

Guardian gods 231

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This collective resentment attracted a cursed spirit, one that fed on greed and the selfish hoarding of knowledge. The scroll he clutched became a symbol of his curse.

The other cursed being known as Elias, was a renowned scholar in a small thriving human city, known for his vast knowledge and eloquent speech. He held a position of great respect and influence, often consulted by leaders and common folk alike. Rumors of his help being required in the humanity kingdom adds to his reputation. However, Elias harbored a secret resentment towards those who dismissed his ideas or challenged his authority. This bitterness festered over time, which led to Elias beginning to manipulate information subtly, distorting truths to suit his narrative and undermine his rivals.

Elias's manipulations, though initially small, grew more significant and harmful. He whispered falsehoods into the ears of the powerful, sowing discord and mistrust among allies, and leading to decisions based on twisted truths. The small city, once harmonious, began to fracture. People turned against each other, alliances crumbled, and chaos ensued. Unbeknownst to Elias, his deceitful actions stirred a collective resentment among the city's inhabitants. Their shared anger and betrayal, amplified by the magnitude of Elias's influence, led to Elias attracting a cursed spirit that attached itself to him.

The Knowledge Hoarder's eyes glowed with an insatiable curiosity, while the Whisperer's serpentine eyes gleamed with malevolent intent. They paused, considering each other, and then the Whisperer spoke.

His voice a silky hiss "Why do we fight, Hoarder? We are both seekers of knowledge, in our own ways. Perhaps we can settle this without bloodshed."

The Knowledge Hoarder voice dry and rasping "What do you propose, Whisperer? A sharing of our truths? I suspect your version of knowledge is nothing but a web of deceit."

Whisperer smiled, forked tongue flicking "Not deceit, my friend, but interpretation. Knowledge is not a fixed point but a fluid stream, ever changing, ever evolving. To control the flow is to wield power. You, with your hoarding, stagnate the stream, letting it fester."

The Hoarder eyes narrowed "And you, with your lies, poison it. Knowledge must be preserved, not twisted to fit the whims of those who would corrupt it. I safeguard the truth, while you pervert it for your own ends."

"Truth is a matter of perspective, Hoarder. What you call truth, others may call folly. Knowledge, in my hands, becomes a tool to shape reality, to bend minds. What good is knowledge if it is not shared, if it does not influence?" Whisperer laughed softly.

The Hoarder voice steady, with conviction "Knowledge shared must be pure, untainted by lies. True knowledge enlightens and empowers, fostering genuine understanding and growth. What you offer is not enlightenment but chaos, misleading and misguiding those who seek the truth."

"Ah, but a lie can inspire, can provoke thought and change. It can be a catalyst for growth, forcing minds to question and seek deeper truths. It is a spark that ignites the flame of curiosity." Whisperer replied, eyes gleaming with cunning

Knowledge Hoarder scowling said "A spark that can also destroy. A mind corrupted by lies may never find its way back to the truth. Lies lead to mistrust, to fear, to division. True knowledge unites, it enlightens and builds trust, paving the way for progress and innovation."

Whisperer mockingly answered "And yet, in your hoarding, you hoard not just knowledge but power. You keep it from the masses, doling it out only when it suits your purpose. Is that not its own form of tyranny? My lies, at least, are accessible to all, free for any to hear and believe."

Knowledge Hoarder voice filled with passion "Accessible, yes, but at what cost? A world built on lies is a world doomed to crumble. My duty is to protect knowledge, to ensure its purity and accuracy. Knowledge shared in its true form elevates society, whereas your deceit breeds confusion and collapse."

Whisperer leaned closer, voice a whisper "But can you truly protect knowledge from change, from interpretation? Even the purest truth can be twisted in the telling. Admit it, Hoarder, even you cannot keep knowledge from evolving."

Knowledge Hoarder nodded "Knowledge must evolve, yes, but through understanding and insight, not through deceit. Evolution of knowledge comes from discovery and learning, not from the corruption of

falsehoods. Your so-called wisdom is nothing but cancer, spreading rot and decay. I will not allow it to consume the truth."

Whisperer sighed dramatically "Then it seems we are at an impasse, old friend. It appears that words alone cannot bridge the chasm between us. We must settle this with more than debate."

Knowledge Hoarder raising his scroll said "So be it. I will show you that the purity of truth is stronger than your twisted lies. Prepare yourself, Whisperer".

Without warning, the Knowledge Hoarder raised his scroll and began chanting an incantation. The texts on his parchment-like skin writhed and shifted, summoning shadowy tendrils that surged towards the Whisperer.

The Whisperer moved swiftly, his form blurring as he dodged the tendrils. With a flick of his forked tongue, he whispered insidious lies into the air, causing the shadows to falter and twist into grotesque shapes before dispersing. The two cursed beings circled each other, looking for an opening.

The Whisperer hissed a string of distorted words, causing the ground beneath the Hoarder to shift and crack. From the fissures sprang nightmarish illusions of monstrous creatures, their eyes glowing and claws reaching out to tear at the Hoarder.

The Hoarder, undeterred, unrolled another section of his scroll, summoning ancient runes that glowed with a malevolent light. With a gesture, he conjured a fireball imbued with the knowledge of destructive spells, hurling it at the illusions. The fireball exploded, incinerating the creatures and forcing the Whisperer to retreat.

In a fluid motion, the Whisperer retaliated by conjuring a serpentine illusion that coiled around the Hoarder, constricting tightly. The Hoarder struggled, his eyes blazing as he recited a counter-spell. The texts on his skin flared brightly, causing the illusion to dissipate in a shower of sparks.

Seizing the moment, the Whisperer lunged at the Hoarder, his forked tongue aiming for the Hoarder's throat. The Hoarder barely managed to evade the strike, feeling the Whisperer's breath on his neck. He responded with a swift incantation, summoning a barrier of dark energy that repelled the Whisperer with a forceful blast.

The Whisperer was thrown back, but he quickly recovered, his yellow eyes filled with fury. He spat a venomous curse, the words twisting into tangible forms—serpentine coils of dark energy that lashed out at the Hoarder, their touch searing and corrupting. The Hoarder countered by conjuring a shield of arcane symbols, blocking the curse and reflecting lies and curse back towards the Whisperer.

The serpentine coils turned on the Whisperer, their searing touch causing him to writhe in agony as his own venomous energy burned him. He screamed in rage and pain, his form flickering like a faulty projection. The Hoarder took advantage of the Whisperer's disorientation, pressing the attack with relentless determination.

The Knowledge Hoarder chanted a powerful spell, the texts on his skin glowing with an ominous light. He summoned a massive, fiery golem imbued with ancient knowledge of warfare. The golem, towering and blazing, charged at the Whisperer with devastating force.

Desperate, the Whisperer lashed out with a flurry of lies, creating illusions of giant serpents that lunged at the Hoarder and his golem. The serpent's bit and coiled, their venomous fangs striking true. But the Hoarder was prepared. He absorbed the falsehoods into his scroll, the texts shifting and changing to accommodate the new information. The Whisperer, realizing he was losing ground, attempted to flee, but the Hoarder was relentless.

With a final incantation, the Hoarder unleashed a storm of ethereal blades, each one inscribed with forbidden knowledge. The blades sliced through the serpentine illusions and struck the Whisperer, who screamed as the energy blade tore through his essence.

As the Whisperer's form collapsed to the ground, the Knowledge Hoarder stood tall, his eyes blazing with triumph. He approached the remnants of his foe, his scroll at the ready. With a frenzy and determined expression, he began to chant, drawing the Whisperer's essence into the scroll.

The scroll absorbed the Whisperer's power, the texts glowing brighter and more complex. The Hoarder felt a surge of energy as he consumed the essence of his defeated opponent. His form seemed to grow more imposing, the texts on his skin shifting with newfound knowledge and power. At the back of the scroll, a huge serpentine eyes filled with cunning light grew on the scroll.

Ikenga and Evara, who was sitting on Osisi's tree branch, felt the slight change in the wind movement, the huge body of Boros slightly moved.

Ikenga smiled pointing at Orin "From now on, you are to take the name "The All-Knowing Oracle" A mysterious entity that embodies the resentment towards those with superior knowledge or intellect"

Orin bowed towards Ikenga and at the same time felt the attraction to take a place beside him. Closing his eyes and thinking of the new ability of the whisperer he just acquired.

A serpentine tongue came out of his mouth as he lied to the world around him "Fly" the effect took place immediately as his feet left the ground taking him up to the branch Ikenga was sitting on.

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Ikenga smiled seeing Orin usage of his curse, the whisperer would have won if it were facing someone ignorant and without knowledge but he was facing the knowledge hoarder, "You can tell a lie to someone who knows the truth"

Looking at the next curses. Before she became the embodiment of tyranny, Queen Elsha was known for her wisdom and beauty. As the first female ruler of her kingdom, her ascent to the throne was fraught with challenges. She was the only child of her father, the late king before he died under the hands of a beast during his hunting party. Many of the kingdom's nobles and advisors, accustomed to male leadership, questioned her right to rule. Despite their skepticism, Elsha's early reign was marked by fairness and prosperity, and she quickly gained the love of her people through her just and compassionate rule.

However, her position remained precarious. The patriarchal structures of her society constantly undermined her authority, with whispers of defiance and plots to replace her becoming a common occurrence in the royal court. Elsha had to navigate a treacherous political intrigue, where every decision she made was scrutinized more harshly than it would have been for a male ruler.

