

The Primal Hunter

Chapter 1151 - A Life of Two Masks

Jake kept watching as newly renamed Golden Forest King slowly lowered himself to ground, control of his own energy a bit wobbly. Energy was still pulsing throughout Unique Lifeform's recently formed body, as it seemingly took a few moments for it and mask to fully become one.

Only a moment, though, as soon King landed on grassy ground softly. Artemis and Yggdrasil had both taken a step back, allowing just Jake and Unique Lifeform to have ir little reunion.

wisps of consciousness settled on Jake as he felt Unique Lifeform still adapting to everything, but once he was confident his former Nevermore teammate could hear and understand him, he really couldn't help himself.

"Man, are you lazy or what? You're hopelessly behind in levels. What have you even been doing while dead?" Jake said, crossing his arms and shaking his head.

"I'm more surprised seeing you've managed to get any levels at all as last time we met, you were still lazing around, wallowing in your own stupidity after severely injuring your soul," familiar voice of King echoed in Jake's head, making him smile.

A part of him had still been afraid that creature brought back wouldn't truly be arrogant asshole he knew. However, seeing as King's massive ego couldn't even give Jake one joke after literally having a god help get him revived, it was definitely same King as before, despite changed name.

Speaking of...

"What's up with name change? Look, I'm not saying you can't change your name, but you've already had three in brief period I've known you, and if you keep up this pattern, you'll have hundreds if not thousands by time you fail your ascension to godhood," Jake fired back with a smile.

"I only change my name as a result of very important events. Dying to you and subsequently finding myself bound to you like a slave was certainly worth changing it to remind myself of my own stupidity," former Fallen King said. *"In same vein, it's certainly an equally massive event when I finally manage to rid myself of chain around my soul."*

“Doesn’t really explain name,” Jake shrugged, not offended at all that King was happy to be free of him. In fact, it was a sentiment he very much reciprocated.

Even if connection had been somewhat useful at times, it was still an overall negative, in Jake’s opinion. He fundamentally opposed what it presented, and while Jake never took advantage of it, mere fact that he could was enough for him to hate its existence.

He also knew that King despised it even more than Jake did, and for good reason. Jake also knew that King would have done borderline anything to get rid of chain holding him back, and that he’d spent much of his free time researching a solution.

“I considered a few different names, but more important than my new name was to get rid of old one. Forest was chosen because I’ve always felt a deep connection to forest from a conceptual standpoint. A forest represents a domain of life for monsters of all kinds. It’s a facilitator of existence. This is domain I proclaim myself king over. As for Golden... well, first thing I noticed after awakening in this new form was that my power of gold had increased in potency substantially, so it came naturally,” King actually answered Jake’s question seriously.

“Could have just gone with Golden King of Forest, n,” Jake shrugged. “Would be a good callback to your original name.”

“It wasn’t my original name and far from my first one. I also consciously wanted to avoid a name like that. Calling myself King of Forest signifies re’s only one forest for me to rule over,” Golden Forest King said seriously. *“Additionally... in event of my ascension to godhood, my legacy skills would sound dumb. Something like Force Blast of King of Forest simply sounds far too silly and repetitive.”*

“Huh, never even fought about that,” Jake muttered. “But actually a pretty good point.”

“Naturally. I plan on sticking with this name permanently,” King said.

“To be clear, I won’t think of you or refer to you as Golden Forest King. Ever. Forest King you can have, but definitely gonna mentally ditch Golden part,” Jake said, being his usual honest self.

“I do not find myself surprised at learning that three words are too difficult for your mind to consistently put toger. You’re truly lucky to find yourself Chosen of Malefic Viper and not a god with a longer name.”

“Thinking about it more, it’s actually hard to find a peak-level god with a long name...” Jake muttered. All Primordials had short official names, a lot of m even just one word.

Turning to Artemis, whom both Jake and King had expertly been ignoring until now, Jake asked a very serious question:

"Is making your Legacy skills sound good part of considerations gods make when deciding on a name?"

Artemis threw Jake quite a glance as she sighed. "In my case, I'm just using my name. It's also quite rare for gods to have chosen their own name, as you more often than not simply get assigned one, and Records around that name eventually crystallize and give it actual power."

"Fair enough, but surely there have been gods who didn't like their assigned titles and forced through something else?" Jake said, having a very hard time believing no god had been pissed off about what others called him.

"There likely have been, but those forsaken names tend to be forgotten," Artemis shrugged.

"I do apologize for hunter's incessant need to sate his own curiosity," Forest King butted in as he bowed toward her. *"This one greets Goddess Artemis, and I believe I also have you to thank for my revival."*

"I was barely involved," Artemis shook her head. "Mor Tree and Jake were ones behind everything."

"Your modesty is admirable. I know from personal experience that no task which involves interacting with hunter for prolonged periods can possibly be described as easy," King said offensively before turning toward dryad made by Yggdrasil. *"I believe it is only proper to thank you once more. As I stand here, I feel your power echoing throughout my body, and I can only display gratitude for vessel you created. It surpasses all expectations I could possibly have."*

Yggdrasil looked at King for a few moments before nodding. Jake didn't know exactly what had just happened, but he got a strong feeling that two had briefly spoken telepathically with one another, having a small private conversation that Yggdrasil seemed satisfied with result of. This chapter is updated by *novel★fire★net*

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Turning her attention toward Jake, dryad lifted a hand as a mask appeared floating above it. **"One soul, one identity, but two masks of roughly equal power. one you've worn until now has returned to where it belongs on vessel of Unique Lifeform. This leaves your mask. mirror. While connection between yourself and Unique Lifeform has been severed, one between masks still persists, and your ownership of this mask also cannot be called into question."**

mask, which looked just like one Jake had before, slowly floated toward him as Yggdrasil kept speaking.

“ original mirror mask was destroyed when Unique Lifeform fell, but I reformed it and transferred many of Records from true mask into mirror, and alongside that, Soulbound connection you had to it. As masks remained connected eternally, it shall grow in tandem with Unique Lifeform, but in event of your demise, rather than Unique Lifeform suffering a disastrous injury to his soul, mask will simply return to his possession.”

Jake nodded, as he had a follow-up question.

“What happens if King decides to go and get himself killed again? Seeing as I’m walking around with mirrored Truesoul and all.”

“ mirrored Truesoul is made to be a conduit of power, and Unique Lifeform can draw from it to regenerate himself once more. It stores a copy of true him. However, dependent on nature of damage he takes that leads to his demise, you may find yourself in a situation where recovery will require powerful assistance from an outside force, not dissimilar to way he was reconstituted first time around.”

“Alright,” Jake said, more or less having just wanted to have it be confirmed that Forest King was still very much a cockroach that was hard to get rid of for good. He still wasn’t entirely sure about all stuff about Truesoul being mirrored and two masks allowing Unique Lifeform to technically have two souls and bodies at same time, but he wasn’t going to question it too much. With existence of creatures like Minaga out there, questioning anything related to Unique Lifeforms was a fool’s errand.

Instead, he turned his attention toward mask, which had floated over to him. Even up close, it looked exactly same, but when he used Identify on it, he saw that description had changed a fair bit.

[Mask of Golden Forest King (Unique)] – A mask containing mirrored Truesoul of Golden Forest King, a mighty Unique Lifeform. mask is made from wood of Yggdrasil using Records of Unique Lifeform. Due to its nature, mask does not obstruct vision when worn, is near-indestructible, and regenerates from any damage it may take. mirrored Truesoul and final intent of Unique Lifeform reside within, drawing power from true body of Unique Lifeform, allowing this item to continue to grow in tandem with Golden Forest King. When wearing this mask, all nobility-related abilities are significantly empowered. Enchantments: Mirrored Truesoul of Golden Forest King. Passively absorbs mana in atmosphere, increasing mana recovery rate by a large amount. Increases maximum mana by 25%. Requirements: Soulbound

As Jake’s knowledge of what mask contained had grown, so had description seemingly changed. From Jake’s understanding, this was a trait of unique items and even skills. As there would only ever be one Mask of Golden Forest King – at least only

one that was wearable by anyone, not Unique Lifeform – description could be fluid. Not too dissimilar from Jake's own Bloodline description.

When it came to actual changes in item's effects, only new thing was an effect empowering all of Jake's nobility-based abilities. In other words, a completely useless bonus that Jake had no way to use. However, he wasn't going to complain.

He already knew that this mask remained his most overpowered piece of equipment by far. Having a mask capable of increasing his maximum mana by 25% was just an absolutely insane bonus that was impossible to find under any usual circumstances.

What made it even better was that it came without any drawbacks. A skill like Anomalous Soul had also increased Jake's maximum mana by 25%, but that had come at a cost. Having it meant Jake needed more experience points for every level, required better Records to get levels and evolve in first place, and getting it hadn't exactly been easy. Especially not subsequent upgrades.

Meanwhile, mask had no downsides whatsoever. Instead, it even increased his mana regeneration by a notable degree when he wore it. It was an absolutely broken item that could only exist because of Unique nature of Unique Lifeform.

Creating an arrow capable of giving a percentage increase in stats wasn't very feasible. amount of Records contained within an item tended to be limited by what crafter was capable of during time of crafting. Even if some weapons or items could grow a little, this growth tended to be limited.

Shit, Jake's own Eternal Hunger was a bit same. Right now, it could grow with him, but that was only because original Records contained within had been enough to create a weapon fit for an A-grade. If Jake wanted to keep using Eternal Hunger all way to S-grade and beyond, there was a good chance he would have to re-craft or improve it in some or qualitative way.

mask, on other hand, would keep growing as long as Forest King did. Sure, there was a possibility that King would fail to evolve and mask would eventually weaken, but Jake had a hard time seeing that happen. Especially not now.

Usually, dying and being resurrected was a great way to fuck up one's Path and corrupt one's Records beyond recognition, making progress incredibly difficult. However, King hadn't truly died, and his resurrection had been quite endeavour, involving several gods and even a Primordial. Overall, it was definitely something that could well and truly be called a fortunate encounter for King.

Reaching out and taking hold of mask, Jake felt how even wooden grooves were exactly same as before. Without much hesitation, Jake took on mask and fully bound it to himself once more.

Instantly he felt rush of energy as his mana pool expanded, and mana in environment began being subtly sucked towards him. feeling was wonderful, and having mask back on his face just felt right.

Looking toward Forest King, ir gazes momentarily met, and Unique Lifeform gave him a quick nod of approval, which was all Jake needed.

“With this, I’ve done as was forepromised. My role here is done, and I shall trust Artemis to show you both out,” Yggdrasil said before turning to Jake. **“Alongside bow, I believe favors have been repaid.”**

“For sure,” Jake nodded, having never really felt like Yggdrasil owed him much in first place. He had just been a courier who brought her some good stuff from Villy, and if she truly owed anyone, it had to be snake god.

With a final nod, Yggdrasil dispelled her dryad body as it turned into pure nature mana and became one with environment once more. This left just Jake, Artemis, and Forest King back still inside Yggdrasil’s Divine Realm... which technically meant Yggdrasil was still re, just not actively.

“I will require some time to fully acclimate to my new body and ensure everything is as it should be,” Forest King said as he moved his clawed hand up in front of his mask, opening and closing it a few times.

“You do that at my place,” Jake said. “Panon of Life gave me an entire palace with way too many rooms.”

“Panon of Life... so that’s where we are,” King nodded. *“You’ve gone through quite efforts to facilitate my resurrection.”*

“Would have felt like a dick if I hadn’t,” Jake shrugged.

King was silent for a moment before he spoke again. *“I do have to make a confession. While time and place it happened hadn’t been planned, and my demise had occurred earlier than I would have preferred, I had already intended to-“*

“I get it,” Jake held up a hand and interrupted him. “No fucking way all puzzle pieces required for your return would have appeared that conveniently out of pure luck.”

“Perhaps I had underestimated your intellect. n again, I should not consider a statistical outlier a new standard,” King said, sounding almost impressed. *“But yes, my demise could have been considered halfway planned. Poorly planned, I came to learn from Primordial. If I’d had more time, I would have likely seen flaws... alas, I have no cause for complaint seeing final result.”*

“Hey, glad it all worked out, though I would recommend avoiding dying again any time soon, as I don’t have any or Primordials owing me favors right now,” Jake said with a smile.

“I’ll attempt to,” King said, actually taking well-deserved flak.

Jake didn’t say anything more but just felt glad that Unique Lifeform was back. It made him feel that at least some of damage Ell’Hakan had done was now remedied, and made him feel slightly better about his failures in past.

He also knew that he wouldn’t be only one happy to hear that King had been revived, as it was definitely time for a proper Nevermore Party Reunion.

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Chapter 1152 - Nevermore Party Party Invites

Still in a good mood, Jake turned to look at Artemis, who was passively waiting around for ir little reunion to end. Jake could also see that despite avatar’s presence, its mind was clearly somewhere entirely different. “I also think we’re done here... can you help us get home?”

“That’s more or less only reason I’m here,” Artemis said in a self-admonishing tone as she snapped her fingers. Space magic enveloped both King and Jake, and a few teleports later, y found mselves back at Jake’s temporary residence. Artemis promptly took her leave again once re, still busy doing something she wouldn’t tell Jake about.

Once it was just two of m, King looked around briefly before turning to Jake. *“Did you arrive at Panon of Life alone, or did-“*

“y’re all here, and I’m already way ahead of you,” Jake smiled, knowing what King was about to ask. He knew Unique Lifeform didn’t really like or people, but he at least did respect ones he’d spent fifty years with inside Nevermore. Especially his fellow monster, Sylphie, but n again, everyone tended to like Sylphie.

“I do hope y haven’t stagnated in my absence,” King said. *“Though it doesn’t feel like it has been that long since I fell. You will have to bring me up to speed about what happened since and what you’ve been up to.”*

“Oh, you know, just usual,” Jake shrugged. “Fought and killed Ell’Hakan before blowing up his planet, Viper ate Yip of Yore and slaughtered an army of gods, I met a being

whose influence on multiverse is so big that this being's mere existence is considered Forbidden knowledge, meaning I now know secrets of multiverse not even Primordials are privy to. Also, currently pursuing a romantic relationship with a goddess, created an or never-seen-before creature that's apparently able to extinguish all light in multiverse. Oh, and recently a contract was put out on my life, leading to me fighting an assassin from Court of Shadows that forced me into Shadow Realm where I ended up having a nice little conversation with Umbra that ultimately resulted in her giving me a cool new cloak that's definitely not just an item that makes it easy for her to track me... Ah, I nearly forgot, I also started a small war with Holy Church."

King stared at Jake, who just grinned widely. "Only one of those was a lie. Bonus points if you guess which one."

"Knowing ridiculousness someone like you gets up to, all of m may as well be true. Though I can assume factuality of some. In order to resurrect me, you would have had to kill Desolate Child of Loss. With that in mind, you must have won war for galaxy, having killed Ell'Hakan in process. Yip of Yore also meeting his death is also only to be expected, though that did happen sooner than I would have anticipated. Starting a war with Holy Church... hm, must have been in extension of conflict for Milky Way. As for rest of m, most of which seem to concern personal encounters and relationships you've formed, I truthfully do not find myself caring overly much, but I assume one of se to be lie," Forest King surprisingly played along with Jake's little joke.

"So that means you give up guessing?" Jake said cheekily.

"... I'll assume it's one about Forbidden Knowledge, as I'm unsure if you would even have been able to share that in first place. most obvious truth was about your encounter with Court of Shadows, as such a thing was only a matter of time, and from what I know of Umbra and story of Sin weapon you wield, encountering her personally was also only to be expected," Forest King said.

"Well, you're wrong," Jake smiled triumphantly. "About Forbidden Knowledge thing. Yeah, it definitely was only a question of time before a contract was put out on me. Anyhow, most of your deduction was pretty spot-on, but to fill in some details..."

Jake began to actually explain what had happened while King was out of commission. He also revealed his little white lie, though if he did end up helping evolve Warpsnatcher, it may as well have ended up being truth, albeit with some modifications, as Jake naturally had no way of knowing what kind of creature little fella would evolve into.

