable precision.

Over the years, he developed the ability further to apply it on a larger scale, which was what he did with the human soldiers. "Too bad it was humans, not my fellow werewolves," Wulv thought to himself.

The full power of his constellation wasn't brought out through the humans, as their mana didn't have traces of celestial energy that would have made him more compatible with them.

The armor the humans wore was enabled so that the ability worked; it was specifically crafted for this situation. If the humans were compatible, they wouldn't have been driven around like puppets. Instead, they would have been of clear mind, making quick decisions on their own like a hive mind.

The cold wind brought clarity to Wulv's mind the further he traveled back to his home. A look of caution flashed in his eyes as he thought to himself, "A divine being is really a divine being."

He thought he was clear of mind, but looking back at his actions, he was unknowingly drawn into the madness of war. One thing Wulv knew about himself was how calm-minded and analytical he was about things.

It was rare for him to ever feel such a rush of emotion while doing what he was supposed to do. His job and mission at the port was to make sure their ally won and was able to keep the port safe, which he did. Sure, he should feel happy about completing his mission, but Wulv knew himself well enough to know he never allowed emotions to cloud his judgment.

This was because his constellation talent made him this way, which his father thought was a problem as he seemed a bit too uptight about things.

Stopping for a moment, Wulv looked down at his claw. "I even took my full wolf form without even noticing." Wulv took a deep breath, allowing the cold air to fill his lungs and steady his thoughts.

Thinking back on his actions and the reason why his father was mad at him, he realized he was only supposed to use his constellation to keep the minds of the humans steady in case the red mist appeared.

The mist was a trait Wulv noticed believers of Björn acquired the longer a fight went on. The mist, for those new to it, would turn them feral and make them lose their composure and mind, foregoing any logical action.

His uncle Jaws' divinity battled the mist's ability. If he had been thinking logically at the moment, he would have noticed that and should have instead used his ability to make the human soldiers ignore the pain caused by two forces fighting in their bodies.

He did do that, but he went even further, taking over the human soldiers' bodies and using them like puppets to fight back against the werebeast army. That led to Yuki and Finn noticing that there was someone else behind the scenes.

Now, looking back on his actions, he couldn't really explain why he did what he did. What he found disturbing was that a few moments back, deep in his mind, he was wishing for more war to occur so he could use his ability to its fullest.

Shifting back to his werewolf form, Wulv straightened his royal garb as he looked up at the red dot in the sky. This dark realization sent a shiver down his spine. The idea that he could desire chaos for the sake of personal satisfaction was unsettling to him.

"I wasn't even on the battlefield itself. I was only watching through a magical lens, yet I was affected. What would have happened if I was there on the battlefield? What would have happened if I had engaged Finn and Yuki in battle?" These questions ran through Wulv's mind as he clenched his fist.

Wulv was so deep in thought, he didn't realize when he entered his people's territory. The werewolves, seeing their prince, had a look of reverence. No one blocked his way or bothered him. Wulv didn't even realize when the border gate was closed behind him.

Wulv was drawn out of his stupor when a carriage stopped by him, with the driver calling out, "Prince Wulv, Prince Wulv!"

Looking at the werewolf calling his name, Wulv showed a slight smile. "I apologize, I was a bit lost in my thoughts."

The werewolf shook his head. "That's alright, Your Highness." Nodding, Wulv opened the door to the carriage and got in. The carriage immediately took off for the capital. As he approached the grand gates of the capital and the bridges of ice in the sky above them, he was greeted by familiar faces.

The carriage dropped Wulv off at the palace gate before taking off. Looking at the palace gate, Wulv noticed his father's huge figure waiting for him.

Taking a deep breath of the cold air, Wulv began walking towards his father. He stopped when he was within arm's reach. Nothing was said as Wulv stood still, looking into his father's cold eyes.

"It seems you already got yourself together," Wulv heard his father say as his cold eyes were replaced with relief.

Wulv smiled as he nodded. "It took a while, but I managed to pull it together."

The palace gate opened, and Maul gestured for Wulv to follow him. "Wulv," his father began, his voice steady but with an edge of concern, "you have succeeded in your mission, but at what cost? What have you learned from this experience?"

"I now understand why you have such reverence when you talk about Grandmother. A divine being is truly a divine being, and to think that Björn was the weakest god."