Her most trusted advisor, Lord Malachi, who is also her uncle, was secretly one of her greatest adversaries. He manipulated the kingdom's deeply ingrained misogyny to sow seeds of doubt and fear in Isabella's mind. Malachi, seeking to control the throne from behind the scenes, fed her paranoia by fabricating conspiracies and exaggerating threats, painting a picture of a kingdom on the brink of betrayal.

Elsha, feeling isolated and increasingly desperate to prove her strength, began to rule with an iron fist. She implemented harsh measures to silence dispute and secure her power, believing that a show of strength was necessary to maintain her throne. The love and admiration of her people turned to fear

and resentment as she executed those she perceived as threats without trial and imposed severe laws that stifled freedom.

The breaking point came when Isabella ordered the execution of her most vocal critic, Lady Garda, a noblewoman who championed the rights of the oppressed and openly defied Isabella's harsh measures. Garda's death was the final straw for the people, who had already suffered greatly under Elsha's increasingly tyrannical rule. Their collective anguish and anger formed a powerful resentment that led to the attraction of the curse inhabiting her.

Unlike the other cursed beings who were shunned and chased away or killed. Once Elsha turned into a cursed being, no one in the kingdom aroused the thought of going against her rule even with her new appearance. They all silently stayed under her rule.

Thaddeus the other cursed being was once a powerful man in a peaceful and prosperous village. His extraordinary strength set him apart from others, making him an admired figure for his physical capabilities. However, the world's serene state left him feeling unfulfilled. Despite his remarkable power, there was no conflict or challenge that required his might. This peace, though a blessing to many, felt like a curse to Thaddeus.

Thaddeus's frustration grew over time. He hated being unable to use his strength for anything meaningful. The mundane tasks of village life seemed trivial compared to what he believed he was capable of. His discontent festered, turning into resentment towards the world around him. He began to believe that his strength was wasted in such a tranquil existence.

The villagers, who once admired him, started to sense his growing bitterness. Thaddeus's occasional outbursts of anger made them wary. Yet, their unease was not enough to catalyze a collective resentment until a tragic event occurred.

One fateful day, a strong magical beast descended upon the village, wreaking havoc and causing destruction. Many lives were lost, and the peaceful village was thrown into chaos. Thaddeus, with his immense strength, ultimately managed to defeat the beast, but the victory came at a great cost. The villagers mourning their dead tried to understand why such a calamity fell upon them.

As they searched for answers, a chilling truth emerged. Thaddeus, in his quest for purpose, had unknowingly provoked the beast. Driven by his frustration and desire for a challenge, he had ventured into the beast's lair and disturbed the creature, leading it to follow him back to the village, so that he can show off his strength and further convince the villagers of his overwhelming talent. The realization that

Thaddeus's actions had brought such devastation upon them was the final straw. The collective anger and resentment of the villagers called upon the curse inhabiting Thaddeus.

A chilling wind sweeps through the air. Elsha, her form regal yet terrifying, stands at one end of the forest. Thaddeus, with his hulking, muscular frame, stands at the other end. They lock eyes for the first time.

Queen Elsha Smirking looked up to the tree branch where Ikenga was sitting " Perhaps the god of curses delights in pitting us against each other."

Thaddeus Snarling said " That works best for me, I've been waiting for a challenge all my life"

Elsha's smirk widened into a feral grin, the chains at her command writhing with anticipation. "Then prepare yourself, Thaddeus," she replied, her tone a mix of challenge and invitation. "For today, one of us will find our end, and the other will claim the power to reshape their fate."

Thaddeus nodded curtly, a hint of excitement etched upon his burly features. "I'll see you at the end of this, Elsha," he vowed, his voice a thunderous promise that echoed through the silent forest.

With a flick of her wrist, Elsha sent her chains whipping forward, aiming to entangle Thaddeus. He roared, meeting the attack head-on with a thunderous charge. The ground shook violently as he barreled towards her, his immense strength causing cracks to spiderweb out from his feet. The chains wrapped around his arms, but he simply tore them apart with a bellow of rage, snapping the metal links like they were mere twine.

Elsha narrowed her eyes, focusing her will. The crown of thorns glowed brighter, and psychic spikes lanced out towards Thaddeus's mind. He staggered, clutching his head as the mental assault tore through his consciousness. But his fury only grew, and with a roar, he slammed his fists into the ground, sending a shockwave rippling towards her.

She leaped back gracefully, her chains retracting as she avoided the brunt of the tremor. With a gesture, she commanded the chains to lash out again, this time aiming to bind his legs. They coiled around him, and she pulled, intending to bring him to his knees. But Thaddeus's strength was relentless. With a snarl, he ripped the chains free once more, the metal biting into his flesh but failing to hold him.

He lunged at her, his massive hand swinging in a crushing arc. She dodged, but not quickly enough. His fist grazed her side, and the force sent her sprawling. She rolled to her feet, the pain barely registering as she focused on her next move. Her eyes locked onto his, and for a moment, he felt the full weight of her tyranny. His steps faltered, his mind overwhelmed by the need to submit.

Taking advantage of his hesitation, she unleashed a flurry of psychic spikes from her crown. They struck him, piercing his mind and body, drawing blood and screams of agony. But he refused to fall. His primal instincts kicked in, and he roared again, louder and more ferocious. The ground beneath them cracked and buckled as he pounded his fists into it, sending debris flying.

He charged again, this time with an unstoppable fury. She tried to evade, but his speed was unnaturally enhanced by his rage. He caught her with a brutal strike to the chest, lifting her off her feet and slamming her into the ground. She gasped for breath, the impact leaving her momentarily stunned.

Seeing her vulnerable, Thaddeus seized the opportunity. He stomped the ground, creating a localized tremor that pinned her down. His hands, capable of crushing bone, wrapped around her neck. He lifted her, intending to snap her spine and end the fight.

But she was not defeated yet. With her last ounce of strength, she focused all her power into a single, desperate act. Her chains shot forward, wrapping around his arms and neck, tightening with unyielding force. Her eyes blazed with determination as she poured her will into the chains, commanding them to constrict and crush.

The chains tightened, cutting into Thaddeus's flesh. Blood oozed from his wounds, his body convulsing as he struggled against the unbreakable bonds. With a final, desperate roar, he summoned all his remaining strength. The ground trembled as he tore one arm free, then the other. He reached up, grabbing the chains around his neck, and with a tremendous effort, he snapped them apart.

Elsa watched in disbelief as Thaddeus broke free. She tried to summon her chains again, but it was too late. With a primal scream, Thaddeus lunged at her, his immense hands wrapping around her throat. He lifted her off the ground, squeezing with all his might. The crown of thorns glowed brightly, but its power was fading. She struggled, gasping for breath, but Thaddeus's grip was unrelenting.

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With a final, crushing squeeze, Thaddeus snapped her neck. Elsha's body went limp, her chains falling to the ground with a heavy clatter. Thaddeus dropped her lifeless form, panting heavily. He stood over her, his chest heaving, blood dripping from his wounds.

As Thaddeus stood over Elsha's lifeless body, a strange energy began to emanate from the defeated queen. The air around them shimmered, and Thaddeus felt an overwhelming surge of power flow into him. The curse that had bound Elsha, now seeking a new vessel, latched onto Thaddeus. His form began to shift and change, embodying the essence of both his own curse and the remnants of Elsha's tyranny.

Thaddeus grew even larger, his muscles expanding further, making him a towering figure of raw power and dominance. His posture became more upright and regal, blending his brute strength with a newfound sense of authority.

Elsha's chains wrapped around Thaddeus's arms and torso, melding into his flesh. They became part of his new armor, dark and twisted, reinforcing his already formidable physique. The crown of thorns shifted, creating a circlet of sharp, metallic spikes around his head, symbolizing his newfound rule and control.

Thaddeus's eyes now glowed with a piercing, icy blue light, reflecting the cold calculation and ruthlessness of Elsha. His presence exuded a crushing weight of tyranny and fear, making anyone who looked at him feel an instinctive urge to submit or flee. The scars and pulsating veins on his body became more pronounced, glowing faintly with an eerie, dark energy. They pulsed rhythmically.

Smirking at the new strength flowing inside of him, a thought couldn't help but sprout on Thaddeus' head as he looked up at Ikenga with a challenging look on his face.

Ikenga seeing raised a brow as he looked into Thaddeus glowing blue eyes, the curses who were making noises enjoying the ritual taking place all turned silent, the other cursed beings were looking at both Ikenga and Thaddeus.

Thaddeus meanwhile was now sweating, in his eyes a giant whose height was unknown to him stretched out a huge furry ape-like arm petting his head.

Thaddeus could do nothing but stand still and let the giant do what it wanted, meanwhile on the outside everyone available saw Thaddeus take a knee as he bowed towards Ikenga.

"I like you" Was what Ikenga said as he began laughing and swinging his feet like a kid from the tree branch.

"You are to take the moniker of "The Tyrannical Juggernaut ", a domineering figure that embodies the resentment towards those who wield power oppressively. A towering, unstoppable force that embodies physical power and the wrath it provokes" A big root extended from Osisi all the way to Thaddeus for him to use to walk up where the others victors are.

Vesper was born into a modest family in a small town, yet from a young age, he harbored grand dreams of fame and adoration. He excelled in the local theater, his performances captivating audiences and earning him small-scale recognition. But Vesper was not content with merely local fame; he yearned for the adulation of the masses.