King listened intently to all that had gone down and even had plenty of follow-up questions. He seemed especially interested in what was happening on Earth after Jake informed him that ir universe had begun to open up, and it was a little embarrassing that Jake couldn't answer most of m due to his limited involvement with governing Earth.

Also, before y forgot, Jake used his token to reach out to ir or party members, unsure if he would even reach m, though in event he didn't, ors should contact m in his stead. Jake also decided to invite one or creature who had shown interest in King's return... and someone who could help fetch people quicker.

He was naturally speaking of Minaga, Unique Lifeform Jake was second-most familiar with... and unlike his former Nevermore party members, he had a strong feeling god would be first one to answer his call.

Jake did wonder what ors had been up to, though, and if y'd made good time while Jake himself was busy doing his own thing.

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Alone, Dina faced serious difficulties fighting, much less killing, a B-grade. While her defensive profile allowed her to drag on battle for a long time, she simply didn't have required damage output to eke out a victory. She would be one to run out of resources first, and while it was imaginable to find an opponent she matched up well enough against for her to win, Dina's Path had never revolved around fighting alone.

Meanwhile, Sword Saint had continually improved his own ability to hunt down B-grades solo, and with every successful hunt, his power grew, allowing him to more easily take down next one. He still needed a semi-good matchup to fight with full confidence, and re were opponents who countered him too much for him to have a good chance in a one-on-one, but se were getting rarer with every passing day. It was a limiter to his hunting speed, though, and every kill required ample preparations and recovery time.

se two had both grown tremendously in power during ir hunting trip, which had kept going longer after Jake returned from his own Hunting Ground. Rar than merely stick to one, Dina and Sword Saint moved around to different ones, fighting in varying biomes and opponents.

Individually, both were now far stronger, with Sword Saint clearly showing most growth. When it came to solo battles, that was.

When teaming up, Dina could truly show off her prowess. support druid and swordsman added up to more than sum of ir parts, and toger, y could dominate Hunting Grounds and even found mselves taking on pairs of B-grades, something not even Jake felt very comfortable doing.

Taken from , this narrative should be reported if found on Amazon.

Currently, two of m were facing off against a couple of pegasus-like B-grades, both of m displaying incredibly swift movements and powerful light magic. fight had already been ongoing for nearly a full hour as Sword Saint had found himself forced to slowly

whittle m both down while Dina ensured ir continued safety by continually healing m both and blocking movements of pegasi.

Finally, Sword Saint found an opportunity as he sliced off wing of a pegasus, making its flight unstable. Its mate tried to help, which put it in a bad position, allowing Dina to wrap one of its legs up in vines.

With a stab through gap between ribs, Sword Saint sliced monster open before he was pushed back by a shockwave of light magic. or pegasus, which had lost a wing, tried to heal m both, but Dina once more struck as a giant tree sprouted from ground and slammed down upon it like a hammer.

Both pegasi had taken severe damage from this assault, turning tide as Dina and Sword Saint focused on one of B-grade monsters and managed to kill it off with a Glimpse of Spring. or pegasus went into an enraged state, burning itself up from inside while pushing Sword Saint back repeatedly. Without Dina, he would have been in trouble, but with her at his side and a purely defensive stance, he managed to buy time long enough for B-grade's backlash from energy overdraft to hit.

Once weakened, it was a simple matter to finish it off, completing yet anor hunt. Dina, who was utterly spent and had lost a leg to an unfortunate slicing laser beam, sat down on a log as she rested. Sword Saint joined her with a body full of lacerations and holes, though he had managed to avoid losing any limbs this time around – an improvement from many of ir prior hunts.

Right as y'd started to recover, a presence fell upon m. Sword Saint was instantly at high alert until he recognized this aura... and a moment later, its owner appeared.

blue four-eyed Unique Lifeform teleported in with a huge grin on his face, blanketing his S-grade aura all over area. "Hey-yo! Wow, you two look like crap."

Looking behind m, he saw carnage from ir battle and two dead pegasi. "Ah, doing a bit of culling of local pegasi population. Understandable. Those damn things reproduce like rabbits." The link to origin of this information rests in [novel·fire·net](#)

"Good to see you too, Minaga," Sword Saint said as he sat cross-legged, bathing in energy of formation Dina had set up to help m recover faster. "May I ask purpose of your impromptu visit?"

"Oh, sure, sure," Minaga said, keeping his big grin. "You two have been invited to a very prestigious party."

"What kind of party?" Dina asked with a frown. Sword Saint also frowned slightly, unsure why Minaga would invite m if this was in any way related to Panon of Life. Unless it wasn't directly related to Panon, but...

"A reunion," Minaga said, spreading out his arms. "One attended not only by yours truly... but a second familiar Unique Lifeform."

Dina's eyes lit up upon hearing that, as she leaned forward with excitement. "Fallen King... y succeeded?"

"Fallen King?" Minaga said with a frown before sighing. "Sadly, I fear Fallen King is gone for good..."

Dina's excitement instantly faded as she now just looked confused. Meanwhile, Sword Saint had quickly seen through Unique Lifeform's antics, and luckily, he didn't keep Dina in suspense for too long.

"But do not fret, instead, you can meet this new guy called Golden Forest King. I know, I know, name leaves much to be desired, but I swear he's a pretty swell guy when you get to know him. Actually, on second thought, he can be a bit of an asshole, can't he? You should know, you did spend a few decades stuck with him in a World Wonder," Minaga said, clearly enjoying being able to deliver good news.

Despite throwing a few angry glances towards Minaga, Dina was clearly happy as she turned to Sword Saint. "We should hurry up and recover. King is at Jake's residence, right?"

"I would assume so," Sword Saint said, finding it amusing that Dina purposefully avoided speaking to Unique Lifeform.

"If you want, I could help you freshen up a bit faster," Minaga offered as a gift of peace. "Wouldn't want to be last ones to arrive. I already got anor clone fetching Sylphie, and it would be super embarrassing if you took longer than little hawk."

"Fine, we'll take you up on offer," Sword Saint answered for both of m as Minaga gladly waved his hand. Instantly, Sword Saint's body was entirely mended inside and out, with even his resource pools getting filled up a good deal. Unique Lifeform couldn't cure backlash from ir boosting skills, but being a bit weaker shouldn't be a problem if y were just going to a reunion party.

"All done! You two ready to go?" Minaga asked. "As this is an S-grade clone, we will need to use official teleportation channels."

"Sure, and let's head back," Sword Saint nodded. While he wouldn't say he and King ever got particularly close, he had missed his fellow member on World Council, and it would be good to reunite with anor also in dereliction of his political responsibilities.

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Elsewhere on Great Planet Jake's personal residence was located on, anor clone of Minaga had gone to fetch a certain Sylphian Hawk. Contrary to Sword Saint and Dina, who had both been fighting with ir lives on line all this time, or Jake, who had eir battled B-grades or trained his skills intense, Sylphie had been having a quite... different experience.

"Ree!" Sylphie screeched as she flew through turbulent torrent of winds, feeling it embrace her body and empower it.

"Ree!" a chorus of or bird-like spirits screeched as y all flew after Sylphie, ir glorious leader. Leading a flock of hundreds, Sylphie traveled through massive tornado, flying against wind as y slowly climbed it toward portal leading to true World Wonder known as Vortex Pinnacle.

flock of birds continued upward, growing closer and closer as intensity of winds grew more powerful. Eventually, some of spirits had to give up and stop ir ascent, but Sylphie kept going strong.

Even as final or C-grade spirit surrendered, she kept going, now only surrounded by B-grades. At this point, it was even getting hard for her, but Sylphie had already decided she wanted to break her previous record this time around, so beat her record she would.

As anor minute passed and Sylphie rose several kilometers higher, even some of B-grades had to drop out. Sylphie was still leading flock, but stronger B-grades would clearly be able to overtake her if y so desired. However, y allowed her to keep leading as tiny hawk simply refused to surrender.

Eventually, her body began to almost lose its form. Due to how intense winds were, holding onto one's physical form was extremely difficult, and if any of spirits found mselves dispersed, y risked taking extreme damage from being caught up in winds of Vortex Pinnacle.

Yet Sylphie soldiered on until she reached a point where even Minaga began to feel a bit worried. Not enough to step in, as Sylphs of domain would do so if y deemed it necessary.

Pushing herself a little furr, Sylphie struggled before she also found herself forced to give up and allowed wind to blow her back down towards ground. As she tumbled through air, Sylphie gave out a triumphant screech, making it clear to all she had surpassed her prior record.

While tumbling, a blue spirit bird with four eyes and weird tentacle-like appendages sticking out here and re appeared beside her, also tumbling down.

"Hey Sylphie," Minaga, in a hastily constructed bird transformation, spoke.

“Ree!” hawk responded, for some reason not at all surprised at seeing Unique Lifeform re.

“Yeah, I’m good, thanks,” Minaga responded, unbored despite spinning roughly eighteen thousand degrees every second. “I’ve come to fetch you for a reunion party.”

“Ree?”

“Yeah, re should be snacks.”

“Ree, ree?”

“Oh... oh yeah, good call. We’ll fetch some of those on way.”

“Ree.”

“Not gonna ask how you already know that, but sure, let’s head off right away.”

With those words – and a polite telepathic message to Sylph god in charge of domain – Minaga teleported two of m away halfway tumbling down tornado, able to take m all way back with this clone as it had been his god one... only taking a slight detour on way to pick up some very important party snacks.

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Chapter 1153 - A Quite Unique Party

Everyone knew ir Nevermore party had been an odd one. It included four people related to four different Primordials, while final member was a Unique Lifeform who didn’t have any direct relations to a Primordial, primarily because he couldn’t be blessed.

Most top parties had included only those from same faction. That, or y were at least put toger with blessed by gods who were officially allied. Aeon and Stormild were Primordials with no official alliances, but tended to remain entirely neutral so y could be left alone to ir own pursuits.

ir party even had a mixture of monsters and enlightened, anor major outlier. Monsters and enlightened very rarely did dungeons toger, much less mega-dungeons like Nevermore.

Yet ir ragtag collection of misfit geniuses had performed quite well and come out of Nevermore as top party of ir entire generation, even producing new all-time top scorer on Nevermore Leaderboards.

Usually, a party like this wouldn't have worked out so well. It was very rare to see people recognized as individual geniuses to group up toger like this, as teamwork was an important factor when exploring dungeons. Yet even that had worked out well, as while ir teamwork hadn't been extraordinary, y were all individually so competent and ambitious that everyone had willingly adapted to increase group's overall chance of success.

That's to say, everyone had been able to put ir ego aside at times if situation demanded it. This was only case because y respected each or and recognized competency of every member in party. This recognition that y were among peers had also allowed genuine friendship to bloom between five, as it was quite frankly hard spending over forty years with someone without at least finding some common ground. Content originally comes from *novel.fire.net*

Yet despite actually getting along, y never had chance to all meet up again after Nevermore. Not before this, anyway. Between all system events, Dina being from anor universe, and King being kind of dead, y had all been too busy.

Sure, it hadn't actually been that many years since y parted after Nevermore, even if it did feel like it. So much had happened, and y had all grown stronger during ir time apart – some more than ors.

Jake and King had hung out in his palace for a while as y waited for ors to arrive. Jake had gotten word that Minaga had taken task upon himself to fetch m all, which he naturally had no objections to.

y all arrived about as fast as Jake had expected m to, with Sword Saint and Dina getting re first. moment y stepped through gateway, Jake would tell two had recently gotten out of quite a fight as ir auras were still slightly unstable, showing that y had hurried re as soon as possible.

"Welcome once more to my humble temporary abode," Jake greeted m in entrance area of way too large palace.

"Thank you for having us," Sword Saint responded as he glanced around. "I was told–"

"garden," Jake interrupted, already knowing what old man was about to ask. "He's still getting familiar with having a body again, and I also get feeling that despite being dead, he did have some gains from experience."

"Are re any negative lingering effects?" Dina asked, worried. "Returning to life cannot have come without any cost... especially not after this long."

"Well, technically, King was never actually dead, so I don't think that applies here," Jake shrugged. "As for if he has any or issues, how about you just go ask him yourself?"

"We both know he wouldn't answer truthfully if he did have some kind of problem," Sword Saint chuckled.

"No, but from his response, you should at least be able to figure out if he does on your own," Jake rightfully pointed out. "Now let's go."

Jake turned to walk towards garden as something just occurred to him. "Wait, where's Minaga? He was one who went to get you, right?"

"He did, but he had us take last teleporter alone," Dina answered, shaking her head. "His excuse was that he would arrive with Sylphie and that having two clones at a reunion party at same time would just be weird."

"I suspect he also wants to make an entrance," Sword Saint added. "You know how Minaga feels about showmanship. If he has a chance to be over--top, he'll take it."

"True, true," Jake nodded in understanding as he continued leading two toward garden area. It was a large enclosed garden on one side of palace, and Jake had chosen this as ir reunion spot due to how much space re was. Also, King had wanted it to be outside as that would allow him to continue training until everyone got re, and for sake of any demonstrations of power, being outside was superior.

Jake suspected it was mainly because King had to stop floating to fit through doorways inside, but that was neir here nor re.

Reaching garden, y found Forest King floating in middle of it as several golden orbs revolved around his body. Each was filled with intense energy, but upon noticing ir arrival, King waved his hand and dispelled m all.

"hunter was right. You did arrive far more promptly than I presumed," Unique Lifeform said as he turned around and looked at Sword Saint and Dina. *"It's a genuine pleasure to meet you both once more, even if time between our last encounter and now is shorter from my perspective."*

"It's good to see you up and floating again," Sword Saint smiled. "Also, Golden Forest King now, huh? I guess it does make sense to get rid of "Fallen" if you no longer consider yourself such."

"It pleases me you understand intent behind change," King nodded.

As two spoke, Dina just stared at King. It took her a few moments to gar herself before she could no longer hold herself back from asking:

“That body... vessel... whatever it is you call it... did Mor Tree truly make it personally?” dryad druid asked with disbelief, already knowing answer to her own question.

“Indeed, Primordial did,” King nodded. “Her involvement in its creation is why I’m taking longer to adapt than I had originally planned. Primordial took my Records, my energies, and my blueprints and created a form from m using some of her own power. It’s... stronger than what I could have made myself, that’s for sure, and merely merging with body resulted in a forced upgrade or change to several of my passive defensive skills.”

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Jake hadn’t known that last part as he looked at Unique Lifeform with a frown. Noticing this, King waved him off. *“I say forced, but I could have merely chosen not to accept this body and forge one myself instead. However, doing so would have been a fool’s errand, as this one is strictly an upgrade. One that’s superior in channeling my energies is easier to heal by ors, and shall leave me more durable. only possible downside is that I need to now fully familiarise myself with it.”*

Relieved, Jake nodded in acknowledgment. He didn’t like thought of Yggdrasil having forced *anything* upon King, even if it had ultimately ended up helping him. Not because he didn’t find Yggdrasil particularly untrustworthy, but simply because he didn’t like concept of taking ors’ choices away like that.

“Can I try to examine you? Just for a bit?” Dina asked curiously.

“You go ahead. Do convey any changes you unveil,” King said as Dina walked over with hurried steps. She placed her hand on chest of Unique Lifeform and sent in a wave of energy to explore King’s body.

Jake and Sword Saint stood back quietly as nearly a full minute passed. From looks of it, King hid nothing from Dina and allowed her to explore away, indicating a very high level of trust. Having someone examine you like that could be a major risk if y had any insidious thoughts, especially when one doing so was capable of manipulating life energy.

Once she was satisfied with her preliminary exam, Dina pulled her hand away. “Amazing. structure is far more complex than before, but that isn’t even most significant change. It’s filled with actual life energy now and is capable of absorbing it from environment and your soul to restore itself. Healing you before was a bit difficult due to complex structure, but despite having gotten so much more complex, it’s also gotten far easier to mend in every way.”

“That is indeed something I also noticed,” King nodded. An idea seemingly occurred to Unique Lifeform just n as he looked over at Jake. *“Could you provide me with a health potion? I wish to test something.”*

"Sure," Jake shrugged as he took out a healing potion and tossed it to Forest King. Unique Lifeform caught the potion telekinetically as he made it float over into one of his clawed hands. On his arm he raised as golden fissures opened up all over it, making the wooden vessel split apart and get damaged in several places.