"I was never close to the red mist or the battlefield, yet I fell under the influence of his divinity," Wulv said as he shook his head.

Maul nodded. "I was taken aback when I noticed the sudden change in your behavior. I had no choice but to let Björn's pawns know that they are being watched."

"This defeated one of our purposes with this war, which was to buy time and make them question themselves on why their actions were clearly known by the humans. Now, with me announcing my presence, it won't take much for them to know we helped the humans," Maul said as he walked through the open palace room door.

Wulv stopped as he clenched his fist. "I apologize, Father. I let myself get carried away and ended up disappointing you."

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Maul, who had taken a step to walk to his throne, stopped and turned around. Putting his hand on his son's shoulder and clenching it, Maul said with a serious tone, "You didn't disappoint me, son."

"Besides, Björn's two pawns didn't achieve their goal of drawing us out into the public eye, nor did they take over the port," Maul said with a laugh as he turned around and walked to his throne.

A smile found its way to the corner of Wulv's lip as he took the moment to truly take in the accomplishment of their goal in this mission.

A few weeks back, Wulv and his fellow clansmen who had been paying attention to the movements of Björn's believers deduced that they would make a move at the port.

Wulv brought the issue to his father, who immediately ordered that they had to stop them. Further discussion with his father made Wulv realize that the attack on the port had another purpose; it could be said that this was the main reason why they were making a move at that specific port.

Björn's believers realized that while their faith was spreading fast through the continent, there was still some hesitation as people were scared of being against the godlings. Those observant had noticed the subtle opposition of the werewolves to the teachings of Björn.

The port attack had the hands of every godling race dealing with and making business behind the scenes with most human kingdoms in the northern continent, but the humans didn't know this. They only thought that Robin was a great trader who was able to get goods from other godling races.

Someone from Björn's side obviously knew the truth behind the port, which was why they made the move to kill two birds with one stone. Yuki's goal was to attack the port and force the demigods to take action to defend their interests while at the same time taking over the port, which would grant her easier access to spread the teachings of Björn to other continents.

The demigods defending their interests would, in turn, be flipped by Yuki to make them look like the victims. Yuki planned on using the demigods' actions to push those hesitant to take the step they were scared of taking.

She planned on proudly proclaiming to those who were hesitant how the demigods were scared of the influence the religion of Björn would have on them, making the humans' strength equal to that of the godlings.

She wants the humans to see the demigods' resistance to their faith as something capable of challenging their status. In this way, most humans, greedy for power or unhappy with their current status, will see their religion as a way out.

But they had failed.

Maul thought about sending out a group of elite forces to intercept Björn's believers before they could reach the port. But Wulv brought up the brilliant idea of going alone to test his theory on the red mist.

Now, as Maul sat on his throne, his eyes gleamed with satisfaction. "We've sent a clear message to Björn and his followers," he said, his voice echoing through the hall. "Their attempts to destabilize us will not succeed. We are stronger, smarter, and more united than they can ever imagine."

Wulv nodded, stepping forward. "What is our next move, Father?"

Maul looked at his son. "I remember you were against the idea of us using a human kingdom as a test ground to help our people increase their immunity to Björn's influence by experiencing the darker side of life compared to the easy way of life they have had until now. Have you changed your mind?"

Maul asked his son. Wulv looked at his father before looking down at his hands. "That was foolish of me. I disagreed because of ethical reasons, but after what I experienced, I think we should do as you said."

"If I, with my talent, fell so easily under his influence, then I dread to think how it would be for the others," Wulv said.

"Now, son, you know this. I want you to understand that your previous thought wasn't wrong. The plan indeed had some ethical issues, but that is something we have to overlook in times like this."

"If it were any other situation, then you being in disagreement with the plan is completely right. Do you understand?" Maul asked. Wulv nodded. "Understood, Father."

"Good. As for our next move, we do nothing. News of what happened at the port will soon spread. Many human kingdoms will reveal which side they stand on during this time."

"My guess is that Björn's followers will attack another human port. Maybe they don't need to attack the port; the humans will willingly let them use it to spread their teachings."

"The strength and skill shown by the werebeast will be sought out by many human leaders. They will soon deduce on their own that the port owner won solely because of our backing. Without the demigods, the war would have been won by Björn's followers."