As he grew older, Vesper moved to the city, where opportunities for stardom abounded. He quickly rose through the ranks of the entertainment industry, his charm and talent opening doors. However, Vesper's ascent was not solely due to his abilities. He was willing to employ any means necessary to achieve his goals. He spread malicious rumors about rivals, sabotaged performances, and ingratiated himself with influential figures, using deceit and manipulation to secure his position, Even his own body was a means for him to achieve his goals.

Noctus, originally named Elias, was born into a reputable family known for their contributions to the arts and academia. The family was also famous for their mastery of light and healing magic, revered by the people for generations. Elias, however, never quite fit the mold set by his family. Despite his efforts to live up to their expectations, he often found himself overshadowed by his more successful siblings and peers.

Elias's life took a turn for the worse when he was falsely accused of practicing necromancy and performing forbidden resurrection spells. In a world where magic was revered but certain practices were deeply frowned upon, the use of necromancy, especially the resurrection of the dead, was considered abhorrent and taboo. Elias's colleague, envious of his potential and the prestige of his family, framed him by planting necromantic artifacts and corpses in his workshop.

Vesper, his face shifting through a myriad of features as he stands flamboyantly dressed in a spotlight that seems to follow him wherever he moves. "Ah, another player on this cursed stage. How quaint. Tell me, shadowy stranger, what drives you in this forsaken realm? A failed dream, perhaps?"

Noctus clad in shadowy robes, his face a blurred, ever-shifting mask of anonymity. "I am Noctus, cursed to be scorned and humiliated for eternity. And you? What facade do you hide behind, fame seeker?"

Vesper answered "I am Vesper, the one who craves the spotlight, even in this darkened world. Fame is my curse, but it is also my strength. But tell me, Noctus, how does it feel to be eternally overshadowed? To never be recognized for who you truly are?"

"Recognition? What a hollow desire. I was once Elias, a name that held meaning, until it was smeared by lies and envy. And you, Vesper? How many people have you stepped on to climb your ladder of fame? How empty does it feel at the top?" Noctus said back to him.

Vesper his face briefly flickers with a hint of bitterness before returning to a composed façade. "Empty? Perhaps. But better to be seen and remembered than to fade into obscurity. At least I have left a mark, unlike you, who hides in the shadows of disgrace."

Noctus tilted his head to the side "A mark? More like a stain. Fame built on deceit and manipulation is as fragile as a house of cards. How does it feel, knowing your admirers would turn on you in an instant if they knew the truth?"

Vesper laughs lightly, though the sound carries a hint of strain. "You speak as if you know me, Noctus. But tell me, how does it feel to be falsely accused? To live a life where every glance is filled with suspicion and disdain? Do you ever dream of redemption, or have you accepted your fate as a scapegoat?"

Noctus had a dark aura that began to emanate from him, the shadows around him growing darker and more oppressive. "Redemption? A fool's hope. I live for the day I can expose the truth, to make those who wronged me suffer. And you, Vesper? Do you ever tire of the charade, the constant need to be someone you're not?"

Vesper with a dramatic flourish, his appearance shifts to mimic Noctus's blurred face, his voice mocking. "Charade? Every actor knows the stage is both a lie and the truest form of self. But you, Noctus, you hide in the shadows, never daring to step into the light. How does it feel to be a coward?"

"Coward? I face my curse head-on, embracing the darkness that surrounds me. Unlike you, clinging to your illusions of grandeur. The light you seek is a mirage, Vesper, and it will leave you blind and alone." Noctus said while pointing at Vesper.

Vesper his expression hardens, the playful tone gone. "Blind, perhaps. But never alone. Even now, in this cursed realm, I am remembered. But you? You will fade into nothingness, a whisper in the dark."

Noctus shook his head as he responded "A whisper, maybe. But a whisper can become a roar. Prepare yourself, Vesper. The shadows will reveal the truth of who we are."

Vesper with a steely determination, his face shifting to his true form. "Then let us see, Noctus. Let the final act commence, and may the true self prevail."

Ikenga eyes flashed purple as a message was relayed to him from the curse inhabiting the seeker. Not minding the request, Ikenga nodded.

With Ikenga confirmed, the forest battlefield changed into a stage. The Seeker of Fame struts onto the stage, his flamboyant attire glittering under the dim lights that flicker erratically. His face shifts through a myriad of well-known personas, each more dazzling than the last. He revels in the spotlight, basking in the imagined adulation of an audience that no longer exists.

From the shadows, the Shunned Outcast emerges, his form barely visible, cloaked in darkness. His face is a blur, a shifting mass of anonymity and disgrace. He moves silently, a stark contrast to the Seeker's ostentatious display.

With a flick of his wrist, the Seeker unleashes Blinding Radiance, a flash of light so intense it would blind any ordinary foe. But the Outcast, accustomed to the darkness, shuts his eyes just in time and disappears into the shadows.

The Seeker laughs, the sound echoing eerily through the empty hall. He turns, his face now that of a renowned warrior, and prepares for an assault. But the Outcast strikes first, his Phantom Strike cutting through the air with deadly precision. The Seeker staggers back, a thin line of blood appearing on his cheek.

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He touches the wound, and as he does, he mimics the face and abilities of the Outcast, shrouding himself in shadows. But this mimicry is imperfect. The Seeker, though hidden, cannot fully grasp the essence of disgrace and anonymity. The true Outcast uses this moment to project Whispers of Scorn, filling the Seeker's mind with haunting, disorienting voices.

The Seeker, momentarily disoriented, lashes out wildly, his Stolen Spotlight ability activating. He reaches for the Outcast, aiming to drain his strength. The Outcast dodges, but not entirely. The Seeker's fingers brush his arm, and he feels a surge of power, but also the crushing weight of disgrace.

The Outcast, weakened but undeterred, retaliates with Aura of Disgrace, enveloping the Seeker in a miasma of shame and self-doubt. The Seeker's confidence wavers, his flamboyant facade flickering. He fights to maintain his composure, but the Outcast presses the advantage, launching a barrage of Phantom Strikes.

Blood splatters the stage as the Seeker is driven back, his defenses crumbling. Desperation fuels him, and he calls upon Stage Control, creating multiple illusions of himself. The theater fills with a dozen Seekers, all identical, all laughing mockingly.

The Outcast narrows his eyes, focusing on the faint, almost imperceptible differences. He strikes at one illusion after another, each dissipating into mist. But the true Seeker is nowhere to be found. Suddenly, a figure lunges from behind, and the Seeker's claws rake across the Outcast's back, tearing flesh and drawing a pained cry.

Both combatants close in, their illusions and shadows falling away as they engage in brutal hand-to-hand combat. The Seeker's flamboyant attire is torn and bloodied, but he moves with surprising agility, each punch and kick a blur of speed and precision. The Outcast, though cloaked in shadows, counters with swift and powerful strikes, his movements silent and deadly.

The Seeker lands a powerful blow to the Outcast's jaw, sending him staggering back. He follows up with a series of rapid punches, each one aimed to cripple and dominate. The Outcast absorbs the hits, his blurred face twisting in pain, but he doesn't fall. Instead, he ducks under the Seeker's next swing, driving his knee into the Seeker's ribs with a sickening crunch.

The Seeker gasps for breath, the wind knocked out of him. The Outcast presses his advantage, grabbing the Seeker by the throat and slamming him into the ground. Dust and debris fly up from the impact, and

the Seeker's head snaps back, dazed. But with a sudden burst of energy, the Seeker twists, breaking free and flipping the Outcast over his shoulder.

The Seeker leaps onto the Outcast, his hands wrapping around his opponent's neck, squeezing with all his might. The Outcast claws at the Seeker's hands, his vision blurring further as the air is cut off. In a final, desperate move, the Outcast summons the last of his strength and drives his thumbs into the Seeker's eyes.

The Seeker screams, releasing his grip and reeling back, clutching his face. Blood pours from his eyes, and he stumbles, half-blind and enraged. The Outcast rises, his own body battered and bruised, and with a primal roar, he charges.

Summoning all his remaining strength, the Outcast activates Eternal Exile, aiming to banish the Seeker to a realm of isolation. The Seeker, sensing the impending danger, tries to flee, but the shadows grasp at him, pulling him back.

With a final, desperate effort, the Seeker unleashes Chosen Facade, shifting into the form of the most resilient warrior he has ever encountered. His body bulks up, muscles rippling, and he breaks free of the shadows' grasp. But the effort costs him dearly.

The Outcast, now grievously wounded, sees his chance. He launches himself at the Seeker, channeling all his pain and disgrace into one final, devastating Phantom Strike. The blow lands true, piercing the Seeker's heart.

The Seeker's form flickers, the illusions falling away, and he collapses to the stage, his flamboyant attire now soaked in blood. His face shifts one last time, settling into a look of pure, unadulterated fear.

The Outcast watches as life fades from the Seeker's eyes. The theater falls silent once more, save for the heavy, labored breathing of the Shunned Outcast. He stands victorious, but at a great cost, his body battered and bloodied.

The Seeker of Fame lies still, his curse finally silenced. The Outcast, though victorious, knows that his battle is never truly over. He will always carry the weight of his curse with him, being embodiment of public disgrace.