"Despite not possessing vital energy like you three, I wonder if this body can absorb it and turn it into useful life energy to restore this vessel," King said as he clasped the bottle in his hand, making it disappear entirely.

A few seconds later, Jake saw the arm of King begin to mend rapidly, and less than ten seconds later, it was fully healed.

"There was a lot of waste. Your vessel clearly isn't designed to properly integrate vital energy," Dina commented, having seen the process.

"Indeed. I shall stick to my own means of restoration," Unique Lifeform nodded.

"Or just use mana potions," Dina shrugged. "If you want it to, your body should be able to directly absorb any kind of mana and turn it into life mana to restore your body."

"I'm aware, but isn't efficiency too low?" King questioned his resident healing expert.

"Quite contrary," Dina said, sounding almost offended that King would say anything about a body created by Yggdrasil could be inefficient. "The only reason it may appear that way to you right now is because the body takes a lot more energy to heal than the one you had before, but with its increased durability, it's definitely a major overall gain."

"Hm, I see," King said as he examined his healed arm a bit. *"It appears I still have some testing left to do."*

"You can do that later," Jake said, shaking his head. "For now, we have something far more important to discuss."

Turning to Sword Saint, he looked at the old man with a serious gaze. "How many?"

"Sixty-seven," the swordsman replied, instantly knowing what Jake was asking about.

"What hell?" Jake exclaimed. "That many? Wait, is it just you, or both of you combined?"

"Kills I've been involved in," Sword Saint clarified. "Solo, it would be four. However, I see little meaning in pursuing solo battles right now, as I already find myself with plenty of gains from fighting with Dina."

“Alright... that at least makes me feel a bit better,” Jake muttered. “I’ve killed... less than that. But all solo! Kind of. re was this one encounter with a Chimera and a Forest Fae that could technically count as a two-on-two battle?”

“Sounds like we have plenty of battle stories to share on both sides,” Sword Saint smiled before looking over at Forest King. “With your current power, do you feel confident in taking on a B-grade?”

King hesitated for a moment before shaking his head. *“Confident would not be word, as it implies I believe my chances would be good. I’m not saying fighting a B-grade would prove impossible, but without truly knowing limitations of my new form and how powerful this oretical B-grade will be, I cannot answer with any confidence.”*

“Yeah, but when you reach our level, it should be pretty straightforward for you to fight B-grades, assuming matchup is good,” Jake said, sharing his genuine assessment.

Out of his four Nevermore members, Jake would consider King second-strongest after himself in most circumstances. Sure, Sword Saint and Sylphie both had higher offensive prowess, and Dina won when it came to defense, but as an overall package, King was still a Unique Lifeform and a pinnacle creature.

Now that he had shed his old form and adopted name of Golden Forest King, Unique Lifeform had grown even stronger, with his potential also higher than before. aura of King at least felt a lot more stable and powerful than before, and if Unique Lifeform had been higher level, Jake would have already gone for a duel.

“Oh, do not fret, I fully plan on hunting down B-grades in large quantities as I climb toward evolution,” Forest King reassured m.

“Maybe we could go hunting toger at some point?” Dina proposed, looking between both Jake and King. “I think it would be fun and maybe even a little nostalgic.”

“I’m not against it,” Jake tentatively agreed. “As long as we’re not carrying some lazy bum who’s far behind rest of us in levels.”

“I find your teasing amusing, especially when one considers facts,” King said, crossing his arms. *“Knowing how slow you tend to level, re is a high probability I shall find myself stepping into B-grade before you. Additionally, I wish to remind you that as you wear mirror of my soul upon your face, I got a small glimpse when you bound it. Ignoring fact that your soul remains damaged and needs to be fixed before you can evolve, your soul itself does not strike me as one that easily grows. It’s a vessel that requires more than most can provide, and while I find your Path admirable, it’s also a more arduous one.”*

Jake opened his mouth, but no words came out as he couldn’t really argue against any of what King had said. He also knew full well that monsters tended to level a lot faster than enlightened, especially if y actively worked for it. Based on how King was acting,

Jake had a good feeling he was going to work *very* hard to get some levels under his belt in *near* future.

"I think that any of us concerning ourselves with our speed of progress *rar* than *quality* of every step we take is a complete waste," Sword Saint shook his head. "Levels are all well and good, but I see *m* not as *goal* but as a side effect of striving for self-improvement."

"*Wisely* so," King agreed.

"Yeah, can't really argue with that," Jake shrugged. "But that doesn't make those level-ups feel any less awesome. I just really like to see numbers going up, I guess."

"Levels do feel nice," Dina nodded as she glanced around a bit. "Say, do you know when Minaga and Sylphie will arrive?"

Jake hesitated for a moment as he looked toward an empty spot on *lawn*. "Well... you know those two. I'm sure y'll pop up all dramatically when we least expect *m* to, probably with some silly-

"Surprise!"

"Ree!"

A blast of wind with sparkling light erupted from where Jake had just been looking as Minaga and Sylphie revealed *mselves* standing on each side of a long table filled with all sorts of different foodstuffs.

Jake had naturally noticed *ir* arrival a good while ago and had struggled hard to ignore *m* as Minaga had taken out a folding table and begun to set up snacks while Sylphie made sure to taste-test everything on offer.

Minaga's divine aura spread out after he revealed himself, which only displayed *anor rar* unique trait of *ir* Nevermore party... because Jake was fairly confident *y were* only party of C-grades capable of completely ignoring *aura* of a god and instead just stare at *god* in question as if wondering who's idea it was to invite him in *first* place.

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Chapter 1154 - A Proper Reunion Party

Sylphie and Minaga had truly gone all out when it came to catering of reunion party, and it quickly became clear that two had spent a bit of time teleporting around Great Planet to get food.

Was this all done because large palace Jake had been assigned didn't have plenty of high-quality food available? No.

Had anyone asked me to do this? Also no.

But not having been asked to do something had never stopped Minaga or Sylphie before.

After its initial light show died down, Jake shook his head. "Welcome to two of you. Happy that you have finally decided to join us.

"Oh, come on, you totally approve," Minaga smiled. "If not, you would have revealed our presence far earlier and ruined surprise."

"If you hadn't dragged Sylphie into this, I totally would have," Jake said in a serious voice.

"Hey! I would have you know that Sylphie and I are equal coconspirators!" Minaga expertly defended himself while crossing his arms. "Or is it just conspirators? Either way, we are in this together!"

"Ree!" Sylphie agreed, crossing her wings. Or, well, at least she tried to.

"Alright, alright," Jake waved me off. "Thank you for wonderful catering."

"You're welcome," Minaga said. "Now, allow me to introduce menu! From left, we have honey-roasted venison meat cubes, prepared by- " Latest content published on *novel* ~~fire~~ *net*

Jake exchanged glances with Dina and Sword Saint as Minaga went over every single piece of food on offer. It all sounded very fancy and expensive, with Sylphie screeching out her personal verdicts of how good every food item was after Unique Lifeform got done introducing it.

After what felt like an hour of everyone else humoring me, Minaga and Sylphie were finally done. I had taken long enough for Minaga to have summoned what looked like magical heating lamps above certain items to keep me just perfect temperature.

"So, what do party guests think?" Minaga said proudly.

"I don't have a mouth and cannot eat," Forest King was first to chime in.

“Yeah, which really shows that not all Unique Lifeforms are created equal,” Minaga sighed. “And by that, I don’t mean I have a biological advantage, but that I’m clearly superior in intellect. If I were you, I would have designed a body capable of eating.”

“I’m fully capable of absorbing natural treasures directly,” King said, crossing his arms.

“Well, yeah, but you can’t taste m, now can you?” Minaga shook his head.

“I taste m differently than you do, but I most certainly can. I see no need to create a clear weakness in my own design by creating an opening leading directly into my interior, all for sake of being able to consume food I don’t need in first place,” Forest King countered, holding nothing back.

“And that’s why I’m clearly superior in intellect,” Minaga proclaimed before swiftly changing topic. “Anyway, good to see you up and floating again! Yggdrasil did quite a wonderful job creating that vessel, didn’t she?”

King, seemingly over bickering with Minaga, answered honestly. *“Yes, it’s remarkable. I’ve yet to fully uncover all advantages of this improved form, but mere fact that it’s an improvement over my own original design is proof of her expertise.”*

“Yeah, for sure,” Minaga nodded along with a severe look as he inspected King. “depth of understanding one must have to create a vessel like that is truly astonishing, isn’t it? Admirable, even.”

“It truly is,” King agreed, fully willing to recognize just how good of a job Yggdrasil had done.

“For sure, for sure,” Minaga nodded. “Of course, Yggdrasil is no Unique Lifeform, which makes it even more impressive. n again, Yggdrasil is a very smart Primordial, so it would make sense for her not to simply handle such a task alone. In fact, I would even expect her to ask for consultancy from ors who may be even more familiar with Unique Lifeforms. Maybe even someone who knows a thing or two about multiple bodies and creating vessels for souls and whatnot. Perhaps even one without a skill to do so, as clearly freeform magic would be required for such a-“

“Wow, yeah, she definitely got lucky it all worked out,” Jake interrupted Minaga with a nod.

“Certainly she did,” Sword Saint concurred. “And without any help whatsoever.”

“It’s only expected for Mor Tree to perform so expertly all on her own,” even Dina fully agreed.

"I shall be sure to extend my thanks to Mor Tree once more if I'm given chance, her individual merit is undeniable," Forest King nodded, and Jake got distinct sense he'd known Minaga had been somewhat involved one way or another from beginning.

Minaga just looked at him and pouted. "Bullies."

"Ree," Sylphie screeched as she'd flown over and padded Minaga on head... truly delivering deathblow.

"What do you mean it's okay that she didn't ask me?" Minaga said, offended. "She... wow, even you are a bully."

"Nevermore party gotta stick together," Jake grinned. "It's only natural we are in agreement when it truly matters."

Minaga muttered something under his breath as he picked up a small biscuit with cheese and quickly munched it down. "I'm gonna eat all good snacks before you get to mine..."

Sylphie was quick to react to this as she did a quick fly-by and snatched a large skewer with meat on it for herself. Jake also shook his head and chuckled as he decided to give food a chance, Sword Saint and Dina also joining him.

Forest King even decided to take some of items, talking about how they were mana-rich enough to serve as sustenance. garden area of Jake's massive mansion also had plenty of seating available, allowing him all to sit down, and only a minute later, Minaga had already forgotten all about recent bullying session as he spoke animatedly about all his own recent adventures.

Jake also shared what he'd been up to since last time they met, Sword Saint and Dina doing same soon after. A lot of this recapping was for King to get him fully up to speed about everything, and others told him a lot of details that Jake had either forgotten or didn't know about. Especially Sword Saint had a lot of insight into how things had developed politically and what had happened to areas King ruled on Earth before his temporary demise.

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Dina and Sword Saint also shared plenty about their hunting adventures, with Jake also chiming in. Everyone besides Minaga and King was unsurprised when Jake talked about contract out on his life and his encounter with Chimera, with three nonchalant individuals not viewing contract on his life as a real problem.

It wasn't, but the fact that not a single person, not even Sylphie, seemed worried did hurt a little. Or maybe y just all had confidence in him. Eir way, some concern would have been nice.

one Jake was most interested in hearing about was Sylphie, who'd spent last many months with Sylphs. Jake had been a little worried about how she would be while out on her own, but from sounds of it, she'd gotten quite a positive welcome.

In fact, y had positively treated her like she was truly one of m in a fashion only innate curiosity of elementals would allow. Sylphie had made a lot of new friends and enjoyed "traveling winds" with m all. biggest wind y traveled was naturally offshoot of World Wonder that bled through wormhole down onto Great Planet.

Jake had briefly heard about this Vortex Pinnacle tornado, but more he learned about it, more he understood not just how frightening it was, but how beneficial it could be to all kinds of wind elementals. winds were infused with special concepts found only within Vortex Pinnacle, and understanding merely a fraction of se could help an elemental get far stronger.

Even gods of wind affinity could learn much from tornado, though if y wanted best gains, y would have to head to this Vortex Pinnacle itself. tornado on Great Planet was mostly for those who were still mortals, and for someone like Sylphie, it was best spot she could possibly be in.

That's also how, despite not having hunted at all during all this hunting by Jake, Dina, and Sword Saint, she'd still outpaced ir leveling speed.

[Juvenile Sylphian Hawk – lvl 331 – Divine Blessing of Stormild]

Alright, fact juvenile was still in her name also played a factor as Sylphie had advantage of naturally growing simply by existing. Sadly for her, party would soon be over, as when she evolved to B-grade, she would finally be considered a fully grown adult Sylphian Hawk.

When it came to how much Sword Saint and Dina had grown, y'd roughly kept pace with Jake, if not been a little slower, seeing as how Jake was now above both of m in level, with him being level 319.

[Dryad – lvl 311 – Divine Blessing of Nature's Attendant]

[Human – lvl 314 – Divine Blessing of Aeon Clok]

fact that Jake had outpaced m both by a little was something he felt was worth being proud of, especially when one considered he had a period of immense soul damage that stopped him from being able to gain levels. n again, he also had his large clash with Ell'Hakan and all Yip of Yore stuff, which netted him a lot of fast levels... but n re was

also Anomalous Soul thing to consider... oh, but Sword Saint was a Transcendent which tended to also affect leveling speed, and as a dryad, Dina only had to level a race and her class, with her race being a naturally slow-growing one...

In summary, comparing leveling speeds between individuals who each had their own unique Paths, all of which stood at a pinnacle, was kind of a waste of time. Everyone had their own advantages, downsides, and fortuitous encounters, which led to one's leveling speed fluctuating immensely.

The only person definitively behind the rest of the Nevermore group in levels was Forest King, something Unique Lifeform was teased plenty about. Especially Jake and Sword Saint took this opportunity to make fun of King as he knew he would soon be caught up with and overtaken, so he had to take advantage when he could.

Once they were all done eating and sharing stories of what they'd recently been up to, real fun could begin. With a god present, he had someone who could easily facilitate a few small duels or opportunities for them all to show off.

Jake was tempted to have a duel with Sword Saint, but decided against it. Now wasn't time or place. He had avoided dueling the old man for a reason, as he wanted their rematch to be a proper one.

Dina also wasn't super interested in duels. She'd already trained with Sylphie and Sword Saint, and with her lack of interest in participating, this left only a few possible matchups. In the end, rather than proper duels, it turned into a chance for Forest King to test out his new body and powers.

"I can't believe I'm being taken advantage of like this," Minaga complained as he created a transparent barrier around the entire area, and with another wave of his hand, spatially expanded the entire thing to turn the garden into a massive grassland.

"You could have just teleported us somewhere," Jake commented as he stood next to the god atop a small hill overlooking the two duelists below.

"Then he wouldn't have been able to show off," Sword Saint smiled.

"See, the old man gets it," Minaga said with a grin.

"You're far older than he is, though..." Dina commented.

"They were speaking about mental ages, I reckon," Jake explained kindly to her.

"I should brand you all heretics..." Minaga complained under his breath.

"Can you even do that? Or does it require some skill system decided not to give you because you're already too damn overpowered being, well, you?" Jake asked.

"I can," Minaga crossed his arms. "Never done it, but I totally can designate someone a heretic. Anyway, let's watch!"

"Sure, sure," Jake smiled before he turned his attention to two below.

On one side, Forest King floated slightly above ground, energy revolving around him. On the other side, a small hawk sat perched on grass, nearly blending into green grass around her.

"In an acknowledgment of my inferiority in power, I shall make first strike," King said as he raised a clawed hand and pointed it toward hawk.

"Ree!" Sylphie responded, telling him to just come at her.

Without any further hesitation, a massive blast of force was released from King, tearing up ground between himself and Sylphie in an instant. Right before shockwave struck hawk, a sphere of wind appeared around her and burst outwards.

Shearing winds hit blast of force as ground exploded, result showing that wind had definitely won out. Undeterred, King struck again, releasing a barrage of attacks toward small hawk.