"While Björn's followers failed in achieving their goal, they did succeed in showing the prowess of joining Björn's religion. Now, while all this is occurring, we observe those human kingdoms that make a clear stand with Björn, and we will make our pick from one of them as our test ground for our people."

Wulv absorbed his father's words, understanding the gravity of the situation. They were on the brink of a larger conflict, one that required strategic thinking and sacrifice. "I will begin gathering intelligence on the human kingdoms," he said.

Maul nodded, satisfied with his son's resolve. "Excellent. We must be prepared for any eventuality. Keep our forces ready and our allies informed."

Almost as if he remembered something, Maul asked, "How are things going in the Silver Kingdom? Is the new king still having problems with the nobles of his kingdom?"

Wulv paused, considering the latest reports. "Yes, Father. The new king, Ragnar, is still facing significant resistance from the nobles. They see him as too young and inexperienced. Some of them have even started to openly defy his orders, and there are whispers of rebellion."

Maul frowned as his claws tapped his frozen throne. "That isn't good. They are very important to us at times like this."

"Because of the difference in race, we can't act as we want with the humans, but with the Silver Kingdom, that limitation is gone as we can act through them."

Looking at Wulv, Maul said, "We need to provide him some help. Maybe take out those nobles who stand against him. He may not be able to do that because of his status, but in this case, we aren't limited like him."

Wulv nodded, a plan already forming in his mind. "I'll send a team of our best operatives to handle the situation discreetly. They can eliminate the rebellious nobles and ensure that Ragnar's position is secure. We'll make it look like accidents or internal disputes to avoid drawing attention."

Maul's eyes gleamed with approval. "Good. And make sure that Ragnar understands the help we are providing. He needs to know that he owes his throne—and his life—to us. This will solidify his loyalty."

"Understood, Father. I'll also send a message to Ragnar, offering our official support and advising him to take a firmer stance against those who oppose him. It will bolster his confidence and make our actions more effective."

Maul leaned back, his expression thoughtful. "We must also ensure that our involvement remains hidden from Björn's followers. If they suspect our influence in the Silver Kingdom, they might take drastic measures. Caution is crucial."

Wulv bowed slightly. "I will see to it, Father."

Down on the western continent, deep in the forest, roaring sounds and the noise of trees falling could be heard. A closer look revealed the source of the commotion.

A bear the size of a tree was seen ablaze with light. Opposite the bear stood another creature, matching its size and girth, but even more colossal. A closer look at this creature revealed a resemblance to a human. This was James, a mortal servant whose life had been irrevocably altered after an encounter with curses and his lord.

James, unlike his past self, no longer looked human. The curse of gluttony he bore now manifested clearly in his appearance. His mouth was no longer where it was supposed to be; his face now featured only his eyes, nose, hair, and ears. In his grotesquely obese body, his mouth grew out of his stomach, occupying the space where his stomach once was.

On his back was a tattoo of a tall tree, wrapped by the huge body of a winged snake. Facing the bear, a roar erupted from James' stomach.

In his hand, a huge, purple, glowing butcher knife materialized. With a speed unexpected for someone of his shape, he rushed towards the bear. The bear, ready for him, roared loudly, sending a fireball from its mouth towards him. Stepping to the side, James swung his knife, which for a brief moment showed the phantom of teeth.

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The bear, using its claw to block the knife, found pieces of its flesh missing. Roaring in anger, flames jetted out from the bear's feet, lifting it into the sky.

Undeterred, James let out another guttural roar from his stomach-mouth, a sound that reverberated through the clearing. His eyes burned with a mix of fury and hunger, reflecting the cursed torment within. With a powerful leap, James propelled his massive form into the air, his butcher knife raised high. The purple glow intensified, casting an eerie light over the battlefield. He swung the knife in a wide arc, aiming to bring the bear crashing down from the sky.

The bear, mid-flight, twisted its body to evade the strike. Flames burst from its paws, creating a temporary shield of fire. However, the phantom teeth on James' knife cut through the flames as if they were mere illusions, leaving a trail of shimmering energy in its wake.

As James landed back on the ground with a thunderous crash, the earth trembled under his weight. The bear circled above, roaring in defiance, its fiery eyes locked onto its foe. It dived toward James, claws extended and ablaze with intense fire.