The Outcast's once entirely shadowy, cloaked form now gains a touch of the Seeker's flamboyant essence, creating a disturbing blend of Flamboyance and darkness. The Outcast's face remains blurred and constantly shifting, but now, amidst the anonymity, glimpses of famous faces flash briefly, as if the essence of those the Seeker mimicked still linger. This creates an unsettling effect, where his visage is never fully clear but occasionally recognizable for fleeting moments.

The dark cloak of the Outcast is now interwoven with shimmering, flamboyant fabrics. Threads of gold and vibrant colors snake through the blackness, catching the light in eerie, unpredictable patterns. The cloak flows more dramatically, almost theatrically, amplifying his movements with an unsettling grace.

His eyes, once hidden in the shadows, now glow with a haunting light. They shift colors, reflecting the moods and personas of those he has absorbed. They can be mesmerizing, drawing in the gaze of those who look into them, making it difficult to look away.

As he stood up the victor, the Light following the seeker turned to him instead declaring him as the winner. It was for a bleak moment but a flash of smile crossed the face of the outcast who has never known fame.

Ikenga snapped his finger as the stage disappeared, showing the forest once again, Pointing at Outcast, Ikenga said "Your moniker from now on will be "The Spotlight Phantom" A ghostly, ever-present figure that embodies the resentment towards those who seek or attain excessive fame, a ghostly figure that embodies both the pursuit of fame driven by pride and the envy it provokes"

Bowing his head, the phantom disappeared into the shadows. From the shadow reflection of Ikenga, the phantom face appeared there for a blink second but he made no move to come out instead he seems to have made his home on Ikenga's shadow. Ikenga did not mind smiling.

Looking at the next two curses, one needed to be introduced as that was James whose story is already known. For his cursed resonance is the luxurious cursed figure.

The grotesque figure, known as Malcus, was once a prosperous merchant named Phineas Greaves. Born into a modest family, Phineas's ambitions had always been far greater than his humble beginnings. Through cunning, shrewd business acumen, and a relentless drive, he amassed a fortune that elevated him to the upper echelons of society. However, his path to wealth was paved with deceit, exploitation, and betrayal. Phineas's insatiable greed led him to ruin lives, break families, and destroy the livelihoods of countless individuals. His unquenchable thirst for gold and power made him a feared and loathed figure.

Phineas's downfall began with a particularly vile transaction. He had discovered a plot of land rich with gold, owned by a small, thriving community. For the community, the gold was used to send their young ones out to apprentice in a well known city. This is all done in the hope that if one of the children makes it, their small community will grow into something bigger, this was an agreed dream of every adult in the community so they all work together for this goal. Using underhanded tactics, he seized the land, leaving the inhabitants destitute. This was the final straw for those who had suffered under his greed. Their collective resentment called upon the curse that inhabited Phineas.

Both curses, now stood facing each other. Embodiment of Wealth said to James with a smile "I am the embodiment of wealth, cursed to endure this agony. Yet, I do not see it as a curse but a testament to my ambition. Greed has driven me to acquire more, to reach for what others deem unattainable."

James the cursed Glutton growling, his stomach-mouth moving grotesquely "And yet, you are blind to the true curse it brings. I am the glutton, cursed with insatiable hunger. For me, it is not about choice but necessity. I consume because I must, my hunger driving me beyond reason."

Embodiment of Wealth bristled at the accusation, his form shimmering faintly as if wavering under an unseen pressure. "You speak as one who envies my wealth, yet fails to see the burden it carries. To be cursed with wealth is to be cursed with responsibility, with the weight of a world that clamors for what you possess."

The Cursed Glutton's stomach-mouth twisted into a grotesque grin, a chilling echo of amusement. "Responsibility, perhaps, but also a blindness to the true cost of your obsession. Tell me, Wealth, when you look upon your treasures, do you see wealth, or do you see the chains that bind you?"

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Embodiment of Wealth Raised an eyebrow, eyes glinting with a mix of fear and determination " You see many see my wealth as chains, but they are chains I willingly bear. Each gem, each coin embedded in my flesh, they whisper promises of power and control. I seek not just to possess, but to master."

Cursed Glutton Licking his lips with his stomach-mouth, eyes burning with hunger "Your mastery is an illusion, built upon fleeting riches. My hunger knows no bounds. It consumes everything in its path, leaving only emptiness."

Embodiment of Wealth narrowed his eyes "Emptiness? I am driven by the desire to fill that void with more wealth, to amass until there is nothing left to grasp. Yet, I see in you a different emptiness, one that no amount of gold or jewels can ever hope to fill."

Cursed Glutton chuckled darkly, a guttural sound that reverberated through the air like a distant thunder. "You misunderstand, Wealth. My emptiness is the hunger for fulfillment, for a satisfaction that goes beyond material gain. Your wealth blinds you to the true treasures of life—connection, purpose, and contentment."

Embodiment of Wealth scoffed, a smirk playing on his lips. "Contentment? Such a quaint notion from one cursed to devour endlessly. Tell me, Glutton, where does your insatiable hunger lead you? Is it not a relentless pursuit of more, driven by a bottomless pit that can never be filled?"

The Cursed Glutton's eyes flickered with a moment of introspection, a brief glimpse of a tortured soul within. "Perhaps... but in my endless consumption, I have glimpsed truths that elude your grasp. There is a hunger that transcends mere sustenance—a hunger for meaning, for a purpose greater than oneself."

Embodiment of Wealth shook his head in disbelief. "Meaning? Purpose? You speak of intangibles, while I wield the power that shapes kingdoms and empires. My wealth is not just material; it is the foundation upon which I build my legacy."

Embodiment of Wealth fell silent, a rare moment of contemplation passing over him. For an instant, the glittering gems embedded in his flesh seemed to dim, their allure fading in the face of a deeper truth. "Chains... perhaps. Yet they are chains of my own making, forged from ambition and the relentless pursuit of power."

The Cursed Glutton nodded slowly, his hunger momentarily subdued. "And therein lies the curse we both bear—bound by our desires, yet blind to the true richness of life. For me, it is the hunger that devours; for you, it is the wealth that ensnares. Two sides of the same cursed coin, forever chasing fulfillment beyond our reach."

James licking his lips with his stomach-mouth, eyes burning with hunger "Enough talk. Let us see whose curse is stronger."

With a guttural growl, The Cursed Glutton lunged forward, the ground shaking beneath his massive weight. He swung his enormous butcher knife, aiming to cleave his opponent in two. The Embodiment of Wealth nimbly dodged, his body shimmering as he moved with surprising agility.

Greed's Touch came into play as the Embodiment of Wealth touched the ground, turning the forest floor beneath the Cursed Glutton into solid gold. The Glutton's foot sank, momentarily trapped. With a roar of frustration, he ripped his foot free, sending shards of gold and dirt flying.

Seizing the opportunity, the Embodiment of Wealth summoned Hoarded Treasures from the depths of his cursed riches. Ancient weapons, enchanted relics, and cursed artifacts materialized around him, forming an arsenal. He grabbed a jeweled sword that glowed with a malevolent light and lunged at the Glutton, slashing with precision.

With a powerful roar from his stomach-mouth, the Cursed Glutton unleashed his Hungry Roar, sending shockwaves through the forest. The Embodiment of Wealth was thrown back, crashing into a moss-covered tree. Leaves and debris filled the air as he struggled to regain his footing.

The Glutton charged, his insatiable hunger driving him forward. His Insatiable Bite aimed to end the fight quickly, snapping towards the Wealth's midsection. But the Embodiment of Wealth was quick, summoning a Treasure Trap between them. The cursed chest exploded with a blinding flash, halting the Glutton's advance and scorching his flesh.

Furious and relentless, the Cursed Glutton used Devour, grabbing a nearby boulder and consuming it whole. His body quickly healed up. He swung his massive butcher knife again, this time connecting with the Embodiment of Wealth and sending him sprawling across the forest floor.

The Embodiment of Wealth, gasping in pain, unleashed Wealth's Curse. A wave of cursed light emanated from his body, hitting the Glutton. For a moment, the giant staggered, his eyes glazing over with a sudden, irrational desire to hoard and protect. But his insatiable hunger quickly overpowered the greed, and he shook off the effect with a thunderous roar.

Desperation crept into the Embodiment of Wealth's eyes as he projected his Painful Riches, hoping to incapacitate his foe. The Glutton staggered, momentarily feeling the intense pain of wealth embedded in his flesh. But his increasing hunger drove him forward, even through the agony.

The Embodiment of Wealth summoned more treasures, wielding a cursed spear and a shield encrusted with dark gems. The cursed spear, known as The Spear of Envious Desires, glowed with an eerie green light. This weapon had the power to drain the life force of those it struck, transferring it to the wielder.

With a determined look, the Embodiment of Wealth charged, aiming the spear at the Glutton's chest. The spear pierced the Glutton's thick skin, and the green light pulsed, draining his energy and revitalizing the Wealth. The Glutton roared in pain and anger, his massive hand swiping at his foe. Wealth not expecting that was sent flying.

Battered but not defeated, the Cursed Glutton raised his purple construct butcher knife, channeling cursed energy into a devastating strike. The blade glowed with a sinister light as it descended. The Embodiment of Wealth raised his shield, the clash of dark energies reverberating through the forest. The shield shattered as it was eaten away by the phantom teeth that appeared, still the blow was deflected enough to spare his life.

The Embodiment of Wealth, seizing his chance, unleashed Treasure's Wrath. The hoarded treasures around him glowed and exploded with magical force, bombarding the Glutton with destructive energy. The forest shook, and the air was filled with the deafening sound of detonations.