Wind responded once more, sending out shearing blows that battled force magic. Every time King attacked, wind retaliated with equal or greater force, and after half a minute of exchanges, Sylphie had yet to even move. Surrounding ground had been torn up and destroyed, but in an area of three meters around hawk, not a single mark could be seen.

"I see that my attacks are utterly incapable of breaking past your current defenses, so allow me to try something different," King said as he lifted his claw again. Ivory bone claw glowed golden, and a moment later, a beam of pure golden energy erupted.

Sylphie seemed to get a bit more serious as she opened her wings, making sphere of wind expand. Crosswinds formed as wind seemed to blow from all directions at once in her vicinity, and once more, King found his attack nullified as winds sheared golden beam apart.

With another wave of his hand, five golden orbs appeared floating above King, each shooting a beam moments later. Sylphie had to actually flap her wings once this time around to nullify attack, though she'd yet to move.

"Her winds have gotten stronger," Sword Saint commented.

"Yeah," Jake nodded. "It seems more... solid. Physical. Not quite sure how to describe it."

“wind energy has definitely been compacted and intensified,” Dina nodded. “But there are a lot of concepts at play I have no insight into.”

She glanced at Minaga after saying this, but Unique Lifeform just shrugged. “You’ll figure it out someday. Or not. Either way, I’m not gonna spoil anything.”

None of them commented on Minaga’s reluctance to share, and Jake even found himself relieved at not knowing, as it would indeed be more fun to figure it out himself. They all remained quiet for a while longer as they saw Forest King shoot off attack after attack, finding himself unable to even make a bird move.

Despite this, Unique Lifeform did not appear frustrated. Quite the contrary. He focused entirely on every attack, trying to refine and improve it as energy traveled through his new vessel. Jake even saw a few attacks clearly blunder as Forest King messed something up, making it weaker than one prior.

Sylphie also seemed to enjoy herself as she got some good practice with using her wind magic purely defensively. As they had commented on earlier, it seemed a lot more solid now, allowing it to play a far more defensive role than before.

Jake couldn’t help but smile watching this scene of two tearing up local landscape. There truly was no better party game at a reunion than shooting deadly attacks at your friends to learn if they’d gotten better at not getting killed. Definitely way better than beer pong. Unless it was beer pong played with live grenades... in that case, beer pong might have been more fun.

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Chapter 1155 - New Attack & Two Matters To Address

Sylphie and Forest King seemed to only intensify their “battle” as Jake and company chatted throughout, commenting on what both sides were doing. Others had also noticed King’s instability with his attacks, and couldn’t help but comment on it.

“He’s trying something,” Sword Saint said with a sense of certainty.

“Definitely,” Jake concurred. It reminded him of himself when he tried to upgrade a skill or get something down that he’d practiced. Every blow had minor variations, as if exploring every aspect of it, hoping to find that final missing piece.

"More than his attacks... his aura is changing slightly," Dina added. "way energy flows with every attack. It's like pathways of new vessel are opening with every blow as mask is allowing its energy and Records to bleed through."

"Could be something like that," Jake nodded. "But I also feel like it's something within mask itself. Within soul of Forest King."

"He's learning to move again," Sword Saint said with a deep breath. "It's similar to someone who lost use of a leg for a long time. He needs to relearn proper walking. No... rarer than that, it's as if he had been walking around with only one leg for too long and has now grown a second one."

Jake slowly nodded, finding himself in agreement with that assessment. He and ors were quiet as fight between bird and Unique Lifeform continued, pace getting faster and power of every exchanged blow growing.

Both were improving as y practiced, but one more than or. King attacked a few more times, switching between golden beams and blasts of force before he finally calmed his barrage of blows and lowered his hands.

"Something clicked into place," Jake commented.

"Indeed," Sword Saint agreed.

"Do you two also feel it?" Dina asked m.

"Yeah," Jake nodded. He felt an odd sense of pressure from Forest King in that moment. One that was different from Unique Lifeform's usual aura, yet still slightly familiar.

Sylphie watched on as Forest King seemed in thought before he raised his claw again.

"During time when my life was never truly my own, something always felt off. Not just because of my state of being, but how my soul felt. My Path. It's taking time to reforge that connection now... but as I feel it being realized, I also feel something else. Something I believe I should have felt all along."

His claw began to glow golden again, Sylphie ready to react as King spoke a final time.

"I would dare you to block this blow, but doing so would be unfair."

A blast of golden light erupted from King's claw, this one different from any attack before. It didn't even make grass rustle, possessing no physical presence at all... yet Jake saw Sylphie's eyes open wide as she didn't hesitate to flap her wings, dashing to side as odd golden wave passed where she'd just been sitting. Even as it passed, it left

no traces of having done anything, yet Jake couldn't help but frown as he had felt something.

Something that reminded him a lot of unique attack King could unleash whenever he dropped mask. Two ors—no, Jake didn't count Minaga as he was cheating by being a god—also seemed to reach same conclusion.

"A soul attack," Dina frowned.

"Not one akin to anything I've seen before," Sword Saint shook his head.

"Presence," Jake said, having realized what attack had been. "He attacked using his presence."

Reason Jake had seen through it was because he had Pride of Malefic Viper, which could do something slightly similar. Using Pride of Malefic Viper, Jake could unleash mental attacks on anyone within his presence, and while such attacks hadn't proven overly useful for Jake as he tended to fight powerful opponents with equally powerful mental states, it still had its advantages.

One of them was that it completely ignored defenses. One's presence was a bit akin to radiation given off by soul, except only thing that could counter this radiation was more radiation. Usually, this radiation wasn't directly harmful to ors, but only resulted in feeling pressured while near someone too powerful. It was a bit more complicated than that, but that was gist of it.

Only way to attack using one's presence was by infusing Willpower into it. That's how gods could still crush a puny mortal like that, with their presence alone. However, Pride did somewhat disprove that as he could unleash a mental attack that, while it still relied on Willpower, wasn't just him infusing harmful intent into it.

Now, Jake had seen another way to use one's presence to attack. Jake also noticed something else as he felt for aura of King. He frowned and looked over at Minaga, looking for an explanation with assumption that only god could feel what he felt.

"Area his presence affects..." Jake muttered questioning tone.

"Truly presence of a king, eh?" Minaga just smiled, not indicating he had any plans of elaborating. Not that Jake needed him to, as he already confirmed what Jake expected.

Presence around people varied based on their power and how much they consciously tried to spread it out... but even Jake had no confidence in making his presence cover as large an area as King currently was. It spread out for several kilometers in all directions, covering them all, and from looks of it, allowed kind of attack King had just unleashed.

What King had done was launch an attack of pure soul force, using his presence as a medium to attack through. Rather than infusing some feeble mental attack into presence or something akin to that, it was pure force.

Jake was genuinely interested in knowing what effect would even be if struck by something like that, and he felt like he wasn't only one. Luckily for him all, Sylphie was also curious, and after dodging another two such blasts, decided to try to take one head-on.

Sylphie summoned plenty of defenses as a whirlwind of green appeared around her body, including her usually overpowered Green Shield, as she called it. It was enough for Jake to not feel confident in having his Arcane Powershot penetrate, and they all watched with bated breath as the odd golden wave struck her.

It phased straight through all wind and even Green Shield, blasting Sylphian Hawk away as if she'd just been hit by a cannon. She spun several times before stabilizing herself, showing that damage hadn't been substantial, but mere fact she'd been hit made attack impressive in its own right.

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"Shockwave struck her Soulshape directly, ignoring everything else," Dina commented with a frown. "Usually, in order to strike soul of another, you need energy to carry attack and make contact in first place. However, what Forest King did was instead use his presence, bypassing use of energy entirely, thus making attack not interact with regular defenses."

Jake was about to comment as dryad instead flew forward, speaking to Unique Lifeform and Sylphie. "If I may, would it be possible to strike me with that attack?"

Sylphie, who seemed to be preparing to go on offensive and actually fight back, stopped herself after Dina appeared. King looked over at her with surprise before he looked back at Sylphie.

"If Sylphian Hawk permits it, I would accept having this brief bout end here. I have insights I need to solidify as you remain fresh in my mind, so protracting battle would prove counterproductive," Forest King answered.

"Ree!" Sylphie answered, making it clear she wasn't happy about it, but agreeing nonetheless as she quickly flew over to Jake. Poor hawk landed straight in his arms while giving off low, complaining screeches at getting hit before, clearly just fishing for Jake to scratch and care for her. Which he naturally did.

"Please," Dina said as she summoned her staff and landed opposite King. READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT [novel♦fire♦net](#)

Unique Lifeform nodded and raised his golden claw, releasing an or blast a moment later. Dina responded by pointing her staff forward and summoning a thin green barrier right in front of it.

When attack made contact, it phased straight through green barrier, but Jake did see it shimmer for a moment right as Dina was struck and sent sliding backwards. She had taken blow like a champ, though to be fair, Jake was pretty sure Bobo had been one to actually tank attack.

"Again," Dina said, raising her staff and taking a defensive posture.

Once more, King obliged and released an or wave. This time around, Dina didn't summon a barrier in front of herself, but instead covered her body with a faint green sheen. On impact, green dimmed, and Dina was once more sent sliding back, but Jake had seen what she'd done.

He couldn't help but smile as Jake quickly handed a complaining Sylphie to Sword Saint and took a step forward, teleporting down below and into range of King. "Hey, throw one of those my way, too."

"I don't want to," King simply responded.

"Come on," Jake cheered him on.

"... fine," Unique Lifeform agreed reluctantly as he threw a golden blast Jake's way.

Jake responded by activating Pride and infusing concept of stability into his own surroundings and presence. When blast hit area affected by Pride, it found itself weakening and slowly whittling away, resulting in blast barely being able to push Jake back. And even n it was only because grass was slightly slippery.

"Your new attack sucks," Jake said with a grin, having already found a good counter.

"Ignoring fact you just spent what I assume to be ten times more resources to block that than I poured into it, this is not an attack. I barely consider it as such. It's merely first building block of what's coming. In isolation, I agree it's weak, but when merged with every or blow, my every attack shall echo onto souls of my foes, rending m in process," Forest King said.

"Still sucks for now, but hey, looking forward to seeing improved version. Or versions? Sorry, I kind of stopped listening about halfway through," Jake responded with a grin.

"It's alright," King said. *"I'll be sure to allow you firsthand experience once I deem it ready."*

"I would be a little concerned, Jake," Dina said, having floated over.

"If I didn't have any cause for concern, it wouldn't be fun in first place, now would it?" Jake shrugged.

"I guess," Dina sighed.

"What you're working on is related to Ruler part of your Path, right?" Minaga decided to join in as he teleported over and asked King directly.

"Correct," King confirmed.

Minaga nodded a few times. "I get feeling 'King' part of your name will begin to make a lot more sense going forward."

"As it rightfully should," Golden Forest King said as he turned to ors. "It was a pleasure to meet you all again, and I shall also affirm my desire for us to hunt toger once more, at least once before we all evolve. However, for now, I still have much to address regarding my new form, as well as aspects of my Path to rediscover and confirm."

"You focus on what's important," Sword Saint nodded. "I also believe a period of respite would be good for Dina and I. If possible, perhaps I can even take this chance to explore martial teachings of Panon of Life."

"I can reach out to tribe," Dina offered, Jake getting feeling that two had discussed this matter already.

"That would be nice," Sword Saint smiled. Jake wasn't sure if he should feel sorry for this tribe or not, but he did look forward to hearing if old man ended up learning anything useful or just spent all his time breaking spirits of young swordsmen who believed mselves geniuses.

"Ree!" Sylphie screeched, having already flown back to land on top of Jake's head.

"Yeah, that makes sense," Jake nodded upon hearing Sylphie's plan to return and play with or wind elementals. He was genuinely happy to hear that she'd made some new friends independent of those Jake knew, as it was only healthy for a young, growing bird like her to have her own social life.

"I should return to grandpa," Dina said after a while, before she suddenly remembered something. "Oh yeah, I heard things are going well with growing bow?"

"Everything was as it should be last time I checked," Jake confirmed. "n again, maybe it's actually fucked? I just pour energy into thing and hope everything works out."

"Unless grandpa told you re are problems, I would also assume things are going well," Dina nodded. "Trusting him is best option."

“For sure,” Jake nodded, not going to argue with that one.

That’s also why Jake wasn’t going to fuck around and use any Jake Juice in bow creation. It was a matter he’d considered a lot, but in end, he concluded that doing so was simply too risky.

Jake had already learned his lesson not to fuck around with Records of gods. Moreover, entire purpose of using Jake Juice was to alter Records contained within an item. To make m closer to ir Primeval Origins.

With bow, Jake already knew what Records were going in re. One part was created from Yggdrasil’s Records, while or was from Apex Hunter bow, which had just Records Jake wanted his new bow to have. All of this was n supervised and controlled by Nature’s Attendant, also adding in his Records. Along with Jake’s own, of course.

In summary, bow had Records of two absolute pinnacle gods, a bow with perfect system-granted Records, and finally, Jake also added his own energy and thus Records. What part of that would Jake even want to see altered?

Was it oretically possible that introducing Jake Juice into mix could create something better? Yes. Was it equally, if not more likely, that Jake would end up just ruining entire thing or end up with something worse? Also yes.

Hence why best approach was indeed to trust that ancient god knew what he was doing.

Besides, he still had to save a bit of his Jake Juice for a special little someone who was still hiding down in cellar of palace, hidden under biggest pile of loot he had assembled. poor Warpsnatcher hadn’t been a fan of King returning as aura of a Unique Lifeform, especially that of King’s, was quite scary to or monsters. When everyone else had also arrived, it hadn’t made things better, especially not Minaga with his god clone.

Luckily for Warpsnatcher, reunion party ended up being a relatively short one, as everyone soon left once more. Dina and Sword Saint would remain on Great Planet, though, so y did sound like visiting again soonish was an option. Sylphie was as flighty as ever, so maybe she would also stop by.

Seeing as Minaga took job of teleporting everyone where y wanted to go, only King would stay back at Jake’s residence, as he’d started meditating right re in garden area.

With everyone else gone or too busy focusing on ir own self-improvement, Jake headed down to cellar to where Warpsnatcher was hiding. So far, Jake had considered wher he wanted to help little fella out and ultimately decided to do so, partly for personal reasons, as he wanted to see if he could have a more purposeful, positive effect on evolution of anor creature.

However, before he would even begin setting up ritual, re were still two more important matters to discuss with Warpsnatcher. One was if this was even what he wanted. Jake didn't want to force his own experiment on an unwilling subject and wanted Warpsnatcher to participate fully aware of risks... or at least as aware as Jake was.

second matter, which was only truly relevant should Warpsnatcher agree, was of equal importance. Because if Jake were to actually go forward with ritual, it would be nice to no longer have to refer to Warpsnatcher as Warpsnatcher, but instead give Warpsnatcher a name.

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Chapter 1156 - Actually Pretty Decent

"Hey re, buddy," Jake said as he squatted down in front of large loot pile. "Everyone else eir left or is busy doing ir own thing, so coast is clear now."

loot pile started rustling, and a few moments later, a head popped out. "Scary gone?"

"y really aren't that scary once you get to know m," Jake shook his head with a smile. "Heck, I'm pretty sure y would like you and you would like m. As long as you overcome your initial fright, things will get better. Besides, outside of god who already left, I doubt any of us C-grades could confidently catch and harm you even if we wanted to."

Warpsnatcher didn't seem entirely convinced, but did climb out of his loot pile and jump down to floor. little guy instantly made sure that everything remained in its right place before turning to Jake again.

"Still scary."

"It's normal to find what we don't know or don't understand scary, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't confront it. How else will we overcome our fears?" Jake said, shaking his head. "But enough of that for now. I actually came to talk to you about something else." Get full chapters from [novel★fire★net](#)

little fella looked confused at Jake, turning his head back and forth. "Talk?"

"Yeah," Jake nodded. "I see you're about to reach peak of C-grade, which means B-grade evolution is next, right?"

Warpsnatcher nodded in confirmation. "Soon grow! Evolve!"