James braced himself, his cursed body rippling with dark energy. His stomach-mouth opened wider, a grotesque maw ready to consume anything in its path. The tattoo on his back seemed to come alive, the snake's wings unfurling as if ready to take flight.

The clash between these two titanic beings sent shockwaves through the surrounding forest. Trees toppled, the ground split, and the air was thick with the smell of burning wood and flesh.

The bear stood up to look at its opponent, James, whose body had been roasted but he wasn't dead as his flesh was quickly healing. Looking at the bear in anger, a purple wave emanated from James, spreading throughout the forest.

Confusion flashed in the bear's eyes before it quickly began salivating and rushing towards James. James' stomach-teeth had a huge tongue with drool dripping from it. As soon as the bear got close, James stretched out his free hand which the bear didn't hesitate to bite. That gave James an opportunity as his knife fell on the bear's neck, taking it off.

Not minding his wounded hand, James put the hand stuck in the bear's mouth into his stomach-teeth as it began chewing down. Bringing out the hand, new flesh quickly grew from the stumped hand.

With quick slashes of his knife, the bear was sliced into pieces. Not minding the burning forest and the heated soil, James' huge body fell to the ground as he grabbed the pieces of bear he had sliced up and began feeding them to his stomach-teeth.

It took about a minute before he was done. His nose twitched as he began heading for the bear's cave. That would be his new home for a while before he once again fled.

As James walked to the bear's cave, he began thinking back on the sudden changes brought to his life. After he knew he was cursed, he did his best to find a way to cure himself of the curse.

As the subject of curses was new, nobody could help him, so all James had to live with from then on was the increasing hunger and the slight fear of losing his mind if he hadn't fed enough.

Before, a meal for five grown men was enough, but soon that changed to a dozen men. From a dozen men, he could eat a meal prepared for a hundred people. It just kept increasing. James didn't know when, but his life had turned into eating, eating, and eating.

The change brought out a physical change which at first he tried to hide but the more he was forced to eat, the more he couldn't hide what he was becoming to the others.

So before things got out of hand, James made his way out of town and headed into the nearest forest, since then the forest has been his new home.

There were a lot of eat here with no worries, that was if there weren't soldiers coming after him to take him down as rumors of a fat gaint cursed beast roaming around in the forest gathered there attention.

James was brought out of his thought as he stood before the bear cave, with no hesitation he walked into it. Because of his size and living in the wild, James has long since lost all his clothes, but maybe because of his change there was no shame.

The most important to him now is to feed himself and stay sane, his penis was also no longer existent which he didn't mind. No woman will show an interest at his current state beside if even a woman showed an interest, she might end up becoming his next meal.

Once he got deep enough into the cave, James dropped down to the floor as he closed his eyes to sleep. The bear he killed was strong filled with magical energy, by his estimate it will last him a day before he becomes hungry again.

Closing his eyes to sleep, James noticed something different today. He wasn't immediately welcomed with darkness instead he was met with the sight of a huge tall tree, where he was only the size of a root, wrapped around the tree was a huge green scaled snake with deep purple wings.

James looked at the sight before remembering the tattoo branded on his back after he was cursed. James didn't understand by he knew both of these titans were sleeping and he somehow has something with their awakening.

James was in that line of thought when he felt a resonance. Looking around the field he was on, he began to see other inhuman creatures walking out from what seemed like smoke.

James, seeing them, immediately understood that these were cursed beings just like him. Looking at the first to appear was a woman his size, naked too, but unlike his grotesque body shape.

The woman was beautiful; James thought with his current state he was above lust, but seeing the woman was like seeing the woman of his dreams; she was everything he looked for in a woman.

The cursed spirit inside of James roared as he shook his head, regaining his consciousness. Looking back at the woman, James found she looked ordinarily beautiful but not enough to put him in the state he was before.

The woman seemed to sense him looking as she looked away from the two titans before looking at him only to black out like James did before regaining her composure and smiling at him. James awkwardly smiled back the best he could with his stomach.

Another presence made themselves known; this time, it was a man easily their size. Unlike them, who were fully naked, the man who appeared was clothed, with an unusually annoying grin at the edge of his mouth and a hand fan he used to fan himself.