With a roar of fury, the Cursed Glutton can be seen with pieces of his flesh missing but his stomach mouth made the sound of chewing through steel as it ate pieces of the shield turning into energy used to quickly heal himself up. The glutton raised his Purple Construct Butcher Knife rushed towards wealth carving through the enchanted barriers created by the Wealth's treasures. He was driven by pure, unstoppable hunger. His massive hand grabbed the Embodiment of Wealth, lifting him off the ground.

The Embodiment of Wealth struggled, summoning more treasures to aid him. A cursed amulet around his neck glowed, projecting a protective barrier. The Glutton snarled, his hunger almost driving him mad. With a final, desperate effort, he used Gluttonous Absorption. His whole upper body turned into a big mouth as he began to consume his opponent, the cursed essence of wealth..

James after absorbing wealth began changing, he grew even larger, towering like a colossal giant, his body an immense and grotesque mass of flesh. His skin, once stretched and distorted by obesity, now shimmers with a sickly golden hue, similar to the Embodiment of Wealth's. Embedded in his flesh are jewels, coins, and other treasures, creating a horrific mosaic of wealth and gluttony.

His eyes glow with a cursed light, a mix of ravenous hunger and maddening greed. They dart around, reflecting both the desire to consume and the obsession to hoard. His stomach-mouth becomes even

more monstrous, lined with jagged, gold-tinted teeth, constantly drooling with a mix of saliva and molten gold.

His fingers elongate into claws, now encrusted with precious gems, making them both deadly and valuable. His hands twitch, eager to grasp and consume.

Ikenga pointed at James before stating "Your moniker from now on is the "The Covetous Leviathan" A colossal, treasure-hoarding beast that embodies both the insatiable greed for wealth and the gluttonous hunger for more".

James bowed after getting his new name but he really didn't know how to feel as his dream of one day turning back human seems to be slipping away, sighing his huge heavy body found a place to sit as he looked at the two curses being left.

Once, in a thriving city lived an artist of extraordinary skill named Alexander. His creations were unparalleled, each piece a masterpiece that captured the admiration of the masses and the elite alike. The royal families and nobles of the land sought him out to draw their family portraits or create timeless depictions of their loved ones. His talent brought him both fame and fortune, and with it, an insidious arrogance.

Alexander genuinely loved what he did. His heart swelled with passion every time he picked up a brush, and he poured his soul into his work. Yet, as his renown grew, so did his disdain for those he deemed beneath him. He no longer paid attention to the common man, who often begged him to draw pictures of their lost loved ones. The pleas of these ordinary people fell on deaf ears, and he pushed them away without a second thought.

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When these common folk turned to other artists, Alexander spared no time in mocking their work. He would publicly ridicule these artists, tearing apart their efforts with biting critiques and cruel laughter. His words stung more than any physical blow, leaving his victims feeling worthless and defeated. Among those who suffered under Alexander's scorn was a young artist who always looked up to him.

He admired Alexander's skill but was always crushed by his harsh judgments. Every time he presented his work, Alexander's words cut deep, magnifying the admirer's own insecurities and deep-seated shame for not measuring up. Despite his best efforts, he could never escape the shadow of inadequacy cast by Alexander's brilliance and cruelty.

Unknown to Alexander, his behavior had sown seeds of resentment among the artists and art lovers of the city. Their collective bitterness and anger began to coalesce, calling upon the curse that befell Alexander. This curse was a manifestation of their collective resentment, born from the pain and humiliation Alexander had inflicted upon them.

As for the other curse, in the sprawling Empire in the southern continent led by Chen, known for its rich culture and rigorous training of young, talented children, lived a young man named Thomas. The empire valued skill and excellence, and from an early age, children were selected and trained to perfect their talents in various disciplines. Those who showed promise were celebrated and nurtured, destined for greatness. However, Thomas was not one of these fortunate souls.

Born with no discernible talent, Thomas struggled from the beginning. He worked tirelessly, dedicating every waking moment to improving himself. He practiced painting, music, martial arts, and more, hoping to find his niche. Despite his relentless efforts, he could never measure up to the gifted prodigies around him. His movements were shaky and unsure, his hands clumsy and weak. The things that came naturally to others were insurmountable challenges for him.

Thomas became a figure of mockery in his city. His lack of talent made him an easy target for ridicule. People used his name as a punchline, a joke that encapsulated the concept of failure in the central city of the continent. Even children would chant his name in derision when they wanted to taunt someone. The humiliation weighed heavily on Thomas, and the spark of hope in his eyes gradually dimmed, replaced by a deep-seated despair.

All this led to Thomas having a deep resentment against the world itself and against the system used by the empire. His deep resentment and the humiliation called upon the curse that took hold of him.

The forest was silent except for the rustling of leaves, everyone available looking at the two figures stood at opposite ends of the room, their eyes locked in a gaze that spoke volumes of their intertwined fates.

The Arrogant Artist, his long, nimble fingers wrapped around his brush, looked down at the frail figure before him with a sneer. His hollow eyes glinted with disdain. "So, you're the unfortunate soul chosen to face me," he began, his voice dripping with contempt. "It's almost laughable."

The Tragic Failure, trembling and weak, their hands twisted and useless, stared back with a mixture of fear and defiance. "I don't know why we're here, but I won't let you belittle me," they replied, their voice shaky but determined.

The Artist chuckled, a cold, mirthless sound. "Belittle you? I'm simply stating the obvious. Talent is a gift, a weapon that I wield with precision and mastery. Those without it are destined to languish in mediocrity, forever dreaming of what they can never achieve."

"Talent isn't everything," the Tragic Failure shot back, their eyes burning with a mix of sorrow and anger. "Some of us struggle our entire lives, not because we lack dreams or ambition, but because the world denies us the means to realize them. Talent can be a curse, too, especially when it's used to crush others."

The Artist's sneer widened. "Spoken like someone who's never known the ecstasy of true creation, the power to shape reality with a mere stroke. Your bitterness only proves your inadequacy. Talent, true talent, is undeniable and unstoppable. It's the mark of those destined to rise above the rest."

"Your so-called talent has made you blind," the Tragic Failure retorted, their voice growing stronger. "Blind to the beauty of effort, of perseverance. You mock those who strive because you've never known the pain of striving without reward. Your arrogance is your real curse."

The Artist's eyes narrowed, his sneer faltering for a moment. He stepped closer, looming over the Tragic Failure. "You speak of beauty in struggle, but that's just a consolation for the weak. Effort without results is just wasted energy. It's the successful who write history, who leave a legacy."

The Tragic Failure held their ground, though their frail body shook with the effort. "History is more than the achievements of a few. It's built on the backs of those who persist, who endure. Your legacy, built on disdain and superiority, will crumble when people see it for what it is: hollow and devoid of compassion."

A flicker of something—doubt, perhaps—crossed the Artist's face, but he quickly masked it with a cruel smile. "Compassion? That's a luxury for those who can afford it. In the world of art, only the extraordinary survive. I have no need for the pity of the ordinary."

The Tragic Failure took a deep breath, their voice steady and clear now. "Extraordinary art isn't born from arrogance or cruelty. It's born from the soul, from the depths of human experience—joy, sorrow, love, pain. Your art may be technically perfect, but it lacks heart. It lacks humanity."

The Artist recoiled as if struck, his sneer replaced by a cold fury. "How dare you lecture me on art? You, who can barely hold a brush! You know nothing of the sacrifices I've made, the battles I've fought to achieve my mastery."

"And you," the Tragic Failure said softly, "know nothing of the sacrifices I've made just to stand here and face you. My battles may not have brought me fame or glory, but they've given me something far more valuable: the strength to keep going, no matter how many times I fall."

For a moment, silence hung between them, heavy with unspoken truths. The Artist's face twisted with rage and confusion, while the Tragic Failure stood resolute, their spirit unbroken.

Finally, the Artist turned away, unable to meet the unwavering gaze of the Tragic Failure. "Believe what you will," he spat, "but in the end, it is I who will be remembered, not you."

"Perhaps," the Tragic Failure replied, their voice filled with quiet dignity. "But I will be remembered by those who matter, by those who understand that true greatness is not measured by success alone, but by the courage to face life's challenges with grace and resilience."

After saying that, the Arrogant Artist, with his unnaturally long and nimble fingers, sneered as he dipped his brush into a palette of vibrant, toxic colors. His hollow eyes, devoid of joy, fixed on the frail figure before him. The Tragic Failure, trembling and weak, their hands twisted and useless, stood there with eyes clouded by despair.

The Artist moved first, his brush flicking through the air with the precision of a master. Colors swirled and leapt from his canvas, forming a monstrous, mocking face that lunged at the Tragic Failure. The face's eyes glowed with a menacing light, its mouth contorted in a cruel sneer.

The Tragic Failure staggered back, their movements shaky and unsure. Desperation fueling their actions, they swung their clenched fists, attempting to dispel the illusion. They narrowly dodged the apparition's attack, the force sending them sprawling to the ground, their frail body convulsing in pain.

The Artist laughed coldly, dipping his brush into a deep, blood-red color. With a flourish, he painted a dagger that materialized in his hand. He lunged at the Tragic Failure, slashing with deadly precision. The blade sliced through flesh, and the Tragic Failure screamed in agony as blood splattered across the floor.