“Right. After doing your evolution quest, I reckon you’ll be good to go with evolution,” Jake said, halfway thinking out loud. Recent happenings in Warpsnatcher’s life definitely added a lot of Records to his Path; fact that he was just one level off cap in C-grade confirmed that.

“Quest? Me prepared quest!” Warpsnatcher said, spreading out his paws proudly. “This quest!”

“You mean that quest will be to collect things?” Jake asked with a frown. “How are you so sure of that?”

From what Jake knew, evolution quests varied... at least y did so for humans. Thinking about it, perhaps it wasn’t that odd if quests for monsters were far more predictable, especially those with more limited Paths like Warpsnatcher.

“Sure?” Warpsnatcher tilted his head. “No sure. Believe!”

“Oh...” Jake couldn’t help but chuckle. “Yeah, alright, that makes a lot more sense. Anyhow, it’s actually something regarding this upcoming evolution I want to talk to you about.”

Warpsnatcher seemed curious and sat down as Jake began to explain. “You see, I have this ability...”

Usually, Jake was very secretive about this ability of his, and telling Artemis about it had been a great show of trust on his part. However, with Warpsnatcher, Jake shared everything he believed monster could possibly need to know, and n a little more to make sure.

He genuinely wanted Warpsnatcher to go into this with full knowledge of what was possibly agreed to.

As for why Jake had even chosen Warpsnatcher in first place... well, re were a few reasons. Besides obvious, such as fact that he was repaying critter helping him out greatly when injured or his own desire to experiment and improve his ability, Warpsnatcher also seemed like a good candidate due to his race.

Jake wanted to avoid having anor Vesperia on his hands. Not to misunderstand, Vesperia was great, and someone Jake considered family, but her birth had also been quite debacle.

With Warpsnatcher, Jake would prefer to have a situation closer to Sylphie or Sandy. More Sandy than Sylphie, as with Sandy, he had also simply helped an existing monster get a far better evolution. One that empowered existing Path that monster in question was already walking.

All while not causing multiversal upheaval or getting any major factions involved.

Jake truly laid everything out, including his thoughts, as he explained things to Warpsnatcher. He also emphasized that there were massive risks involved. That Jake himself was halfway threading unknown ground, and that consequences of a mishap could lead to the worst of consequences.

He even went as far as to briefly mention how he'd messed up his own soul, and without help of a god, there was a good chance he could have lost his life or at least found himself potentially permanently crippled.

Of risks Jake foresaw, most likely one was an unwanted evolution. One that would turn Warpsnatcher into something he didn't want to be. This was, in general, one of the biggest concerns Jake had regarding helping monsters evolve into incredibly powerful variants.

If he somehow ended up turning Warpsnatcher into a living calamity that had to be put down, Jake would feel absolutely terrible about it. Perhaps it would even put him off using his ability ever again, at least in the context of helping people he actually cared about.

Throughout this entire talk with Warpsnatcher, the little fella remained mostly quiet, with a few nods here and there. Jake had feared that this conversation wouldn't even be possible as he wasn't sure about the mental maturity of Warpsnatcher, but it seemed that concern was unfounded.

While the little guy wasn't very good at talking while looking, and acting very childish, he was still dealing with a mature, peak C-grade who understood what Jake was talking about. At least understanding in Warpsnatcher's eyes told him that.

After Jake was done talking, they were both quiet for a while as peak C-grade seemed to be thinking things over. A full dozen seconds passed before he spoke.

"Danger. Yes," Warpsnatcher said after considering things. "Also gift. Make strong. Risk gift."

"Yeah, risk and reward," Jake nodded. "I cannot tell you what the ratio is, though. If the risk is worth the reward."

"Worth," Warpsnatcher said with little hesitation. "Become strong hard. Not strong bad. Risk fine. Life be risk. Gift... super. Worth all risk."

Jake listened and was quiet as Warpsnatcher truly made it clear he fully understood what Jake was talking about. While he lacked words to fully express it, Jake knew what the little guy meant, especially with the last two fragmented sentences.

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Getting high-level evolutions was something all monsters hoped for. Even races already considered high-level by default struggled to get best possible evolution. As an example, all True Dragons were incredibly powerful by default, yet there remained a massive gap between weakest and most powerful True Dragon variants.

It was akin to difference between geniuses of enlightened species. People like Reika, Sword Saint's great-granddaughter, or Matteo, from Court of Shadows, could be comparable to True Dragons once they evolved to B-grade, but only variants in lower echelons.

To Jake, someone like Matteo couldn't even be considered a threat, and in same vein, peak True Dragons also looked down on or weaker variants of True Dragons, even if they were all considered powerful by others.

What was important wasn't only power, but future potential. Despite being a top species, most True Dragons never evolved beyond B-grade. Having a more powerful variant did raise requirements for evolution, but it wasn't completely one-to-one, making chance of evolving again higher when having a powerful variant race.

That's why people were willing to do some truly insane things to try to evolve and get a strong variant. most common cause of massive sacrificial rituals was people trying to get a better evolution or accumulate Records, once more with goal of getting a better evolution down line.

There were few, if any, lines that couldn't be crossed if it meant more power and future potential, and with that in mind, was risk Jake talked about truly that noteworthy? Jake got feeling that even if he told Warpsnatcher there was a ninety-nine percent chance of things going awry and a one percent chance for a substantially better evolution, little guy would agree without a second thought. What Jake offered was simply that valuable.

"Alright," Jake agreed with a sigh. "I'll begin setting up ritual, now. This will take a while, and I'm still unclear on all details, but plan is for it to be a live infusion of Records shortly before your moment of evolution. I may still need a catalyst, though, as I'm not sure I can directly infuse energy into you, but we'll see. There's a lot of testing to be done before real thing."

"Okay!" Warpsnatcher said happily while clapping his small paws.

"There is one more thing," Jake said. "A name. I think it would be easier for everyone if you had one, and rather than just randomly give you first thing that pops into mind, I reckoned I'd ask if you had any ideas."

Hey, maybe Jake got lucky and little fella had gotten on a name since last time they talked about a name.

"Warpsnatcher!" Warpsnatcher replied instantly.

"That's your race name," Jake sighed. "Also, what if you evolve into something that's no longer called a Warpsnatcher? n name would just feel weird, wouldn't it?"

"No change?" little guy asked, his ears dropping as he looked all sad.

"You can change it, but people very rarely do," Jake explained. "Not unless y have a good reason to, anyway. And choosing a name we know will be outdated within foreseeable future seemed a little silly, doesn't it?"

"Understand," Warpsnatcher nodded as he seemed to really rack his brain for a name. It was to level where Jake even felt sorry for guy, but he didn't intervene for purely selfish reasons.

Jake's ideal scenario was to have Warpsnatcher decide on his own name, no matter how silly it ended up being. Sure, re were limits, but as long as little guy got on something that could even vaguely pass as a name, Jake would jump on it.

That way, no one could blame him. Saying he wasn't one who decided name in first place was perfect defense that not even Miranda had any counter to.

Sadly for Jake, poor Warpsnatcher wasn't very good at coming up with a name eir. For a beast, Jake knew that concept of names was already a little strange, but he'd hoped that little guy would deliver a miracle.

Seeing as that wasn't going to happen, Jake went back to brainstorming out loud after Warpsnatcher had made its third non-viable name suggestion.

"No, again, I'm Jake. You can't also be Jake. At least it would be very confusing for everyone if we were both called exact same thing," Jake sighed.

"Ja... he?"

"Pronouncing name wrong doesn't make it any less confusing," Jake felt on brink of giving up. It was to level where he considered just calling up Miranda and asking for her help.

However, that was when y got input from an unexpected place. Jake had known y had an observer all this time, but he hadn't been sure if he had simply been a passive one. At least not until now.

"Are you aware that as part of my training, I try to better perceive all that falls within my presence? That includes cellar you are currently occupying, and has allowed me to witness something I wish I hadn't. Seeing you two waste your time thinking about a name is frustrating," Forest King spoke, projecting his thoughts into minds of both Jake and Warpsnatcher.

little guy instantly turned nervous and looked around, ready to escape at any time, as Jake even felt subtle movements of mana around him. Jake quickly gave Warpsnatcher a calming look before speaking.

“Oh yeah, n you come up with a good one,” Jake said, crossing his arms. re was no bloody way King had any good ideas for an actual na-

“Fine. Jasper. It’s a name from your world I came across when re, and from my understanding, it means treasurer. Additionally, it’s also name of a precious gemstone, which fits considering creature’s affinity for collecting all things shiny.”

Jake was about to insult King for having an equally shitty naming sense, but his mouth just opened and closed a few times before he muttered to himself. “Fuck... that’s actually decent.”

--

Elsewhere in multiverse, in coldness of space, nothing but thin mana existed. Even n, it was primarily only re because of nearby celestial bodies radiating it. It was a space that barely any living creatures occupied, viewed merely as something one had to pass through to get from one point of interest to anor.

Right n, unblocked beams of sun caught a reflective surface as a metallic object uncloaked itself, becoming visible to naked eye. A few moments later, a similar object was revealed, followed by several more over next few seconds.

y all approached a nearby celestial body and quickly started orbiting it, joining over a thousand similar contraptions already in orbit. Each of m orbited celestial body at high speeds, all pointed downwards with long barrel-like lenses. Occasionally, one of m would even shoot out a beam of light that seemed to simply merge into dusty surface of celestial body upon impact.

A few million kilometers away, on anor celestial body, a single human sat in front of a large metallic cube with ever-shifting surfaces. He observed it closely and noted down any useful information.

Tabbing a screen off to side, he made sure to record all incoming information as human stood up and went to a small side room. re, a woman was already waiting with a large insulated mug in her hand.

“Freshly brewed coffee,” she smiled, handing him mug.

“Thank you,” Arnold said to his assistant, Nanna, as he accepted mug. He took a deep breath of steam before having a taste that seemed to satisfy him.

“Are things proceeding as expected?” Nanna asked, with Arnold nodding in response.

“Scans are ongoing, and model of moon should be ready within month,” he said. “So far, B-grade dwelling within has yet to react, reinforcing theory that it does not possess proper intellect beyond instinctual. Without feeling a threat, chances of it responding are low.”

“Sounds good,” Nanna said, knowing it wasn’t whole story.

“So far,” Arnold said. “Scans so far have been unable to penetrate adequately due to increasing energy density closer one gets to core. New satellites are an improvement, but they remain far from enough.”

“That’s why Chosen of Boundless Hydra is also involved,” Nanna said, partly to remind Arnold, as he could get a bit stuck in his own mind and forget that there were other people involved in a project.

“Yes,” Arnold nodded as he was in thought for a while. “I need to finish proximity scanners for Cosmic Worm to deploy.”

Taking a large swig of his coffee, Arnold walked out with large mug in hand, his mind already focused on his work.

Nanna didn’t say anything, but just smiled as she returned to her own little office to continue her work. She was currently in midst of designing residential parts of upcoming moonbase, seeing as Arnold had entirely expectedly forgotten to actually make place livable in his initial designs.

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- Chapter 1157 - Innate Advantages

Chapter 1157 - Innate Advantages

Jake really wanted to find a good reason to shut down name Jasper, but he couldn’t make up one. To make matters worse, Warpsnatcher’s big eyes lit up when it heard suggestion.

“Ja...per!” little guy said, trying to pronounce name, looking very happy with it. Jake suspected part of reason why Warpsnatcher liked name was fact that it started with ‘Ja’, which made it at least slightly similar to Jake.

“Do you like name Jasper?” Jake asked C-grade beast.

“Jas...per!” Warpsnatcher tried to pronounce name again, doing a way better job this time around.

“Should I take that as a yes?”

“Jasper!”

“I’ll take it as a yes,” Jake smiled, shaking his head as he looked towards where Forest King was, his gaze seemingly ignoring all physical obstacles in way. “Happy now, you grump?”

“As long as I put a stop to your inane focus on making up a name, n yes,” Unique Lifeform answered. “I also found your explanation of how your ability as a Harbinger of Primeval Origins works interesting.”

“Oh please, you already knew for most part,” Jake waved King off. “Or did I severely overestimate your power of deduction from all damn context clues you must have collected over years?”

“No, I had my suspicions, but having things be confirmed is still a different matter,” King said. “Though I do still wonder what source of this energy of yours is. It cannot be simple in nature, so method of acquisition must be equally complex conceptually. Not to mention potential for backlashes when misused or or unknown limitations regarding its application. I would question why you would waste something so precious on a beast you’ve only just met, but I shall leave it up to your discretion. Having spent quite a few years around you, I’ve come to learn that your own seemingly impulsive decisions usually lead to favorable outcomes on account of your ridiculous ability to intuit matters.”

“That’s quite praise,” Jake chuckled.

During his explanation to newly named Jasper, Jake hadn’t shared *everything* regarding his ability. Just everything that could be relevant to little guy. origin of Jake Juice wasn’t something that had any impact on outcome, so he’d naturally kept that hidden. origin of energy was also Jake’s biggest secret regarding ability, as most or aspects of it could be guessed from outcomes.

However, as could be seen by King’s thoughts, not even Unique Lifeform assumed Primeval Origin Energy was something Jake could just passively produce on his own. He assumed it was far more complex, and Jake really couldn’t blame him, as he would also assume re would be some serious limitations on that kind of ability.

Sure, re were some limitations on how much Jake could use as it replenished incredibly slowly. Passively, that is. Jake also regenerated some of this energy whenever he leveled up or even just gained experience. Actually, it was entirely possible that Jake didn’t passively regenerate Jake Juice at all, but only got it through gaining experience and Records, and whenever he got a level, he just got an extra boost.

re were still a lot of unknowns regarding all Primeval Origins stuff, which was part of reason why Jake wanted to do this kind of experiment with Warpsnatcher in first place.

"I never denied that you have certain outstanding abilities. That has never been what I questioned. What I instead question is person possessing se abilities," King said, straight back to being a bit of an asshole.

"You know, abilities color personality, and I'm as much a product of my Bloodline as you're a product of being born with a golden spoon permanently stuck up your ass," Jake shrugged.

"You speak of innate advantages? Of being born with a silver spoon? Remind me once more, what incredible merit did you accomplish to gain a Bloodline that even I, a Unique Lifeform, find too ridiculous?" Forest King countered.

"Alright, alright, we're both system's version of privileged rich kids, and-"

"I wasn't done. I believe system recognizes that we Unique Lifeforms are indeed too innately powerful, which is why it has limited us in several ways. Perhaps biggest limit placed upon us is our inability to produce more of our kin, forcing eternal solitude upon us. To be clear, I find this an understandable limitation. If Unique Lifeforms could reproduce, multiverse would risk being dominated by us. Just imagine if Minaga could reproduce and clone an army capable of producing anor army that could clone mselves all over again."

"Yeah, that would definitely be ridiculous, but-" Jake tried to say, but was interrupted yet again.

"Oh, good to see that you agree. Now, please enlighten me as to why you are able to pass on an equally ludicrous Bloodline onto your offspring," King finished saying, finally getting to point.

"Hell if I know," Jake sighed and shook his head. "But I would argue re are differences and limitations. First of all, Bloodlines aren't always passed down, and more powerful y were, lower chance of passing m down. Additionally, when passed down, it's never a one-to-one. Bloodlines always change at least a little, more often than not growing weaker in offspring, which is why many factions and families try to get two people with Bloodlines to have children, as that can cause ir Bloodlines to merge and mutate. Alright, re is also very rare chance of a child being born with a more powerful Bloodline than parent, but that usually only happens once Bloodline has been severely diluted over time, and even n, I'm not sure it can ever match power of original Bloodline Patriarch."

"Those are a lot of words to excuse what's ultimately still a massive advantage your Bloodline has," Forest King commented. *"n again, fact that it can be propagated*

through reproduction also has its downsides. At very least, I have no need to be in fear of females wishing to pass on my Lineage."

"Well, I wouldn't say I'm afraid of it, but sure, it can be annoying," Jake shrugged. "And not like that's an exclusive challenge for people with strong Bloodlines. Those with powerful variant races face the exact same thing."

Looking down at Jasper, who had just been listening in on their conversation, Jake smiled. "I guess that's another potential risk we need to add if you agree to the ritual. If things work out well, you may face issues with female attention."

