

The Primordial Record

- Chapter 31: Stepping Into Hell

Chapter 31: Stepping Into Hell

Three Abominations larvae were shambling towards them, and Maeve deliberately slowed down and allowed Rowan to take the lead, he knew this was her way of teaching him.

Learn by doing. Rowan would have it no other way.

Seeing these monsters ahead, he leaned towards them. They were all women in the loosest sense of the word—Nothing about them was human anymore. They were the favored gender for the larvae of Abominations.

He would have felt hesitation to kill these women warped by the touch of the Abominations. But it had been studied and there was proof that the mind was the first to die when you were infected by an Abomination. You simply become a conduit to the will of the Core.

The monstrous babies tied to the women's chests made low crooning sounds like birds, yet their eyes were filled with darkness and bloodlust.

His Spatial Sight made it possible to keep perfect track of everything around him, and he let his intuition take over.

The first Abomination larvae was a few feet from him when she swiped with black-tipped claws, Rowan did not dodge because he was faster. He simply stabbed with the short sword at the Abomination's chest, his target the head of the child.

The blade was sharp, and his strength was tremendous, the sword penetrated through the head of the baby into the chest of the Abomination, who shrieked at him, yellow saliva spraying all over his face.

With a low grunt, Rowan applied pressure upward and his blade sliced the Abomination larvae in two, erupting from the top of her head in a flood of yellow blood and brain matter, the body fell on its knees and parted into two like an open book.

Rowan lifted his legs and stepped across the twitching Abomination. The second one was too close for Rowan to make any effective movement, but he had already planned his next series of actions.

He pushed her to the left, his strength enough to make her stumble, and he buried the shears in her neck, the Divine Weapon emitted a wave of chills that froze her in the spot. The last one was on him, biting and clawing, the legs of the Abomination were wrapped around his waist and her teeth were trying to find purchase on his neck.

Rowan let it happen for a few seconds and when he saw the attacks were ineffective he seized her by the neck and pulled her away from him.

He raised his sword and swung at her head, even with all his advantages, his angle of descent was wrong and instead of neatly cutting through her skull, the blade went through halfway and stopped.

Rowan grimaced and wrenched the blade to the side forcefully, exploding her head like a watermelon. Turning to the last frozen Abomination, it took a single blow to free the head off her body.

He picked up the Divine weapon and shook both of his wrists, flinging away the gore on his weapons.

He had wavered when he was about to kill the second Abomination. A trace of concern for their wellbeing crept over him, and his hands shook.

Even with the horror these things represented, he had assumed he was sufficiently motivated to put an end to them. He did not know how to feel about this apparent weakness of his, but the screams coming from his town were getting worse, and suddenly all his concerns were dust in the winds.

"If there are Abomination larvae, roaming this far from Calcutta, then we have to be careful not to be surrounded." Maeve said, "Ahead. There are four more by the side of the trees."

"Five..." Rowan said, "One of them is perched on the top of the elm tree in the middle."

"Oh... Is that so," Maeve smirked, so you missed the two below the ground.?

"Son of a..." Rowan muttered.

"It would seem you have other sensory abilities besides your eyes, Master. Yet, you don't use them effectively" Maeve said as she abruptly shot past him, the massive blade she held shimmered away and was replaced by a giant hammer.

"Watch your steps!" Her words drifted into his ears, as she leaped and pounded the ground with her hammer, causing a mini earthquake.

The ground shattered before that blow, pulverizing the Abominations inside the ground, the wave of destruction spread to the trees and uprooted dozens of them.

Rowan, anticipating the spreading wave of force, leaped in the air, his Spatial sight revealing there was more behind this hammer blow of Maeve. Besides the sheer force, the ground seemed like it was humming.

Before his feet touched the ground, every single Abomination was dead. The hammer blow had flung them up, and she replaced the hammer with her long sword, and like a dancer from hell, she twirled through the falling Abomination slicing their heads off.

Rowan heard her whisper, "1.5 seconds" with annoyance in her tone.

They began moving again, and Maeve took a step back, allowing Rowan to dispatch the wandering Abominations he saw along the way, giving him advice on proper weapon usage, scouting his surroundings for hostility, and the act of killing efficiently.

He did not think he could utilize everything she thought to him presently, but he kept all her instructions inside, and he would slowly absorb them as time passed.

For now, his movements were more refined, and the swings from his sword were smooth and direct, he began holding back his strength as he did need to put his all behind the weapon, a tenth of his present strength was enough to cut through the Abomination larvae.

He began holding his Spatial sight around him always like a bubble, occasionally shooting a burst of them into the ground, ahead and behind him.

He wrapped his sight around Maeve, wishing to duplicate her movements. She had a peculiar method she used to accelerate her motions instantly. It was a freaky thing to witness her going from zero to a hundred in a heartbeat and going back to zero in the next breath.

When they reached the edge of the fog, both of them paused, Maeve bent down and began to set up a beacon, materializing various components.

Rowan took the time to call up his Primordial Record, and looked at his Soul point progress, in addition to rescuing his people, he hoped to harvest sizeable amounts of souls for his growth

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Name: Rowan Kuranos

Age: 11/11

Strength: 45.7

Agility: 44.9

Constitution: 92.4

Spirit: 47.9

Class: None

Title: Plane walker

Aspect: Spatial Sight (Tier 1)

Skill: (None)

Passive: Decipher language (complete), Icy soul (level 4)

Records:

[ATAVISM]- level 0 [490/3000]

– level 0 [0/1000]

Soul Point:75.4288

Remark: Divine Runt

That was a healthy amount of soul points he had collected so far, he poured seventy of those into Ouroboros, and his body made cracking sounds as it compacted, and he grew another inch, Maeve turned and looked at him, and went back to assembling the beacon.