It seemed he was taken aback by his new location, so the grin on his face fell as he regarded the two titans before looking at James and the woman. Each time he stared at either of them, he blacked out.

James, who was taken aback by the man's appearance, experienced the same thing he did with the woman. This time, the feeling he experienced was jealousy. The man was simply beautiful looking, his appearance not falling behind that of the woman.

James couldn't help but feel jealousy seeing that, as he resented why he was stuck with this appearance while the man looked human. Every detail on the man, James couldn't help but want. It took some time before James broke out of his stupor. This time, James understood what was happening. These beings appearing are just like him, cursed, able to induce and arouse feelings depending on the curse. In his case, he guessed when they looked at him, they were struck with hunger and an urge to feed.

Next to emerge from the smoke was a gaunt figure draped in tattered robes. His eyes were sunken, and he clutched a scroll close to his chest. His skin was parchment-like, covered in scrawling texts that seemed to shift and change. As he approached, James felt an insatiable curiosity gnaw at him, but it was paired with a sense of hoarding, as if every piece of knowledge was too precious to share. This must be the curse of the knowledge hoarder, he thought. The figure's eyes darted around, assessing the others, yet never sharing a word, greedily keeping his wisdom to himself.

Following him was another figure, also cloaked but with an unsettling presence. This one, unlike the knowledge hoarder, seemed too eager to engage, since he appeared he has been talking but the words that flowed from his mouth were twisted, misleading, and filled with lies. His tongue was forked, like a serpent's, and his eyes were an unnerving shade of yellow. As he spoke, James felt a dizzying disorientation, a sense of truth being warped. This was the curse of spreading misinformation, a dangerous whisperer whose knowledge was a curse to all who listened.

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Then came a regal-looking individual, her posture exuding authority. Her eyes scanned the surroundings with a cold, calculating glare. She had a crown of thorns digging into her scalp, and her limbs were bound in heavy chains that dragged behind her. As her gaze fell on James, he felt a crushing weight of tyranny, a need to submit. She represented the curse of power used to dominate and oppress, a ruler who would bring others to their knees with her mere presence.

In contrast, a brute of a man followed her, his muscles bulging grotesquely, veins pulsating just under his skin. His skin was a patchwork of scars and fresh wounds, and his hands were unnaturally large, capable of crushing bone with ease. He radiated raw physical power, but his curse was the compulsion to use it to harm and control. As he moved, the ground seemed to tremble, and James felt a primal fear, the instinct to flee from the violence this being embodied.

From the mist, another figure appeared, dressed in flamboyant attire, seeking the attention of all around him. His face was an ever-shifting mask of other people's features, never settling on his own. His curse was the insatiable need for fame at the expense of others. As he paraded, James felt a repulsion, sensing the underhanded tactics this being would use to climb to the top, no matter who he trampled on.

But there was also another side of fame. A figure cloaked in shadows emerged, shunned and whispered about. His face was blurred, constantly shifting and never clear, representing anonymity and public disgrace. The curse of public disgrace hung heavily around him. As this being moved, James felt a pang of empathy, understanding the crushing weight of being forever scorned and humiliated.

Then, a grotesque figure lumbered forth, adorned in tattered finery that had once been luxurious. His skin was a sickly gold, shimmering unnaturally, and his fingers were elongated into claws that clutched at invisible riches. Coins and jewels seemed embedded in his flesh, causing him constant pain as they glittered with a cursed light. This was the embodiment of wealth, cursed to be consumed by greed. As he moved, his eyes darted, and James felt an overwhelming desire to hoard and protect, a greed so intense it made him sick yet he couldn't help but want more riches to himself.

Lastly, two more beings stepped forth. One, an artist of extraordinary skill, displayed their talents with a sneer, belittling all who watched. His fingers were unnaturally long and nimble, but his eyes were hollow, devoid of joy. This was the curse of talent used to demean others. As James watched, he felt his own inadequacies magnified, a deep-seated shame for not measuring up.

The final figure was a tragic sight. They were frail, their movements shaky and unsure. Their hands, once deft and sure, were now clumsy and weak, fingers twisted and useless. Their eyes, once filled with confidence and spark, were now clouded with despair. This was the curse of never having talent. As James observed, he felt a profound sorrow and fear, the terror of a life lived in mediocrity, haunted by the dreams of skills they never possessed. The haunting memory of what they aspired to be, now forever out of reach, was etched on their weary face.