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"It not good?" Jasper asked, tilting his head.

"Well, depending on the perspective, it might be," Jake shrugged.

"The hunter fears the horrors of social interactions more than nearly anything else, so it's only natural that dealing with the complexities of humanoid mating rituals will be a major challenge for him. This is especially observed in scenarios where he isn't even interested in or party in the first place. Watching him trying to navigate conversations while trying to escape is truly a sight to behold," Unique Lifeform continued to make fun of Jake.

"Alright, alright, enough from you for now," Jake waved King off. "Go back to your training or whatever. I need to actually focus on preparing what's next."

"You know what? For the first time in a while, you have a good point. We both have better endeavors to engage in," King agreed. *"I wish you luck with your future Path, Warpsnatcher."*

"Bye!" Jasper said, waving toward where King was sitting, and Jake got a distinct feeling that the little fella wasn't just mimicking where Jake looked at earlier, but was also aware of Unique Lifeform's exact location.

Jake also couldn't help but smile, seeing how much more comfortable Jasper had gotten with King in such a small amount of time. And again, seeing two powerful people bicker back and forth had to be a good way to make them seem less scary.

"I'll need to go do some research about how to set up the ritual," Jake said as he looked around the cellar room. "But just one warning. You may have to move your collection to a bigger room, as I'm considering integrating it into the ritual."

Warpsnatcher tilted his head to the side, looking a bit concerned. "You take?"

"No, at least not directly," Jake shook his head. "Eir way, that's something to think about later. For now, let's just figure out how to get this entire ritual off ground in first place. I admittedly do also have a few or projects I'll be working on in meantime, so preparations won't be done for a while. Also, you can come to me at any time with questions or concerns if you have m, and I hope it doesn't need to be said, but you're free to change your mind and drop out at any point."

"Okay!" Jasper nodded, not indicating at all that he was reconsidering his participation.

Jake nodded and went out of cellar and up toward living room. As he'd told Jasper, he indeed also had several or projects he was working on at same time, and luckily for him, namely bow, his Meditate skill, and he also planned on continuing to work on his poisons here and re.

Overall, Jake had plenty of things to do... though if need be, he could definitely still find openings in his schedule to fit in quality time with Artemis whenever she was available.

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Duskleaf studied soil sample closely, attempting to identify any unwanted concepts within it while making sure it had what he was looking for. After confirming everything was as expected, he noted it down and moved on to next sample. se soil samples had been collected from all over multiverse, most of m from areas even gods had to fear entering.

"How is it?" Nature's Attendant spoke as he teleported into room. He hoped re had been progress, and if anyone could discover what was missing, it would be Duskleaf. He was one of few alchemists in multiverse that Nature's Attendant actually respected opinion of, after all.

"None of m are any good," Duskleaf shook his head. "At least not on ir own. We'll need to combine soil samples and make our own composite. Even n, we'll need right fertilizer to ensure failures don't repeat."

"I take it that means you need more samples to test on?" Nature's Attendant asked.

"We should have gared enough of most types for both testing and execution phase," Duskleaf said, his voice containing a high level of certainty. "However, a few of m are lacking, especially Crimsonfowl Sand. From all initial tests, we will need a lot of it." The source of this content is **novel•fire•net**

"Alright," Nature's Attendant sighed, knowing just how annoying that type of sand was. It took a long time for it to be produced and only occurred in nesting area of Crimsonfowl, a species of birds that were overly territorial. While Nature's Attendant didn't fear m as even strongest species among m rarely surpassed B-grade, that didn't

mean locating its nesting areas was easy, and even if he found one, quantity was bound to be low due to just how rare Crimsonfowl was.

Once upon a time, y were much more common, but alas, y had nearly been hunted to extinction.

"I know what you're thinking, but no, there are no substitutions I've found that work," Duskleaf shook his head. "Only Crimsonfowl have survived that still possess Records. It may be possible there are others in some forgotten realm, but finding that would be far harder than finding more Crimsonfowl Sand."

Nature's Attendant nodded, aware y were limited in options. "I'll send some aspiring younglings to explore potential sites where it may be found. I'll also contact any huntsmasters to hear if y've spotted any while looking for new Hunting Grounds."

"Sounds good," Duskleaf said. "Just be careful about this spreading. We wouldn't want Risen or Holy Church kicking up a fuss."

"Heh, I think we'll manage even if y do catch on," Nature's Attendant chuckled. "Was there anything else?"

"Nothing pressing," Duskleaf shook his head. "Ah, but I did hear about you helping out Jake with making a bow or something like that?"

"Indeed," second-in-command of Panon of Life confirmed.

"How is that going? I know that working with Jake's energies in any capacity can be quite... challenging."

"That's an understatement," Nature's Attendant shook his head with a small smirk. "That arcane affinity of his is stubborn, to say least. At times, it's incredibly hard to work with, and at others, it does exactly what I wanted it to. It's almost as if—"

Nature's Attendant stopped himself mid-sentence before shaking his head. "Never mind. My point is, it's an interesting affinity and a powerful one for sure."

"You've yet to answer how it's going," Duskleaf reminded the other god.

"Oh. Right. I would say things are going as well as y should, and I believe final result will be more than satisfactory for everyone involved."

"That's good," Duskleaf said with a smile, before another thought struck him. "How is Artemis these days?"

"She's fine," Nature's Attendant answered. "She's also helping me with bow. However, I get the feeling that isn't what you're truly asking."

“So?”

“No indication re’s been any major developments, but I get feeling things are progressing slow and steady. I did recently have a conversation with her partly related to subject, and from that, I believe that she’s quite serious about matter and giving it a lot of thought,” Nature’s Attendant answered honestly. “It’s Jake I have a harder time reading.”

Duskleaf nodded, in thought for a moment. y were really acting like two old men right now, discussing love lives of a young-ish god and a young mortal. However, it was a fairly important matter that should not be taken lightly.

From an outside perspective, it was likely just viewed as Artemis having a temporary fling with a mortal for a few years. This was quite common and not at all viewed as weird, but se two old men knew re was far more to it. And not just because y were both operating under working ory that Jake would eventually reach godhood.

Jake was clearly not a normal Chosen, so anyone he was close to also automatically got close to Malefic Viper and his Order. Meanwhile, Artemis had been a member of Panon of Life ever since she was a child and was now a relatively high-ranked member of faction.

All of this is to say that any relationship had massive political implications.

He also gave Meira some thought, and truthfully, he believed this was a good thing for her. Even if she couldn’t see it right now.

“I think it best to just leave two to it,” Duskleaf shook his head. “Let whatever happens happen.”

“That does sound like best approach,” Nature’s Attendant smiled. “You know, a part of me had hoped Dina could be a way to forge a stronger bond with him, but this development isn’t too bad, eir.”

“Enough about that,” Duskleaf waved him off. “I should really get back to it, and I believe you also have plenty of matters to address.”

“True, true,” Nature’s Attendant smiled. “But re’s nothing wrong with looking forward to a potentially flourishing relationship between both factions and people.”

With those words, god teleported away, leaving Duskleaf behind. Shaking his head, alchemist got back to work, and only a few seconds later, he was so engrossed that he’d already entirely forgotten about everything irrelevant to current project.

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Chapter 1158 - A Day In Holstred's Life Full of Surprises

Holstred held a hand on his sword as he flew through dense forest alongside rest of his fellow officers. former Knight Commander and slave made a hand motion, telling scout beside him to move forward and see if he could spot any of ir targets.

Right as scout moved forward, Holstred felt a great release of energy in distance, making his eyes open wide. "Defenses!"

A beam of pure flames shot towards scout in front, man unable to react in time. Luckily for him, Holstred was as he used a skill to instantly teleport in front of man and summoned a shield of energy.

fire beam exploded upon impact, setting surrounding forest aflame. Lowering his shield, Holstred looked ahead. "We're close... I believe that was a trap of some kind."

"A magic circle was placed on a tree roughly nine kilometers in that direction," a ranger in his group said, having located source of attack successfully.

"That means we're close," Holstred nodded as he took out a token. "I'll inform *him*. Continue onwards and locate enemy camp before it's too late."

"Yes, sir," group of officers said in unison as y all began moving forward once more, adopting a defensive formation in case y found mselves attacked again.

Holstred was currently leading a group to apprehend – or more realistically, slay – a group of criminals who had lately caused trouble in a mid-sized city on Earth. While details weren't perfectly clear yet, it appeared y were all servants of some god who'd tried to gain influence and create a foothold on planet. y had done a pretty decent job, too, having taken over an entire city with over two million citizens.

Miranda had responded by sending a team of her own to investigate and have a discussion with City Lord. It was from re that things hadn't gone well. Again, details were vague, but end result was that all seven people in negotiation team were publicly executed by City Lord, all of m accused of being heretics.

City Lord had likely wanted to accomplish something with se executions, but it evidently hadn't gone as planned. Despite City Lord and followers of yet unknown god being in control of most parts of city, re were still officials related to World Council present.

What could only be described as an internal civil war began within city, leading to more executions and murders before spiralling into public conflict in streets. At that point, situation had become untenable, and Miranda had stepped in with force, sending Holstred and his team of officers.

However, when y arrived in city, City Lord and higher-ups of unapproved religion had taken off. y'd set up a secret teleportation circle that, from an initial analysis, was supposed to take m off planet, but Miranda had stopped m using her remote control over Pylon of Civilization. Each Pylon had ability to disturb teleportation, and coupled with planet-spanning barrier that also worked to do same thing, it had put a stop to ir plans.

Using space mage as part of Holstred's team, y tracked City Leader and his coconspirators and followed ir teleportation as best y could. That had now led m to this situation where y were actively tracking enemy, and from looks of it, or side had indeed been well prepared.

y encountered several more traps that slowed m down, making it clear or party always had this as a backup plan, as re was no way all of se traps had just been placed.

Moreover, y were in one of areas still considered unexplored territory on Earth. It was one of areas considered quite dangerous due to how prolific C-grades were, and only those considered elite dared enter.

Holstred had been slightly hesitant going, but having already used his communication totem, he felt a lot better about situation should things go wrong.

Continuing pursuit, one of scouts soon notified him that auras had been detected not too far away.

"Prepare yourselves," Holstred said in a calm voice. "Assume y'll resist."

After saying this, he also detected auras. ir entire group slowed down slightly as y broke through treeline and saw a large circular grass and tree-covered mound appear before m.

Some form of residence? Holstred instantly questioned as he saw large, poorly put-together wooden door leading into mound. It was just over five meters tall, and evidently not made for or by humans or or human-sized species.

"Sir, re are movements of space mana from within mound," space mage in ir party informed him.

Holstred acknowledged message, but before he could give command to move forward, targets y had pursued showed mselves.

From atop mound, having been hidden within trees, two dozen people stepped out. One of m was City Lord in question, while ors were officials and elites who'd fled alongside him. He quickly identified people in front of him doing City Lord last.

[Human – lvl 281 – Minor Blessing of ???]

Holstred's Identify skill had been upgraded to see Blessings, but god in question had hidden who y were, something he knew y could easily do. It was annoying for sure, but at least his initial assessment was that none of people re were a threat, and if push came to shove, Holstred could handle m all on his own.

Alas, before violence came negotiations.

"You're like a dog, wagging its tail to its master," City Lord spoke as he stepped forward, and Holstred instantly felt effect of several mental skills upon him. "I heard you were a slave when you first got to this planet. To me, it looks like you're still one."

Holstred ignored man entirely as he cleared his throat. "Under penal code of—"

"This planet is a gift to multiverse. You're following a master who will monopolize it. Sure, y're communicating illusion of openness, but it's all a lie. Just see how y limited access moment our universe opened up. All of my fellow faithful, denied entry," City Lord continued speaking as he sneered. "Pure heresy, to disallow passage of faithful."

"You're under arrest," Holstred stopped trying to cite laws and got straight to point. "Eir surrender or resist and suffer consequences."

City Lord seemed undeterred. "I see you're not blessed. Holstred... I have an offer to you instead. Serve a better master. Someone worthy of that title. We will retreat from this planet for now, but you are free to join us. Join us and go somewhere better. Or stay forever a slave to a witch."

Holstred's eyes opened wide. "Are... are you serious?"

City Lord smiled. "My Patron is righteous and forgiving. Someone actually worthy of your loyalty."

"Sir?" space mage beside Holstred asked, but he ignored her.

"I... this is not a decision I can make lightly," Holstred frowned. "I have family... a wife... child..."

"You can return for m, or we'll send people to help m evacuate," City Lord said in a soothing voice. "Unless your wife is powerful on her own, it's also best she leaves. This planet will only become more and more dangerous to those without power as time passes. Definitely not kind of place you'd want a kid growing up."

Holstred seemed to resolve himself and adopted a serious face. "I will admit I've also feared for future of my family and have considered leaving. Grant me three guarantees, and you shall have my loyalty."

As he said this, Holstred moved away from his fellow officers and stood between two groups, his hand still on his sword. His companions all looked at him with faces full of shock as former Knight Commander spoke.

"First of all, no witnesses. assumption must be that I died here today. That's only way my family can be kept safe. Secondly, I want a proper position and all benefits to boot. I'm confident in reaching B-grade and will perhaps even go beyond, and I think it's a valid expectation to get resources that will allow me to grow."

"Certainly," City Lord agreed happily.

"Finally, I want a Blessing from your Patron. From my new god," Holstred said. "Promise me first two and grant me final one now, and I shall cut m all down."

Holstred raised his sword and pointed it towards his former companions, who all prepared mselves for what was to come.

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City Lord was all smiles as he spoke."I believe this is... what... no... you!"

Halfway through, he seemed to get a message of some kind from somewhere, making City Lord instantly turn furious. "Blasphemer! Deceiver!"

"Damn, thought I had you," Holstred smiled. "Guess I won't discover identity of this mysterious Patron of yours today. Alas... negotiations over. Officers, permission to kill."

He had really hoped his little ruse would have worked. All he was fishing for was to get Blessing offered, as it was impossible for a god to hide ir name re. He would have rejected it, but it would have confirmed who y were dealing with.

"You had me in first half," space mage sent him as magic began revolving around her, being among first to get her bearings.

or officers also let out sighs of relief as y all moved to attack. Holstred wanted m to finish up here and get into mound as soon as-

"I told you talking was a waste of time."

A beam of fire erupted from within large mound, blowing a hole through it and straight toward space mage, who was preparing to attack. Holstred's eyes opened wide as he

teleported once more and appeared in front of beam at very last moment, his shield summoned once more.

impact blasted him back into mage as two of m were sent flying. Holstred's shield was slowly burned through, but luckily, beam stopped right before his shield was burned away.

“Oh? Not too bad. I understand why you thought he was worth recruiting,” same voice as before echoed as a creature walked out of large mound.

Holstred stabilized as he checked on mage he'd been slammed into, making sure she was also alright. She had some bruises, but orwise, none of m had taken any major damage. However, that didn't mean things were good.

He looked at creature that had just appeared, and from its aura, he knew y were in trouble. It was a bipedal boar-like creature with two large tusks on each side of its mouth and red hair that looked as if it was on fire all over its body. What's more, rar than eyes, it had two balls of fire, and in its hand, creature carried a staff that looked like it was made out of a long spine of some monster.

[Great Bristleboar Pyrolord – lvl 349 – Lesser Blessing of ???]

It was a peak C-grade. Holstred himself had reached level 310 after much struggle, and while he could fight monster, he wasn't confident in his chances of victory at all. Rar than fighting, he planned on ordering a tactical retreat to-

“Now you're one talking.”

A second voice came from behind Holstred, and as he whipped around, he saw anor huge boar monster walking out of forest toward m, cutting off ir path to retreat. This one wielded a large axe over its shoulder and had metallic hair covering its entire form.

[Great Bristleboar Champion – lvl 349 – Lesser Blessing of ???]

“Defensive formation,” Holstred instantly ordered as all officers moved to be closer to him. Focusing, Holstred activated several skills with hopes of allowing himself and his allies to at least buy some time.

“Kill heretics,” City Lord spoke in a cold tone.