Wounded but undeterred, the Tragic Failure clutched their side and forced themselves to their feet. They charged at the Artist, their fists swinging wildly. The Artist sidestepped, his sneer widening as he effortlessly avoided their attacks. However, the Tragic Failure's wild swings kept coming, each driven by sheer desperation and the will to survive.

In a moment of unexpected agility, the Tragic Failure landed a solid punch to the Artist's face, knocking him off balance. Seizing the opportunity, they tackled him to the ground. The Artist, surprised by the sudden shift, dropped his brush. They grappled on the floor, the Tragic Failure's desperation pitted against the Artist's arrogance.

The Artist struggled to free himself, his long fingers clawing at his opponent. He reached for his brush, but the Tragic Failure, driven by sheer willpower, knocked it out of reach. The Artist's eyes widened in fear as the Tragic Failure's hands closed around his throat.

The Artist managed to knee the Tragic Failure in the ribs, forcing them to release their grip. Both of them gasped for air as they rolled apart, their bodies battered and bruised. The Artist scrambled to his feet, his face contorted with fury. He reached for his palette, but the Tragic Failure, driven by sheer willpower, lunged at him once more.

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The Artist tried to summon another illusion, his brush moving frantically across the canvas. But the Tragic Failure, their hands twisted and useless, used their entire body to tackle him, slamming him into the ground with all the force they could muster.

The Artist's head hit the floor with a sickening crack, but instead of lying still, he snarled, his hollow eyes burning with rage. They were cursed beings, and such a blow could not end them. He thrust his brush upward, stabbing it into the Tragic Failure's shoulder. The Tragic Failure screamed in pain but did not relent, their twisted hands gripping the Artist's throat with ironclad determination.

The Artist's eyes bulged as he struggled for breath. He painted desperately on the floor with his free hand, the colors forming tendrils that wrapped around the Tragic Failure's limbs, trying to pull them off.

The Tragic Failure, however, was driven by a lifetime of despair and unfulfilled dreams. They summoned every ounce of their willpower, their body shaking with the effort.

The tendrils tightened, squeezing the life out of the Tragic Failure, but they refused to let go. They headbutted the Artist, their foreheads cracking together. The Artist's concentration faltered, and the tendrils loosened their grip.

With one final, desperate effort, the Tragic Failure twisted, using the weight of their body to snap the Artist's neck. The Artist's eyes widened in shock, his body convulsing before going limp. But even this was not enough to kill a cursed being. The Artist's body began to twitch, slowly mending itself. His paint brush can be seen drawing in the air the exact same thing happening right now.

Realizing he needed to act quickly, the Tragic Failure summoned the last of his strength, channeling his despair into a haunting, ghostly form. This spectral presence emerged from their body, enveloping the Artist. The spectral figure, embodying the weight of the Tragic Failure's lost dreams, began to drain the Artist's life force.

The Artist screamed as the spectral figure tightened its grip, drawing out his arrogance and cruelty. His body convulsed violently, the life force being torn from him. With a final, guttural scream, the Artist's body went limp, the spectral figure dissipating as the Tragic Failure collapsed beside him.

The curse inside of talent left his fallen form as it went into failure who immediately began undergoing transformation. The once frail and shaky figure now stands taller, with an aura of newfound confidence and vigor. His twisted fingers straighten out, becoming elegant and dexterous. The cloudiness in his eyes clears, revealing a sharp, intense gaze filled with a blend of sorrow and newfound purpose.

His physique, while healthier and more robust, still shows signs of the frailty they once endured, making them appear both formidable and tragically beautiful.

His clothing transformed into something that combines tattered elements with vibrant, artistic embellishments. An ethereal brush, glowing with a soft but radiant energy, hangs at his side.

Ikenga form disappeared from his sitting place as he appeared before Thomas, Placing a hand on his shoulder Ikenga said with a smile "Like your other siblings, You are to take a new moniker which is "The

Despairing Virtuoso" entity that embodies both the brilliance and arrogance of unparalleled talent, and the crushing despair of mediocrity and failure"

Thomas nodded, accepting his new name, Ikenga turned back to see Boros snake head closer to him, at the same time a face grew out from Osi tree form. They both are now fully awake. Their awakening immediately caused a commotion among the cursed spirits present as they began roaring or rather cursing out inexplicable disturbing words that Ikenga and other cursed beings present found sweet to the ear.

Ikenga seeing that smiled as he turned to Thomas "This is such a beautiful sight and i want to capture it, Include yourself in it"

Thomas, understanding Ikenga words nodded as his palette appeared before him, he looked around only to see he had no paper which Ikenga helped as he snapped his hand as a huge paper appeared before Thomas.

For this time in Thomas' life, he felt confident as his brush dipped into Palette as he began drawing. The whole realm fell silent as Thomas did his work and soon the drawing paper began glowing with a deep Purple gold light.

The paper unfolded presenting a sight that would scare any mortal but to everyone present they all had a smile on their face. Ikenga laughed as the paper divided with each cursed being having a piece in their hand.

Boros' form shrunk as he turned into a green light wrapping herself all over Ikenga. She looked at the curses she gave birth too, happiness filled her very being as she thought to herself "I have proved myself useful to him, that means I get to stay near him a bit longer"

Boros has been with Ikenga for the longest as she rarely leaves his side, she has learnt a lot about him during that process. While her creator tends to present himself as someone kind, because of the nature of what he is from birth "A god" Kindness was the limit he has for most beings even for his own child.

Ikenga has a deep curiosity of things and always liked being surprised even though he doesn't show it. He has deep appreciation for those with talent and is able to make good use of it.

Thinking back on the annoying bird, she can only conclude his absence from the realm being that he has achieved nothing over the long years and knowing Ikenga he doesn't mind, but Boros knows that for existence like her and Tweet. Ikenga not minding is not what they want as that means they can no longer be near his grace.

It truly is funny to Boros because Ikenga's action of not minding is the greatest gift to most because that means you are truly free to act on your own will without his influence. Freedom was a new concept Boros has observed most humans were obsessed with.

At first she looked down on this concept but over the years she found herself beginning to like and accept this concept because While Ikenag never took away her freedom and she was allowed to do whatever she wanted.

Being near a being as Ikenga made her feel like she always had to be above and beyond in everything, even though Ikenga himself never made her request. But after the first 10 years after Ikenag went to sleep, Boros came to understand the concept of freedom as she started feeling like she no longer had anything to prove.

Yet when Ikenga woke up from his sleep and she tried heading back to his realm yet for some reason couldn't, she began missing being near him, falling asleep with him on a tree.

As Boros pondered these thoughts, she felt a sudden tug in her essence. The green light surrounding Ikenga flickered. She realized she had formed a deeper bond with him than she initially understood. This bond was both a blessing and a curse, tying her to Ikenga in ways that both comforted and constrained her.

A soft whisper echoed in her mind, "Boros, why do you cling to me so?" It was Ikenga's voice, gentle yet probing.

Boros hesitated, then responded, "Because being near you gives me purpose. I've seen the world and tasted freedom, but it's your presence that grounds me."

Ikenga's silence was contemplative. When he finally spoke, his tone was softer than before. "You have always been free, Boros. My presence should not be a chain, but a sanctuary. Find your own path, and if it leads you back to me, it will be because you truly desire it, not because you need it."

Boros felt a warmth spread through her being. She understood now. Freedom was not just the absence of constraints but the presence of choice. And her choice, for now, was to stay by Ikenga's side, not out of necessity, but out of genuine desire.

Ikenga looked back at the cursed beings who were staring at him with confusion. "I am sure you are all puzzled as to why you were initially summoned here."

Pointing at Boros and Osi, Ikenga continued, "It was because of the awakening of these two, who are responsible for the birth of cursed spirits. But it was also time for the advancement of the cursed system."

The Covetous Leviathan stepped forward, its voice a low growl. "Advancement of the cursed system? What does that mean for us?"

Ikenga nodded. "You all know the reason why curses came to be in the first place. Your current existence is a reflection of twisted aspects of human desires and ambitions."

"Wealth—the Covetous Leviathan," Ikenga began, pointing to each one in turn. "Beauty—the Enchanting Siren, Power—the Tyrannical Juggernaut, Knowledge—the All-Knowing Oracle, Fame—the Spotlight Phantom, and Talent—the Despairing Virtuoso. Each of you embodies the dark side of these aspects."

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The Tyrannical Juggernaut clenched his fists, his voice booming. "So what is our purpose now?"

Ikenga's gaze was steady. "The fact that you have extracted yourselves from these desires and regained consciousness, even in your cursed state, is precisely why you are here today."

The All-Knowing Oracle tilted her head, her eyes piercing. "And what does that mean for our future?"

"Every cursed spirit is drawn to the essence of what you represent. Therefore, from this moment on, in the hierarchy of curses, you will be known as the 'Arch Curses'. No other curse will achieve the same

status you hold now. Every cursed being from here on will fall under your dominion, depending on the nature of their curse."

The Spotlight Phantom's ethereal voice cut through the air. "So, we are to be leaders of these new curses?"

"Yes," Ikenga affirmed. "You will guide them, control them".

The Despairing Virtuoso sighed, a melancholic tune echoing in his voice. "And what of our desires? Are we forever bound by them?"

Ikenga's expression softened. "Your desires are part of you, but they do not have to define you. You have the power to transcend them. The completion of what you are today is something many will wish they had."

"Depending on the course and action you all take from now on, godhood is present to you all. It all depends on if you can grab that chance."