James stood among these cursed beings, each a reflection of a twisted aspect of human desire and ambition.

Back in Mahu's realm, she was busy retwisting Ikenga braids when all of sudden Ikenga cursed tattoos glowed purple, his eyes glowing too, which caught her attention "What's that? she asked

Ikenga smiled as he got even more comfortable before responding "That is the cue for the awakening of Osis and Boros"

Ikenga waved his hand, A sight of what was happening in his realm appeared, meanwhile he closed his eyes connecting with his realm.

James was looking at the other cursed being, when they felt the presence of something heavier and divine looking at them, The cursed spirit inside of everyone available was pushing them to kneel as their creator is among them.

Hearing the word creator, the cursed being could immediately guess who that was "Ikenga, god of nature and curses"

Ikenga form was with Mahu, but a shadow of his appeared and the shadow was the same height as Osis and Boros, so when the cursed being bowed all they saw was his toes.

Ikenga looked down to embodiments of the collective negative emotions of society, summoned or attracted by widespread resentment towards specific behaviors or traits.

Since his curses appeared, it has been nothing but a thorn on the human side, as their every deep hidden secret is being presented in front of them.

Many have looked into his words which came with the birth of curses so they have a pretty good idea on why it happens, yet humans being the creature they are only got scared for a few weeks before they turned back to their regular life.

Some even began taking advantage of the curses, purposely cursing their neighbor who has been a bother to them. Too bad curses didn't work that way yet that have stopped them, as they kept finding ways to one up each other.

Many of the cursed beings here are a good example of the darkness hidden deep in the human heart. Looking at the first Woman that appeared "Evara" the name was whispered to Ikenga from the cursed spirit inhabiting her.

Evara is the result of unchecked lust from both men and women. She had once been a celebrated figure in her small village. With flowing raven hair, piercing green eyes, and a radiant smile, she was the epitome of beauty and grace. Everyone admired her, and her presence brought joy to many. But with admiration came envy, and with envy came resentment.

Evara had the misfortune of attracting the attention of too many. Suitors from far and wide sought her hand, but Elena, desiring true love, rejected each one who came for superficial reasons. Her rejections, while polite and considerate, sowed seeds of bitterness in the hearts of those who were turned away. Whispers of her arrogance and unapproachability began to spread.

The village was small, and gossip traveled fast. A group of spurned suitors and envious women gathered, their collective resentment brewing into something dark and sinister. The spirit manifested in Evara's life one fateful night, whispering insidious thoughts into her mind. At first, she brushed them off, thinking herself paranoid. But the thoughts grew stronger, and soon she found herself liking the whispers which prompted her to completely merge with the curse returning back her consciousness.

By the time she did, the whole village was already under the effect of her curse as men and women fell at her feet, with each madly aroused looking at her, Evara found herself chuckling at the sight, the once innocent girl was gone.

Looking away, Ikenga looked at the man who appeared after her. The man was named Alaric, and his backstory was a stark contrast to Evara yet almost the same. Alaric had always been aware of his extraordinary looks and charm. From a young age, he realized that his striking features and magnetic personality could get him anything he desired. He embraced his gifts with a sense of entitlement, manipulating and using others to his advantage without remorse.

Alaric grew up in a bustling city where appearances were everything. He quickly learned that a well-placed smile or a flirtatious glance could open doors that were closed to others. Alaric reveled in the power his beauty gave him, using it to climb the social ladder, seduce partners, and secure wealth. He never hesitated to exploit his looks, seeing them as a tool to achieve his ambitions.

But Alaric's charm came at a cost. The people he manipulated, the hearts he broke, and the rivals he outshone harbored deep resentment towards him. What Ikenga and Alaric found funny was that their resentment didn't come from how bad he did them, instead it came from them resenting why they weren't blessed like him as for the women whose heart he has broken their resentment came from them knowing they can't have him alone for themselves.

Ikenga looked at both Evara and Alaric, both cursed being felt his look before suddenly they felt like a restraint had been lifted off of them.

With the release, Evara and Alaric both looked at each other. An attraction that was never there before was felt by both of them, the attraction came with the desire to merge.