“Who are you to give me orders?” Pyrolord sneered, before quickly changing his expression into that of a grin. **“But I'll let this one slide.”**

“Brace!” Holstred yelled right as Pyrolord slammed its staff into ground. A pillar of fire descended from sky down upon m, and Holstred reacted as fast as possible by

summoning a new shield to defend m. or officers also used ir own skills, as several barriers appeared to block powerful blow.

pillar struck m as Pyrolord started laughing and channeling even more power. Magic runes lit up all over his body, and one even formed on ground beneath his feet as intensity of flames grew, and Holstred knew that he couldn't keep defending ors for much longer.

However, just n... payoff from message he sent earlier arrived.

Pyrolord, who was happily channeling his magic, suddenly whipped his head upwards, but only thing he could do was scream. A beam of energy that Holstred couldn't even begin to comprehend complexity of struck Pyrolord right in head, unceremoniously shearing it off in an instant.

A powerful peak C-grade had died in an instant, and all Holstred could do was sigh in relief as a figure floated down from above.

“How was he so fucking weak? Couldn't even handle one Dragon's Breath. I was hoping for a proper fight based on what Verdant Witch told me...” newcomer said.

It was a scalekin covered in dark green scales with two wings behind his back.

[Malefic Dragonkin – lvl 321 – Divine Blessing of Malefic Viper]

“Lord Draskil,” Holstred said as he lowered his shield. “I thank you for your prompt assistance.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Malefic Dragonkin waved him off as he looked toward second peak C-grade monster, who was just staring at his dead ally. “Someone called a champion should put up a better fight, right?”

Draskil didn't hesitate as he flapped his wings once, teleporting down right in front of Bristleboar Champion. boar responded quickly by raising its axe and swinging it down towards far lower level C-grade.

Raising a claw, Draskil blocked blow directly as his arm only slightly buckled from impact. “Weak.”

With his or hand, he swept upwards as a large green claw of malefic energy cut into boar, but its metallic hide managed to block attack for most part. This seemed to please Draskil as he unleashed a barrage of blows, poor boar barely able to fight back.

Holstred took this opportunity to move and apprehend City Lord with or officers. Inside mound, he found three space mages trying to prepare a new magic circle for m to flee planet, likely with goal of ultimately escaping universe.

City Lord had given up surprisingly easily after Draskil's appearance, and while some fought back, it was nothing he and his officers couldn't easily handle. Holstred took out a pair of handcuffs made by Arnold himself, metal strong enough for most peak C-grades to struggle with breaking it.

He cuffed most dangerous ones, and while it wouldn't pacify m entirely, it would make m a lot weaker if a fight were to break out again. Holstred doubted y would be foolish enough to try with presence of Malefic Dragonkin, but he'd already been surprised quite a few times that day.

And it turned out world had at least one more surprise in store for him.

While still inside mound, y all heard a massive explosion sound from outside, and while that in itself wasn't concerning, seeing as two C-grades were fighting, yell that came after certainly was.

"Fuck!"

Draskil had been one to yell, making Holstred charge out in concern, and once outside, he was met with a sight that felt straight out of a nightmare.

He saw Draskil looking down at his bleeding arm that had a nasty cut on it, and about a hundred meters away, Champion was kneeling on ground, his entire body covered in rotting wounds.

Right behind him, anor boar stood. This one was nearly ten meters tall and covered in a combination of red and golden fur. new boar casually reached out his hand and grasped head of already dying Champion.

"Weak indeed."

A nasty crushing sound echoed through clearing as skull of Champion was crushed into paste. Holstred could barely stay upright on his legs when he identified new arrival.

[Supreme Bristleboar Warchief – lvl ??? – Greater Blessing of ???]

B-grade. He had heard B-grades had begun being observed around planet, and that a few had even been hunted down already... but that had been by large elite parties, such as a group led by Judge from Court of Shadows.

However, perhaps more concerning than appearance of a B-grade was why B-grade was here in first place. It was evident that some god had deep roots on Earth and had managed to stay mostly undetected until now. Moreover, if re was one B-grade serving this god, re could be more.

Holstred would be lying if he said a deep sense of panic didn't begin to well up in his chest, but he still had one source of calm. Despite being injured, Draskil didn't look afraid in slightest. In fact, he looked nearly as annoyed as anything else.

“Malefic Dragonkin,” B-grade Warchief said as a large halberd appeared in his hand. **“I’ve heard much about you. A rising star in Order of Malefic Viper... and someone my Patron would love to see dead.”**

Draskil looked at B-grade as he licked his lips “Fuck... man, I would also love to see you try. I’ve been itching for a good fight.”

B-grade scuffed and lowered his halberd. **“n come. Show me what one who received Legacy of a Primordial is capable of.”**

“Again, I would bloody love to, but you’re really not in a state to be fighting anyone right now,” Draskil sighed.

“Your posturing and faux confidence would almost be impressive if it weren’t so delusional,” B-grade Warchief chuckled. **“But please. Do humor me. Why am I not in a state to battle?”**

“Well,” Draskil shrugged. “You’re already dead.”

“What do you-“ B-grade said as he tried to take a step forward, but his leg buckled under his own weight. Blood began bleeding from Warchief’s eyes as wounds spontaneously appeared all over his body, leaking black pus. **“Wha... what did you-“**

“Me? Nothing,” Draskil said casually, shaking his head. “You were already dead before you even arrived.”

B-grade shook all over as his gaze lowered to two small puncture wounds on his ankle that he hadn’t noticed before now. He tried to reach down toward wound but fell forward, his entire body breaking apart upon impacting ground, spreading flesh and gore everywhere.

“Damn,” Draskil said in an impressed voice as he looked somewhere behind Warchief. “That’s some serious venom you’re packing.”

Holstred was confused about who Malefic Dragonkin was speaking to until he saw a faint shimmer in forest. Seemingly walking out of nowhere, a woman who looked to be in her early twenties with almost sickly white skin appeared. She wore an odd dress that didn’t quite look like fabric, and her two eyes were entirely red and sent a shiver down Knight Commander’s spine.

It was anor B-grade, but one on a whole or level from Warchief that had just died. He was almost afraid to do so as he used Identify.

[Jadescale Crimsoneye Snake – lvl ??? – Greater Blessing of Malefic Viper]

When he saw name, he realized who it was, but before he could say anything, Draskil spoke up again.

“Shit, that was hot. re’s nothing more attractive than a woman who can kill someone without m even noticing,” Draskil grinned as he began walking toward B-grade snake. “Hey, how about two of us-“

Holstred didn’t even see what happened next, as Draskil was sent flying into forest. A trail of blood and thousands of toppled trees in his wake as he slammed into a hill over a dozen kilometers away, exploding entire thing. Scarlett, former Alabaster Crimsoneye Snake, lowered her raised hand as she looked at Holstred and smiled.

“Hi re!” she said in a cheery tone. “Miranda asked me to help out. Seems like her suspicions were correct... oh, and she told me to apologize for keeping you in dark. She said something about it being necessary to bait out real prey.”

Once more, Holstred didn’t even have time to answer as a bloody Malefic Dragonkin walked out of forest with a big smile on his face. “You really are one hell of a woman, eh? But you know, you could have just said no. Unless-“

A second whipping sound echoed through valley as Malefic Dragonkin was sent flying once more, Holstred and Scarlett continuing to speak as if Draskil wasn’t even re. The source of this content is *novel~fire~net*

“I can only be grateful for Ms. Wells’ foresight,” Holstred said as he looked toward listless City Lord, who looked as if his entire world had just crumbled. “Hopefully, at least one of se can provide some insight.”

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Chapter 1159 - Beneath Dark Heavens

black clouds rumbled as sound of thunder roared. Bolts of black lightning jumped between clouds, with occasional strike hitting ground. No matter in which direction one looked, dark clouds were all one could see as y made up entire sky.

Below, ground was perfectly bare, not a single thing re besides black sand. Whenever a lightning strike hit sand, it was kicked up, and occasionally, a natural sculpture formed as sand was transformed into glass.

Besides sand and clouds, only one or thing existed in this barren world. Standing beneath dark heavens, a single human stared up into eternal blackness. Despite looking so small, this solitary man was center of this world and victim of dark heavens' full attention as it bore down on him with ever-increasing pressure.

Yet man remained unfazed.

Raising his hand, man clenched a fist as dozens of bolts struck him at once, lightning burning through his body and into ground below, forming a platform of glass all around him.

Energy lingered in his body for several seconds before he sighed.

"It's indeed getting stronger every day," man muttered. "Tenlucis truly was a complete and utter lunatic to have devised a Path like this. n again, aren't I equally insane for having accepted it?"

man in question was naturally Caleb, and he found himself deep in meditation where he'd entered his Soulspace. Unlike Jake, who had control and influence over his own Soulspace, Caleb's was quite different. While his Soulspace was indeed a representation of his Path and powers, it was also a timer counting down to day when dark heavens would overwhelm him.

Tenlucis truly had been a maniac, something Caleb had only begun to realize more and more furr he progressed. What Tenlucis had done was create a special affinity and concept he called Dark Heavens, which had led to him becoming one of most powerful gods during his time and someone considered only second to Umbra herself. If he'd managed to survive, perhaps he would even have been able to truly be her equal, but he had sadly fallen before he could fully realize his Path.

What Dark Heavens did was to constantly temper one's magic as it was in an eternal phase of growth. Relying on concepts of dark affinity, Dark Heavens would constantly consume Caleb's Records and forcefully make m part of itself. This made his dark lighting stronger and all Legacy skills affected by Tenlucis were constantly improved, but it also put pressure on Caleb.

Dark Heavens couldn't be stopped, only fed. He needed to accumulate more and more Records, or Dark Heavens would starve, and as it was designed, would begin to consume whatever else it could find. With no Records coming in, it would eat ones Caleb already had, resulting in only bad things, from loss of skills and even stats, all way to consuming his very existence, forcing his entire being to become one with Dark Heavens.

One could wonder why anyone would make something like this, but Caleb understood, and even if he didn't, Umbra had gladly enlightened him. number one killer of potential wasn't getting killed in battle... it was complacency. Loss of momentum.

Dark Heavens forced Caleb to keep moving forward. Forced him to keep progressing. While internal motivation was best when getting stronger, external ones were also great to have. That's why factions bored with having wars all time and why it was even considered relatively commonplace for factions to hire assassins to kill ir own young talents. threat of death or having one's country destroyed was a great motivator.

However, se external motivators could be dealt with. One could defeat enemy country invading, have assassination contract expire, or finally get revenge on a hated enemy. At that point, many geniuses lost ir purpose and began to become complacent, eventually resulting in ir Path falling apart and time claiming ir lives.

Dark Heavens fixed that. It was a constant reminder that Caleb couldn't just decide to do nothing for a few hundred years. He needed to always do something to at least get a few Records.

It was a reckless and dangerous Path, but Caleb had chosen it for a reason, and he'd walked into it with both eyes wide open.

Caleb was fully aware that he wasn't a genius. Not compared to those around him. Eron, Sword Saint, Casper, Arnold, Carmen, and, of course, his dear bror Jake, also surpassed him several times over when it came to sheer talent. This wasn't even mentioning monsters Jake had been behind creating.

Granted, he had originally accepted Legacy of Tenlucis without knowing he was surrounded by monsters, and back n, he'd done it as a way to ensure he could be powerful enough to defend his family. He'd also instantly understood that he was particularly suited to Path.

Besides obvious weakness of having a Path that would one day consume his very existence, Dark Heavens did have anor major downside. In fact, it had been this downside that ended up dooming Tenlucis in end.

Lack of Records for Dark Heavens truthfully wasn't a problem, and Caleb doubted it ever would be. As long as he got enough to still be able to evolve when time came, it was all fine. No, real problem came from just how overbearing Dark Heavens were.

It was a concept designed to constantly pressure its user, pushing m forward. And it did just that... perhaps a bit too well. pressure it put on people was akin to that of a powerful presence, seeing as Dark Heavens were effectively its own living entity within Caleb's Soulspace.

This entity would continue growing in his Soulspace, and unless he could withstand pressure it put on him, it would eventually make everything around it crumble. only way to address this was to continue growing stronger, as stronger one got, more one could resist presences of ors.

Except... Caleb had a level of aura resistance that couldn't quite be measured. While Caleb did feel some pressure when standing in front of a god like Umbra, he wasn't sure how much of that pressure was from him feeling like he should be pressured. If he actively resisted being suppressed, even Umbra's aura wasn't enough to make him bend a knee.

That's why Caleb didn't fear Dark Heavens. He didn't fear finding himself crushed by his own Path, which meant only downside was need to constantly keep growing, something he planned on doing, anyway.

This Path of a mad god had been thing that allowed him to stand beside or top performers of Earth, and he was confident that he could continue to do so. Especially now that he'd finally reached level 320 in his class and gained a skill he'd been waiting for.

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Opening his eyes in real world, Caleb found himself sitting in a small cave. Four members from Court of Shadows were with him, one of whom saw he had exited meditation.

"Judge," woman said with a nod. "target has been located. Jim and Dwight are currently tracking it."

"Thanks, Pam," Caleb nodded as he stood up and exited cave. "I'll move to ir position."

Taking a single step forward, Caleb faded into shadows and remained within m as he closed in on his allies. two men had been tracking target y'd been contracted to kill, keeping a safe distance, which was perfectly understandable.

y didn't stand a chance against a B-grade, after all.

For Caleb, this would also be his first solo hunt, but compared to last time, he had a lot more confidence.

target y were tracking was on a planet in Milky Way that had undergone quite a few challenges after death of Ell'Hakan and had only recently fully stabilized after years of internal conflict.

Right as y did, a B-grade monster had emerged and began to threaten newfound balance. Seeing as planet's new ruling faction wanted to prove itself and not instantly run to Miranda for help when faced with a problem, y decided to instead hire Court of Shadows to handle ir problem. It wasn't a regular kind of gig, but Caleb had gladly accepted it, in part for purely selfish reasons, as he wanted to test himself.

Closing in on his destination, Caleb briefly made contact with two or assassins and told m to retreat. He no longer needed ir help, as he'd already located target.

B-grade in question was a large reptilian monster that looked a bit like a scaled hippo walking on two legs. When he spotted B-grade, Caleb saw it was resting within a small pond, injuries still on its body from when it faced a large group of peak C-grade monsters recently. Proof that he was dealing with a low-tier B-grade for sure.

Taking a deep breath, Caleb prepared himself. His passive stealth skill had reached legendary rarity a long time ago, and combined with B-grade not expecting an attack, he had plenty of prep-time.

Taking out his staff – a long black metal pole – Caleb got himself ready. Energy began building in his body as he prepared to unleash his combo attack. One only made possible due to his recent gains.

With everything ready, Caleb made his move, and many things happened at once.

Caleb shot forward like a bolt of lightning, and a massive pillar of energy descended upon B-grade. As this pillar of lightning descended, world changed with it. All life seemed to fade from reality, and everything lost color for both Caleb and B-grade as Judge dragged m into Shadow Realm.

His target realized something was up second world changed, but at that point, it was already too late. Thunderfall of Tenlucis struck B-grade right as Caleb himself also arrived. His staff slammed into monster's head as he dove through his own pillar of lightning, his weapon serving as a lightning rod to funnel even more of energy into his opponent's body.

A deafening scream erupted from hippo-like monster, sending out a shockwave that pushed Caleb back, and a moment later, lightning pillar ceased, revealing form of B-grade. From this brief opening attack, it was already covered in burns as dark lightning lingered, but Caleb was fully aware this was far from enough to take down a true B-grade.

Which was why he was far from done.

“You... a mere human C-grade dares to-” B-grade tried to say, but Caleb was not in mood for chit-chat.

“Descent of Dark Heavens.”

This was skill he'd learned upon reaching level 320 in his class. It was also Caleb's second Mythical Skill.

Descent of Dark Heavens was even more powerful than his first one. Umbra had been quite hands-on with informing him of steps he'd need to take in order to unlock this skill, and he fully understood why after using it for first time.

most important prerequisite to use skill was ability to enter Shadow Realm in first place, because Dark Heavens could only exist re. In fact, according to Umbra, Dark Heavens always existed within Shadow Realm, as concept had become one with it.