The All-Knowing Oracle's eyes gleamed with curiosity. "Godhood? What do we need to do to achieve this?"

Ikenga continued, "I will be leaving this world very soon, which is why your very being and existence is crucial for maintaining the world as it is today. In the near future, I may return, but if I do not, bear in mind this: a demigod, the daughter of Keles, will make her way to my realm. She will grasp the fruit of godhood and ascend."

The Covetous Leviathan's eyes narrowed. "And what does this mean for us?"

"After her ascension," Ikenga said, "you all have the freedom to choose whether to join her in the duty she will undertake as a god. You can either continue to oversee the balance of curses in this world or align yourselves with her divine mission."

The Enchanting Siren's voice was thoughtful and hesitant, Ikenga noticed that, so he waited for her to speak "Father, If I may speak?"

Ikenga raised a brow at how she addressed him, he wasn't the only one as Osisi's head turned to look at her even Boros who was wrapped around Ikenga constricted a bit harder.

Ikenga chuckled before gesturing for her to continue, the other cursed seeing Ikenga's reaction had a smile on their face. A feeling they thought was absent after becoming what they are somehow was made present. A recognition and acceptance from the very being who made you look the way you are was enough compared to the recognition they were solely looking for before.

Siren smiled as she pointed up to the sky "I believe I found my way forward as I have felt this attraction coming from the sky after my completion"

An Image was shared to Ikenga through their connection, The Image was the moon where Mahu resisted. Ikenga's real body who was in Mahu's real paused, the same with Mahu as she momentarily dazed off with her whole body glowing.

Ikenga knew what that was "Precognition" as they got stronger, small abilities truthful to what they were beginning showing itself. In this case when something concerning a god is brought up, for a small moment the god is able to get a small glimpse of the future picture not the whole but a small glimpse that was enough for the god to work with.

Mahu and Ikenga both looked at each other before Mahu smiled and said to Ikenga "She indeed is has a connection with me"

Looking around she said "My realm will be lonely once you are gone, I don't mind having her over to stay with me"

Ikenga, curious but not wanting to spoil the future surprises, nodded as his attention turned back to his realm. Looking at the siren, Ikenga said "The lady up there is interested in having you after once you have left my realm, what do you think?"

Hearing Ikenga's word, Siren eyes widened as she happily nodded "It would be an honor father"

Ikenga nodded as he looked at the other curses before asking "Does any of you feel the same connection Like your sister the siren"

The all knowing Oracle raised his hand as he Turned back towards Osi before speaking "I felt similar connection but It is coming from the divine cursed tree behind me"

Oracle traced his hand across Osi's thick trunks as he said "There is a powerful curses pertaining to Knowledge placed on the fruit of these trees, I somehow feel Like it's my job to take care of the tree and its fruits"

"Interesting" Ikenga thought to himself, he indeed laid a curse of the fruits after his dealing with the primates living in the spirit realm and the curse can form their deep need to progress their race through knowledge and now for one of his curses to notice that was interesting to Ikenga.

Osi meanwhile was looking at the all knowing Oracle "I finally have a companion who will delve into the dreamland of knowledge with me" Osi for the longest has always studied cursed energy to better understand his very existence.

During this study of curses, he occasionally delved into other knowledge which in some way was kind of unavoidable as his home in the mortal world was a place of study for the apelings. It can be said that the druid profession was created with his help.

Ikenga smiled "You both can handle each other, I am curious to see the result of what becomes of you two"

Looking at the other curses who shook their heads showing that they have felt no connection. Ikenga nodded before Looking down at his shadow where Phantom made his home and asked "what about you?"

"I am already with my connection" Phantom said to Ikenga who nodded his head.

Looking back at the cursed beings, Ikenga waved his hand as a portal to the spirit realm opened up. The arch curses looked confused at him.

Pointing at the portal, Ikenga said "Your presence in the mortal world should be diminished as much as possible, Before your completion, you were all able to affect a city with your presence alone and right now kingdoms will fall into chaos with your presence alone"

"What are we to do in the spirit realm?" Virtuoso asked.

"You are to take up the assignment of your position once you get there, the realm spirit will help with that. Also having you in the spirit realm will help it grow and adjust, in turn creating a home suitable for curses"

Looking at the sad Arch curses, Ikenga said with a serious tone no longer as light hearted "This is also for your own safety, You will understand in the future how much of a thorn you are to the human race, your very existence is the dark part most human try very hard to hide yet because of your existence hiding is no longer a choice"

"It won't come as a surprise to me in the future, If there are human powerhouses seeking out each of you to end your existence, ou all are strong but not invincible"

Looking at the cures Ikenga continued "Few of you are compact oriented and are able to take care of yourselves but the same can't be said for the others. If somehow in the future, ways is found to overlook the passive effect you have on people then you will be left open to be dealt with"

"Understood father " They all said as they bowed toward Ikenga who once again began smiling as he reassured them. "It is not a place of exile but a haven for growth. You will not be abandoned there."

"In there you can let go and understand fully the power you wield and beside the happenings of the world won't be forgone to you" Ikenga said with a smile.

Juggernaut huffed as went through the portal, followed by Leviathan and lastly Virtuoso. The portal closed behind the three, meanwhile behind Siren a portal leading to Mahu's realm opened up for, with no hesitation she made her way into it.

Oracle meanwhile looked at Osisi whose body opened up to show a space filled with books, the trunks went back to normal after he went inside. As for Ikenga, his construct dispersed into dots of lights, Phantom found himself under the shadow of the real Ikem who was with Mahu.

Down on the western continent, Erik and his son were in the throne room waiting for Iris and her companion, they both got a message from the harpies that they have successfully found how Silas manipulation works.

Erik for the past few weeks has been mentally worn out, dealing with his people, increasing frustration and questioning, it got even worse when people began to take note of people's disappearance. Helping the harpies didn't come at an easy cost as both parties were in the blind so all they did was guess and hope the batch of people kidnapped were those needed.

Chapter 239:

The door to the palace opened to show Iris with her wings spread out, holding a small golden plated chest. Erik, seeing that, immediately walked down from his throne before he quickly asked "Is that it?"

Iris nodded but she didn't look to happy "Inside the chest is the culprit but before we start, I have to Inform your majesty Erik that those who have been compromised can't be saved"

Erik heard her words but didn't pay much mind to it as he was too drawn to the chest ready to find out the source of his trouble, Taking the chest away from Iris.

Erik took a deep breath before opening it, looking inside the chest all Erik found was something similar to a piece of hair. Enhancing his vision with mana, Erik noticed it was hair but a creature that looked like a hair and this one is dead.

Iris chose to speak up this time "What you see there is what I call a parasite, most living beings have some kind of parasite in them which lives in symbiosis with them"

"The parasite you are holding, I can proudly proclaim, is very uncommon in our world except for those compromised by Silas. Silas somehow got his hands on such a creature that is able to live in symbiosis with its host, altering their behavior and making them loyal to him, Worst part is that nothing is out of the unusual until Silas decides to activate the parasite" Iris explained, her voice tinged with frustration and a hint of fear.

"My comrade made a hypothesis that Silas relationship with the creatures are similar to a hive mind like bees and their queen. In this case Silas is the head of the hive mind able to easily influence other parasites"

Erik's brows furrowed as he looked at the tiny, lifeless creature. "So, Silas has been using these parasites to control my people, activating them at will?" he asked, a mix of anger and disbelief in his tone.

Iris nodded. "Yes, Your Majesty. Those who have been compromised by these parasites are beyond saving. Once the parasite integrates with the host's nervous system, it becomes impossible to remove without killing them."

Erik's face darkened with fury. "Then we must find a way to stop Silas before he decides to activate them and cause more chaos"

Iris shook her head at Erik statement "It will be impossible to catch him off guard, during our time dissecting people, there was always this creepy sensation of being watched and we all concluded that this was Silas"

"The parasite can transmit maybe images or information of their current surroundings to him so wanting to find and stop him is impossible besides he should know by now that we have found how his manipulation works" Iris said as she took a step back.

Erik raised a brow at her action "what are you doing?"

Iris gave Erik a lady royalty bow before she answered with a subtle smile on her face "I believe we have help have help you and the humans enough"

"This is where we take a step back and leave mortal problems to mortals, don't you think so your majesty?" Iris asked as she looked at Erik.

Erik's eyes widened in disbelief. "You can't be serious. You're abandoning us now, at our most critical hour?"

Iris straightened, her expression calm and resolute. "This battle is yours to fight, Erik. We have provided you with the knowledge and tools you need to face Silas. The rest is up to you and your people."

Erik's anger flared, but he quickly suppressed it, realizing the futility of arguing. "Very well, Iris. Thank you for your assistance. We will handle this from here."

Iris nodded, a glint of respect in her eyes. "I believe in your strength, Erik. You will prevail."

Before walking away, she said "I wish you a happy cleansing." With that, Iris turned and walked away, her wings shimmering in the torchlight. Erik watched her go, a mix of frustration brewing within him.

"Cleansing?" Erik thought to himself in confusion as he looked down at the small chest he was holding, it was then it clicked.

For a second everything turned blurry for Erik, the implication of the word was something Erik doesn't like or want to see happen but from the way things are going it seems he has no choice but to do that.

Erik stood in silence when the palace door was opened again to show a guard who came in a hurry, Jonas who knew his father needed a moment to get things together met the guard halfway before asking "What is it?"