Almost like they both read each other's minds, Evara and Alaric quickly created a distance between each other. They both looked scared as they looked up only to feel the calm, anticipating eyes of Ikenga staring at them.

At the same time, from the void all cursed spirits created till today made their presence known as they gathered around Ikenga. The air in the realm of Ikenga was thick with an oppressive energy, swirling with the malevolent power of countless curses. The landscape became a distorted reflection of reality, filled with shadowy shapes and twisted forms. In the midst of this eerie place, two figures stood facing each other: Evara and Alaric.

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Alaric was the first to regain his composure as his hand fan slid open to which he fanned himself with as he stared at Evara.

Evara also regained her composure as she put on a charming smile "Do you desire me Alaric"

Alaric looked at her before shaking his head "I should ask you the same, Don't you wish you could be like me?"

Evara pouted seductively "No girl likes a sassy man, you know that right Alaric?"

Alaric smiled charmingly "I have for the longest not given two thought about what women think of me, at the end of the day they can help but want me more"

Evara leaned in a bit closer, her charm increasing, if only for a moment Alaric felt his heartbeat increase which caused Evara to smile as she began walking closer to him.

Alaric by habit fanned himself as he calmed down before also walking to meet Evara, surprising her but she did her best to hide it

Evara giggling softly said " Oh, I do love a confident challenger. But beware, Alaric, for my allure is not to be underestimated".

Alaric raising an eyebrow, his smile confident said " Nor is my ability to turn envy into a formidable force. Let us dance this dance of curses and see where it leads us.

Evara, now close enough, ran a finger along Alaric's jawline " Oh, I'm sure it will lead to... interesting places. Shall we begin, my charming adversary?"

As they began to circle each other, the tension in the air was almost unbearable. Evara is the first to strike, unleashing her Irresistible Aura. A wave of intense attraction radiates from her, attempting to

overwhelm Alaric's senses. Alaric, however, manages to resist the charm, his mind fortified by his own curse.

Alaric counters with his Envious Presence, filling the forest with a greenish, shimmering aura. Evara feels a pang of jealousy stab through her, but her curse keeps her focused.

Evara lunges forward with Bewitching Touch, her elongated fingers reaching for Alaric's throat. He sidesteps her attack with fluid grace, but not before she grazes his shoulder, sapping a bit of his willpower. Alaric winces but quickly retaliates with Jealous Grip, his hand glowing with a sickly green light as he grabs her arm. Evara gasps as her confidence drains away, momentarily weakening her.

The two closed in on each other again, their movements a deadly dance. Evara's Alluring Embrace caught Alaric off guard; she wrapped herself around him, her claws digging into his flesh, drawing blood. He gasped in pain as his life force began to drain away, feeding her. But Alaric was not defenseless. Summoning his strength, he unleashed Envious Strike, his hand glowing with green energy as he struck her side with a quick two piece.

Evara screamed, a mix of pain and rage, as the blow landed. She released him, stumbling back, dark ichor seeping from the wound. Alaric's energy surged, his attack power heightened by the jealousy that fueled him.

Evara recovers quickly, her eyes blazing with fury. She uses Seductive Whispers, her voice a haunting melody that invades Alaric's mind. For a moment, he falters, his thoughts clouded by her words. Seizing the opportunity, Evara uses Enrapturing Gaze, her eyes locking onto Alaric's. He stiffens, paralyzed by the illusion of his deepest desire: a version of himself untainted by the curse.

Breaking free through sheer force of will, Alaric snarls and casts Covetous Glance, his eyes burning with envy. Evara feels an overwhelming compulsion to obey him, her movements becoming hesitant and uncertain. Alaric follows up with Mirror of Ambition, creating an illusion that shows Evara as a grotesque, powerless being. The sight shakes her to her core, making her doubt herself.

Evara, sensing the fight slipping away, unleashed her Charming Dance. Her movements were hypnotic, designed to entrance and disorient. Alaric found himself slowing, entranced by the dance. She took advantage, her claws slicing through the air, leaving deep gashes on his chest and arms.

But Alaric, driven by an unyielding jealousy, tapped into his Mirror of Envy. A spectral mirror materialized, reflecting Evara's next attack back at her. She cried out as her own power hit her, staggering her.