After Caleb summoned it, endless darkness above Judge and B-grade rumbled. Clouds full of energy formed as a powerful pressure fell upon world. Caleb stood unfazed under this pressure as B-grade hippo looked toward sky with wide eyes as its legs shook from having to experience same thing Caleb did every moment of every day.

Without giving his target any chance to acclimate, Caleb attacked. He'd already fully unleashed his boosting skill – his second mythical skill. It was a boosting skill truly towards pinnacle, more than doubling all his stats for a brief period when fully activated. Unlike boosting skills of ors, his wasn't made for prolonged combat, but for absolute explosive power to finish his target off as soon as possible.

Striking with his staff, Caleb went all out as he unleashed a barrage of attacks. At same time, skies above resonated with his blows, raining down lightning bolts with every strike.

Each attack did very little, but Caleb kept striking as he allowed dark lightning to accumulate within his target. His blows didn't merely aim to damage body of his foe, but dark lightning went as far as to affect soul, burning away resources while having a numbing effect, serving almost as a weak neurotoxin.

However, perhaps more importantly was that more lightning energy accumulated within his foe, more B-grade would resonate with Dark Heavens and be affected by it. Which meant that pressure would only keep growing with every bit of damage taken, and what's more, when level of resonance reached a high enough level, Dark Heavens would begin to strive to eliminate being that dared defy it.

Having taken advantage of his opponent's shock and fact that it was already damaged when Caleb attacked, he soon reached this point. scary thing about resonating with Dark Heavens was that not only would lightning bolts begin to shoot down from sky, but B-grade itself would become a source.

One could avoid a descending lightning strike, but if lightning strike ascended directly from one's body, re was no escape.

Bolts of lightning constantly shot up and down between Dark Heavens and B-grade, burning it even more from inside out. Not to misunderstand, monster did try to fight

back and had throughout, but with damage it had taken, effects of Dark Heavens, lightning, and Caleb's speed, nothing it did could hit Caleb.

Still, Caleb knew that victory wasn't inevitable. Doing this much burned through his resources like there was no tomorrow, as keeping Dark Heavens present wasn't an easy endeavour, and longer he kept it active, more mana it would drain. Alright, skill description also included that longer he kept it active, more he would be affected by pressure, but again, Caleb didn't really care about that part.

mana drain alone was a tight timer, though, and he had already consumed a mana potion to keep himself going. With every passing second, his own boosting skill also damaged his body more and more, as while he was quite resistant to his own dark lightning, he wasn't entirely immune. New NOVEL chapters are published on [novel●fire●net](#)

Caleb had made estimations before his attack, and luckily for him, he'd been on mark. After B-grade unleashed its last gambit and promptly failed because Caleb retreated far away with his version of Shadow Vault, his target finally fell to ground.

Right as it did, Caleb dispelled everything as quickly as he could. Shadow Realm dispersed around him alongside Dark Heavens, and his boosting skill also deactivated as extreme weakness flooded his body, making Caleb fall down on one knee in front of his slain foe.

He started coughing as his body convulsed, his muscles rippling from how overexerted they were. pressure from Dark Heavens was also stronger than usual as his own Path punished him for having dared to summon it... but most important was that he'd won.

Less than a minute later, four assassins he'd brought with him to this mission arrived and helped him retreat to somewhere safer.

In total, it had taken three minutes and thirty-nine seconds to kill his first B-grade solo. If fight had surpassed four minutes, Caleb would have had to retreat or risk dying or permanent injury from his own skills.

Caleb truly did walk an extreme Path... but alas, he didn't really have much of a choice if he wanted to keep up with absolute monsters he was surrounded by. Especially not when he considered his big brother, who was biggest monster of them all.

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Chapter 1160 - Perplexing Plots Across Milky Way

"Anor one?" Miranda asked with exasperation. "And let me guess, y need help?"

"So far y haven't requested it, but I think that's a safe assumption," Lillian answered calmly. "While y should be able to defeat a B-grade mselves, losses y would incur would be massive."

"Yeah, I guess ir only viable strategy would be to throw bodies at it until damn thing gets tired out," Miranda nodded. "Assuming it's anor weak variant, that is."

"All signs indicate it is," Lillian said. "I would guess a request for assistance is imminent."

"Alright... see if people from Valhal would like to handle this one," Miranda sighed, not really having many or options at this point, as most of or elite factions or teams were busy.

Miranda had expected that dealing with emergence of B-grades would be a challenge, but it had happened earlier than expected. What's more, it was all over galaxy.

Luckily, it was still confined to top planets of Milky Way, and some of planets could handle it on ir own. Kindroth, as an example, had reported emergence of three B-grades so far, but he and his forces had handled m on ir own.

same was true for or top factions in galaxy that controlled planets. While y didn't necessarily have any individuals capable of fighting B-grades, numbers could still make up for difference.

If it were truly powerful, B-grades would have been a lot harder to handle, but so far, all ones appearing have been at bottom of barrel. It did make sense, though.

se were all B-grades that had consumed special system-given natural treasures during early parts of integration and experienced massive growth due to it. ir Paths were shaky to say least, and at most, y had one lucky encounter that allowed m to barely evolve to B-grade.

To make matters more annoying, many of se B-grades were actively causing problems for current leadership of planets. To be clear, Miranda believed re were actually far more B-grades than y knew, but most of m were smart enough to stay hell away from enlightened settlements, and if y did approach, y did so with no ill intent.

same really couldn't be said about problematic B-grades. What's more, y all shared commonality of carrying blessings. Usually very low-tier blessings, but Blessings noneless. Additionally, all gods giving out se Blessings actively hid ir identities.

Miranda and rest of Earth's intelligence network had tried to uncover who was behind this, but sadly, re weren't really any reliable ways to confirm a god's name. Sure, if a god used Identify on someone blessed, re was a good chance y could see through it, but sadly for Miranda, y didn't have any gods handy.

Fortunately, despite best attempts of se B-grades, none of m had managed to accomplish anything meaningful. A significant reason for ir failure was arrival of backup from Order of Malefic Viper.

Draskil had already been around and was a great help with or elites gone from planet. When Scarlett had arrived about a year ago and helped Holstred deal with Bristleboar B-grade, things had really turned around.

Scarlett was proof of what a true B-grade could be. While she had also gained power rapidly through consuming potent system-provided natural treasures, she had gotten incredibly lucky and found an even more fortuitous encounter to address her shaky foundation.

She had gained Blessing of Forefar of her entire race pretty early on in C-grade and afterwards even gone to Order of Malefic Viper to improve herself furr. n, armed with knowledge and an improved Path, she spent fifty years tempering herself inside of Nevermore. Once she was out of time re, she had already been close to peak C-grade and only needed a little more to fully evolve.

Additionally, snake had also told Miranda a great deal about considerable resources invested in her. Not by Order of Malefic Viper, mind you, but Dragonflights that had seemingly decided that Scarlett would be ir connection to Chosen of Malefic Viper.

All of this had resulted in Scarlett turning into a relatively high-tier B-grade. Her power was truly proof of vast gulf in power that could exist even within same grade. Miranda had been a bit worried about putting so much on Scarlett, but so far, she'd yet to encounter a single B-grade she wasn't capable of killing near-instantly, with little to no effort.

Her venom was simply too powerful for anything to handle. It didn't even matter what she attacked, as even a damn water elemental found itself poisoned to death. Miranda was also fully aware that a single bite from Scarlett would kill her and pretty much any or C-grade alive, with only a scarce few exceptions. Draskil being one of m.

As Miranda was in thought, y had a knock on door. Looking up, Miranda realized who it was as she waved her hand.

door swung open, revealing a familiar elf.

"This lowly one is honored to have Voice of One visit her humble planet," Miranda said in a mocking tone.

"My mere presence is indeed a gift upon your life," Kindroth responded with a dry chuckle. "Humor aside, allow me to get directly to point. According to my contacts, Holy Church is not affiliated with this god or gods trying to cause a disturbance. y also aren't aware of who it could be, though y do have ir speculations."

"Ones similar to ours?" Miranda asked inquisitively.

"Yeah," Kindroth nodded. "Yip of Yore had a lot of allies and people who believed in him. While Malefic One got rid of a lot of m, far more exist out re. I would almost be surprised if something like this didn't happen."

"True, especially when it seems so low-risk," Miranda muttered.

"But not entirely risk or consequence-free," Kindroth pointed out. "Giving out that many Blessings isn't free, and I can only imagine losses that whatever gods are involved have already suffered."

"That's why I said low risk," Miranda shook her head. "Activity has recently slowed down across board, making me think enemy has eir given up..."

"Or y are gearing up for something bigger," Kindroth finished her sentence. "y must know y can't keep doing this forever. Not only is it unsustainable and incurs too big a cost, but it's also too risky. If y go too far..."

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"karmic footprint y'll leave will be too substantial and potentially allow us to discover ir identities," Miranda took her turn to finish Kindroth's sentence.

"Exactly," elven World Leader smiled. "I can only surmise that whatever god or gods are behind this weren't open supporters of Yip of Yore; if y were, re would be no reason for all subterfuge."

"I do agree with that assumption," Miranda said. "What I can't quite figure out is why yet. Sure, I get motive, but not goal. This or party must know that y can't accomplish anything meaningful by just having a bunch of problematic B-grades and peak C-grades create trouble around place."

"I could make guesses, but re are none I'm confident of," Kindroth sighed. "Though it is possible, this god is just incredibly incompetent and ir plans were messed up from moment that white snake arrived on planet."

"Her name is Scarlett," Miranda corrected elf.

"Right," World Leader nodded, as he seemed to be in thought for a moment. "If I may ask, who was behind her name? Because it doesn't seem like one Chosen of Malefic One would have thought up."

"Oh?" Miranda exclaimed, acting dumb. "What could you possibly mean by that?"

Kindroth just looked at her with a raised eyebrow before she chuckled.

"Hey, I think he's getting better," Miranda said, shaking her head. "latest name he gave was Jasper."

"Is it an elemental made of gems? Maybe a golem?"

"No, and I was also shocked when I learned it wasn't," Miranda said, a hint of pride in her voice.

"Impressive," Kindroth said, Miranda unable to tell if he was joking or not. "Alas, I believe I should head home. council has been a bit annoying se days due to B-grade activity."

"Enjoy politicking," Miranda waved him off. "I was about to throw you out anyway, as I have a meeting coming up."

"You didn't need to add that," Kindroth said, acting hurt.

"See you next time, oh supreme Voice of One," Miranda said as she waved her hand, making Kindroth slide across floor and out of door, which promptly closed after him.

Outside door, elf shook his head before taking his leave. Once he was out of earshot, Miranda turned to side of table.

"He didn't notice you, did he?"

"It doesn't appear like he did," Lillian answered as a faint sheen of moonlight covered her body.

"With those stealth skills, you should join Court of Shadows... wait, maybe I need a spymaster? Do you wanna be a spymaster?" Miranda tilted her head.

"No," Lillian shut down notion right away.

"How about secret moonlight assassin?"

"I don't believe that falls under my job description," Lillian answered in same deadpan tone.

"Hey, personal assistant is a proud job title!" Miranda joked around with a smile. It genuinely made her happy to see that Lillian had grown a lot stronger over years, and while she wasn't some peak genius, she was far from weak for her level. While Miranda didn't need any bodyguard to defend her, she was happy that her personal assistant and close friend were capable of not only defending herself but capable of continuing to progress by Miranda's side.

"Need I remind you that World Council is waiting?" Lillian asked.

"Oh... right," Miranda nodded. "That's why I have a personal teleportation circle."

Getting up, she and Lillian walked to a corner of room where a hidden magic circle revealed itself, and a moment later, two were whisked away to another exciting budget and city-planning meeting.

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"*Work work work,*" space worm said as it wormed around large, desolate celestial object. Once in a while, worm would spit out small metallic objects before quickly continuing.

"*Little bit here, little re, little bit everywhere!*" worm sang while deploying beacons. This singing was naturally also done through special communication device connected directly to a certain scientist's mind. "*Hey! Hey! Arnold! Listen!*"

It took a few seconds before Sandy got a response.

"Yes?" scientist said in his usual calm voice.

"*When are we gonna blow up moon?*" Sandy asked excitedly.

"*We're not blowing up moon, we're merely destroying Ghostvine that has assimilated itself with it,*" Arnold explained for thirty-eighth time.

"*Potato, tomato! Same thing!*"

"*outcomes are vastly different, as one shall leave celestial object intact,*" Arnold simply explained calmly. "*While some amount of damage is inevitable, nothing done will be unfixable.*"

"*Okay, okay,*" Sandy agreed that Arnold was being boring. "*How many more of se do I need to place?*"

“Nineteen more.”

“Wow! That’s... a lot less than I expected. Do you even know how many of se I’ve placed over last half a year?” Sandy asked with exasperation.

“Two thousand, two hundred and seventy-two will be total amount placed over last one hundred and fifty-nine days,” Arnold once more answered, merely with facts.

“Which is a lot!” Sandy exclaimed, before suddenly being in doubt. *“Wait, it’s a lot, right?”*

“It’s sufficient.”

“Yay! When we... oh, wait a second, Ghostvine mad again!” This chapter is updated by **novel•fire•net**

Sandy sadly had to stop chatting as y were suddenly exhausted by a massive blast of death energy from deep within tunnel worm was currently traveling through. Speeding up to dodge, Sandy quickly retreated right as vines sprang out of walls and tried to tie m up, but Sandy was as swift as a space worm, as tough as a space worm, and as agile as a space worm, allowing m to avoid initial assault.

This was not same worm that had been kind of killed when trying to explore moon with Jake. Sandy had grown a lot since n and was superior in every way imaginable. Meanwhile, Ghostvine had grown far less in comparison, allowing Sandy to actually escape clutches of B-grade.

What’s more, Sandy didn’t even need to fully retreat. Instead, y continued mission of planting Arnold’s beacons within moon’s vast tunnel system. It was a dangerous mission, but Sandy was only one capable of doing it.

se beacons would allow Arnold to scan interior of moon using his satellites. He’d tried to penetrate surface using various means, but ultimately concluded that unless he wanted to wait till he reached B-grade himself or had some major breakthrough, he would need beacons inside moon to get a full scan.

Initially, he had placed se beacons using drones, which had worked out pretty well. He had placed over ten thousand beacons on his own, but when he tried to place m deeper, he ran into a big problem.

Ghostvine Sovereign’s senses got better closer one got to core, and it began to destroy se drones before y could get deep enough. While it usually took a little while for m to be detected, y simply couldn’t get deep enough.

That was where Sandy stepped in.

While Sandy couldn't avoid being detected eir, that didn't mean B-grade could do anything about worm. Sure, a few thousand vines were annoying to deal with, but Sandy was more than capable of escaping over and over again while placing all different beacons.

As Sandy dodged anor attempt to be captured, worm finally got done charging up magic. *"Poof we go!"*

With vines closing in from all sides, space worm disappeared. A few hundred kilometers away, within anor tunnel deep inside moon, space worm reappeared and spat out anor beacon.

"Eighteen to go!" Sandy said proudly, right before a real downer message came from or side.

"Consider retreating and placing rest tomorrow after Ghostvine has had time to calm down," Arnold warned. *"Its energy signature is spiking significantly, indicating it's preparing to launch a proper assault."*

"Pfft, you're a total worrywart. You know that, right?" Sandy said as worm looked a bit worried toward center of moon. *"But you know, just for you, I'll listen this time around."*

Arnold didn't even respond as Sandy quickly fled from room before Ghostvine Sovereign had time to gar its power and launch a powerful attack. Sandy totally wasn't afraid, and it wasn't as if last time space worm had ignored Arnold. y'd nearly returned to being an egg once more.

It took a bit of effort, but Sandy soon made ir escape and retreated a good distance away from moon, where worm stopped moving and just floated through empty space.

"Hey, Arnold."

"Yes?" scientist responded.

"When we gonna blow up moon?"

"We're not blowing up moon," Arnold answered for thirty-ninth time. *"But if you're asking about when offensive portion of operation shall begin, it's estimated to be next week."*

"Yay!" Sandy celebrated, super looking forward to finally blowing up moon.

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