The guard bowed "The priest from the sun kingdom met with the Harpies envoy after a short unknown discussion, the sun priest made a request to head back to his kingdom"

Jonas hearing that stood wide eyes as he looked at his father, Erik sighed before saying to the guard "Let him go, keeping him here will send a bad message to the sun kingdom"

The guard nodded before leaving, Jonas walked towards his father "Do you think the Harpies informed the priest of our lies to him, father?"

Erik took a moment to think before responding "I don't think so, the Harpies seem adamant in letting humans solve their problems themselves . Even though they are in cahoot with the sun kingdom, there is no benefit for them to sow discord between us and the sun kingdom"

Jonas nodded to his father's words "Then what do you think she said to the priest?"

Erik walked back to his throne while holding the chest "I think it has something to do with a new religion the godlings race are trying hard to keep at bay but from the recent news from the Northern part, it seems it can be held much longer"

"If possible, I would like to tackle the Silas problem before the outbreak of the new religion reaches our side but from the way things are going, we are about to have two waves of problematic issues weighing on us. The harpies must have shared the news with the priest of this so that they can prepare themselves' ' .

Iris who was now in the sky took a look back at the humanity kingdom. If possible she would have liked to stay and help them much more but Kael message to her before she left and made her stay away.

Kael informed her of how since the beginning of this, their actions against the humans have been pushing the ethical boundary of the humans, like the sky drop and the convincing of the human leader to give away some humans as test subject, even though the second one was mostly of good help to the humans, it still doesn't excuse what they were doing.

Later, their backhand play in all this would be known but that is something they can still deal with. The problem now is that after Iris found the problem of Silas, the solution to the problem isn't something the harpies should put their hands on.

The only way to end the Silas problem is by killing those who have been compromised, there is no other way to end it. From the look of things, it is unknown how many have been compromised in Erik's kingdom but estimation shows that one third of the people in Erik's kingdom are compromised not to mention those of important standing in the human kingdom.

Kale told Iris that the first two problems can be solved but when it comes to mass killing of humans, the Harpies should not have a hand in dealing with it as the blame can be easily shifted to them on the reason that they are not humans.

Iris informed the priest of the possible cleansing about to happen and at the same time, on the order of Bernard who still has his suspicion that Silas may have played a hand on the sun kingdom but he doesn't dare to use that hand, nevertheless it doesn't make it any better if there was ever a chance of that.

"Good luck" Iris said as her body was covered with golden flames as she penetrated through the cloud in a burst of speed after she swung her wings.

Erik sat in his office with the chest on the table in front of him, "How was he to find other parasites using the one in front of him and what was he to do once he found them?"

Iris already told him there was no saving of those hosted with the parasite as it has become an essential part of them living, so extracting the parasite or killing it can't be done without the host dying in the process.

If possible, Erik would like to get his team of researchers to start finding ways to locate other parasites but since now one in his castle or kingdom can be fully trusted, it will be all up to him to do it alone.

Chapter 240:

Erik sat in his office, the dead parasite before him. Without any records of this creature, he had to rely on his own knowledge and magical prowess. He closed his eyes and channeled his magic, focusing on the parasite. If it was one of a kind, then perhaps it had unique magical properties that he could exploit.

He began by casting a series of diagnostic spells, hoping to discern any residual magic within the parasite's remains. As he was casting the spell, memories of his past world emerged in his mind where he was in class with other elves doing something similar. As his hands glowed with a soft blue light, he sensed faint traces of dark magic, suggesting the parasite had an inherent magical signature. This was a crucial discovery—it meant that, despite being dead, the parasite could still be traced through its magical essence.

Erik decided to create a magical sensor attuned to the parasite's unique energy. He gathered rare crystals and enchanted them with a spell designed to resonate with the parasite's magical frequency. This device, once completed, would allow him to detect the presence of similar magic within living hosts. Only downside was that it wasn't efficient enough.

Once he was done with the crystal, Erik walked around his castle to test the sensor working. It worked well but not as well as he wanted it to, for the sensor to find another parasite, he had to get close enough to work which wasn't optimal.

In a day Erik found about ten compromised personnel in his castle which wasn't to Erik liking, he did his best to play off his finding of them since Iris informed of Silas being able to see and know what happens through other parasites.

That didn't stop Erik from nabbing one compromised maid. Erik began working on a better sensor, at the same time he didn't give up on trying to save those hosted with the parasite. However, as Erik delved deeper into his research, a gnawing realization took hold. The more he learned about the parasite, the clearer it became that it had integrated so deeply with its hosts that it had become an essential part of their biological systems. Extracting or killing the parasite would inevitably result in the death of the host. This horrifying truth weighed heavily on him, and despair started to creep in.

The thought of condemning countless people to death was almost too much to bear. Erik's mind flashed with images of innocent faces, people he had sworn to protect. His hands trembled as he continued his work, the weight of his responsibility pressing down on him like never before. The device and spells he was creating would only serve to identify the doomed, not save them.

He knew he needed to devise a way to neutralize the parasite's influence without harming the hosts, but every avenue he explored led to dead ends. The parasite's integration was too perfect, its magic too entwined with the life force of its victims. The realization that there was no way to save the infected felt like a punch to the gut, each revelation cutting deeper into his resolve.

Despite his growing despair, Erik refused to give up. He continued to research, hoping against hope for a breakthrough. He dug deeper into his memories, anything that might offer a glimmer of hope. Yet, the truth was unavoidable: the only solution to stop the parasite was to end the lives of those it had infested.

Erik's study became a sanctuary of sorrow and determination. The air hummed with magical energy as he tirelessly refined his spells and sensors, each small success tinged with the bitter knowledge of what it would mean. Every enchantment and magical device he created brought him closer to identifying the infected, but also closer to the heart-wrenching task of deciding their fate.

Jonas noticed his father's state, so he did his best to stay closer to him. Erik took comfort in knowing that none of his family members was infested so it did help a bit having his son working with him.

It took two weeks for them to be done, Erik and Jonas stood looking at the huge magical sensor they built, it was activated as they both were loathing the sight they will see once it was activated.

While they were looking at the device, a small magic circle showed itself at the ear of Jonas where a voice came through saying "It has all been laid out"

"Good work, stand by for further orders" Jonas said as he looked at his father.

After they were done with the device, Erik and Jonas made the effort of building a smaller sensor connected to the bigger one, these smaller sensors were all sent to city and towns far away from the capital city, basically all lands under the human kingdom had a device layed out in them waiting to activate.

Erik's eyes looked determined as he placed his hand on the crystal activating the device, and an invisible wave of mana pulsed out of the device spreading out further out of the capital.

At the same time, the other device activated sending out the same invincible pulse, the pulse connected with the bigger one bouncing off each other.

On the bigger device, a hologram map of the human kingdom appeared in front of Erik and Jonas who were early looking at the hologram before a small red ping went off.

Soon another ping went off, that was the catalyst as soon half of the map was filled with red ping. Erik was expecting something similar to happen but when it really did, he found out he wasn't really ready.

While Ikenga was shocked, the people of humanity noticed something weird, as for some reason most people on the street in front of them, or those they were having a conversation with momentarily blanked out.

It wouldn't have meant anything if it happened to only one person but everyone experienced and saw the same thing which sparked up a conversation and whispered among themselves.

The work office was silent as Erik and Jonas both stared wide eyed at the hologram, the door to the office opened to show the queen walking in carrying with her desert and steaming tea.

She noticed both men didn't pay attention to her so she dropped off the tea at the table before walking towards them. She was about to say something when her eyes were caught by the hologram, understanding what that meant, the queen held her mouth in fear as tears began falling from her face.

Erik's hands were clenched under his robe, all he ever really wanted was revenge for his people, deciding the fate of millions and thousands of people was something he never really expected would happen to him one day.

So this is what it takes being a leader, Erik thought to himself mockingly remembering his slander of the elf chief when he was young, he never really understood the pressure that can be with the position of a leader and right now he is.

Looking at his son, Jonas beside him. Erik dreaded handing over such a position and choice to his son but that wasn't a choice he could make on his own.

In his own, nobody taught him but at least he was here to teach his son. Gathering himself together, Erik cleared his throat, the royal air around him emerged as he calmly ordered his son.

"We now know who we can trust, so call the council member. This time we expose the plan to them and let them in on the decision we are about to make" Erik said to Jonas who was taken back by his father suddenly changed.

Jonas felt himself calming down seeing the way his father was presenting himself so he took a deep breath before bowing and said "understood." With that he turned around only to see his mother with tears on her face.

He was about to say something, when he felt his father hand on his shoulder "Go, let me take care of her"

Jonas nodded solemnly and left the room, his footsteps echoing through the silent halls of the castle. Erik turned to his wife, her tear-streaked face a mirror of his own inner turmoil. He reached out, taking her trembling hands in his.

"We always knew this might happen," Erik began softly, his voice steady despite the storm raging within him. "But I never wanted it to come to this."

The queen nodded, her eyes searching for any hint of hope. "Is there truly no other way?"

Erik shook his head, the weight of his responsibility pressing down on him. "Every option leads to the same end. The parasites are too deeply entwined with their hosts. We can identify them, but we cannot save them."

Tears flowed freely from the queen's eyes, and Erik pulled her into an embrace, holding her tightly as if to shield her from the harsh reality. "We must be strong, for our people and for our family. This is the only way to protect those who are still free from this scourge."