With a roar, Evara unleashed Glamour of the Damned, filling the forest with countless seductive illusions of herself. Alaric finds himself surrounded, his mind struggling to distinguish the real Evara from the phantasms.

Taking advantage of his confusion, Evara strikes with Bewitching Touch again, this time sinking her claws deep into his chest. Alaric screams in pain, his strength waning as she drains more of his willpower.

Desperate, Alaric summons all his remaining energy and uses Desirous Vortex. The forest erupts in a swirling maelstrom of envy and desire, the air thick with the intense emotions. Evara staggers, momentarily disoriented by the chaotic energies.

But Evara with the will she sapped away from Alaric managed to hold on. She focuses through the storm, her eyes locking onto Alaric. With a final, furious effort, she closes the distance between them, her hands glowing with pink energy. Alaric tries to defend himself, but he's too weakened by the previous attacks.

Evara grabs Alaric by the throat, lifting him off the ground. Her voice is a venomous hiss as she speaks.

"You were never my equal, Alaric."

With a brutal twist, she snaps his neck, the sound echoing through the cathedral. Alaric's body falls limp in her grasp, the light fading from his eyes.

Breathing heavily, Evara drops Alaric's lifeless body to the ground. The air was heavy with the aftermath of their battle. Evara stood victorious, her grotesque form still emanating an unsettling allure. She looks down at Alaric's body, with hunger clear in her eyes.

In response to that the body of Alaric twitched as his whole body turned into a huge corporal cursed spirit with the same presence of Envy and jealousy.

Elara opened her arm as the cursed spirit flew into her body merging with the cursed spirit she already had. A purple cocoon covered her whole body as she underwent her transformation.

After a while an arm pierced through the cocoon as Evara emerged new, now she was even clothed and her allure seems more complete and even stronger. The new cloth she had on compared to her nakedness before made the sensation of lust even stronger as now the drive to see what is under the dress became almost irresistible.

The other cursed being around took notice of that, as unlike before when they could snap out of it, this time they were all under the effect of Elara's presence.

Ikenga meanwhile was looking at Osi and Boros, as soon as Evara completed her evolution. He felt a slight awakening heartbeat.

Finally looking at the woman, Ikem raised a brow as the woman was now qualified to compete for beauty with the gods, Evara looked up hearing the voice of the creator "Evara is a name for your mortal past. You are now to take on the name "The enchanting siren", A mesmerizing but malevolent entity that represents the envy and desire people feel towards extreme beauty".

"Yes my lord" Evara's sweet enchanting voice answered back as her feet left the ground, She soon found a branch on Osi to sit down as she looked down at the other cursed being curious to see who will join her next.

Ikenga's overwhelming presence shrunk down, as a purple construct of him appeared on the branch Evara was sitting on, she was taken back but soon smiled.

Ikenga meanwhile looked at the next two curses he was about to pick out, Both represented the dark side of knowledge.

Orin the one whose skin is parchment-like, covered in scrawling texts that seemed to shift and change. Orin was once a renowned scholar in the city of Caladris, a hub of learning and intellectual pursuit. Caladris was a city built on the staying ground of the dragon who took it upon itself to teach the humans of the eastern continent. The staying ground of the dragon was then built into a city after it left. Orin's journey from respected intellectual to cursed hoarder was a result of his actions and the collective resentment of his peers and students.

Orin was initially a beloved teacher and researcher, known for his incredible intellect and insatiable thirst for knowledge. His lectures were popular, and his discoveries contributed significantly to the city's wealth of wisdom. However, as his reputation grew, so did his ego. He began to view his knowledge as a source of power, something that elevated him above others.

Orin started to guard his discoveries heavily. He refused to share his research, claiming that others would misuse it or not understand its depth. He locked himself away, conducting experiments and writing papers that he never intended anyone else to see. He even developed elaborate codes to encrypt his notes, ensuring that no one could understand his work without his guidance. His colleagues and students, who once admired him, grew frustrated and resentful. They had come to Caladris to learn and grow, but Orin's selfishness stifled their own intellectual pursuits.

The resentment simmered and grew, spreading through the academic community like wildfire. Orin's students, who felt betrayed by their mentor's hoarding, began to secretly criticize him. His peers, who had once collaborated with him, turned against him. The collective frustration and bitterness of the scholars and students created a potent aura of negativity.