Rowan was sure she had noticed his height increasing; however, his shell served as a shield to all outside probing, so he doubted she would know the earth-shaking changes happening inside his body.

These were his stat increments:

Strength: 45.7 – 52.7

Agility: 44.9 – 51.9

Constitution: 92.4 – 112.4

Spirit: 47.9 – 48.5

Two-Headed Ouroboros: 490 – 560

His spirit did not benefit from Ouroboros, but the more souls he collected his Spirit grew slowly as a result, but this was slow to him compared to his other stats. For anyone else to grow their spirit this quickly was impossible.

Yet, this was not the most thing that had happened to him at the moment. His Constitution had reached the Rift state and everything inside him was beginning to change.

"The Beacon is complete," Maeve said, as a bright blue light shot from the components she assembled. It would be their guide on the way out and also serve as a waypoint.

Rowan nodded and both of them stepped into Hell.

Chapter 32: First Battle

The Black fog swallowed them, and neither one of them flinched from that darkness. Rowan felt Soul Seizer drawing many soul fragments with varying flavors. He detected laughter and sunlight and a baby wailing. Weird, he had never had this effect when he collected souls before.

Then it hit him, he was collecting the souls of people. Regular folks who lived their lives in contentment, their souls carried a glow that felt warm and complete.

Was this not Alana? The young woman who had a painful crush on Rowan, went beet-red anytime Rowan tried talking to her. She had an unusual way with words, always referring to herself in the first person.

This soul that felt like a piece of hard leather should be Morin, a dependable farmer who was something of a playboy.

Branrik, a mason who had seven strong boys he was very proud of...

Ragodr, the self-proclaimed most handsome man in all of Calcutta...

Fjarmir, a petty thief who had been adopted by his people because he was mostly harmless and could be called in a pinch to help do menial tasks...

Grunmir...

Voramyrr...

Svegrimm...

Torernir...

Gragvar...

Grarnir...

Thogir...

Please, no more...

Hundreds of soul fragments came, they brought with them a trace of their memories, but only the best parts or the worst.

Grarnir sees his wife torn apart and at the moment of his death; seizing an Abomination and tears out the throat with his teeth....

So many souls.... So many memories...

Rowan did not know how he did it, but he did not consume those souls, he kept them safe in the Jaws of Dagon—The bracelet form of Soul Seizer that was on his wrist.

As the souls poured into his being, carrying with them light and heat, his Icy Soul grew colder. Throughout the previous battle, he had never made a sound, he was imitating Maeve. Her coldness and deadly precision. But that was not who he was. He was not cold, he lived his life with passion....

His Soul may have turned to Ice, but his blood was filled with fire.

So, he opened himself to the souls, his Soul Seizer called them through the darkness, and they came to him seeking warmth and solace, he opened himself, and he asked them to witness their vengeance.

They must have heard the fury in his blood, for more of them came to him, and he kept them. He told them he was their sword. He told them whoever was responsible for their demise would pay the ultimate price.

Then the Abomination came through the fog.

The shapes that entered his sight in the fog were different from anything he had ever seen before.

Their head was mostly mouth, filled with long misshapen black teeth that oozed black tar, their nose were two deep holes, and their eyes were small and beady, and glowed yellow.

Their hands ended in thick bone spikes, and what Rowan found the most revolting was that they were skinless, their anatomy was unnatural, too many joints leading nowhere, and their bodies were a mishmash of different parts that served only one purpose to kill.

With a cry that came straight from nightmares, they charged at him. Rowan replied with a roar of his own that exploded through the fog. An utterly unearthly cry. One that was borne from a rage he could hardly hold back any longer. The anger of an Empyrean. A being born at the birth of a universe.

Something beyond what he knew erupted from his body, and Maeve was driven to her knees. She looked at him, her face was that of pure astonishment. The cry that came from his lungs was primal and seemed unending, and the surrounding fog began to retreat as if fleeing from that cry.

The effects on the Abomination were distinct as they fell to the ground shrieking in confusion, There were dozens of them, their alien bodies writhing on the ground. The spikes were their limbs digging massive holes in the ground.

The cry from Rowan ended, and the fog had retreated for hundreds of meters around him, Maeve picked herself up, her footing unsteady.

"Watch yourself!" Rowan told her as he tackled the first Abomination, and he did not hold his strength back. His sword and shears turned it into a pile of minced flesh.

He disregarded the training from Maeve, his fury could not let anything through. He began to butcher them as they lay on the floor confused, but they soon recovered, and he was already too deep in their midst.

Not only that, but he was swamped by a dozen Abomination, and he fell to the ground, for a moment he was buried under bodies, spikes, and claws and fangs scrapped his body, wishing to dig through his shell and find his flesh, but they were all denied.

He screamed again, stunning the Abomination on top of him, and he erupted with all his strength and fury, digging deep inside and his bloodline began to boil and heat up, the two golden tattoos on his chest began to glow and growls began to emanate from them.

He seized an Abomination by the throat, he had lost the shears in the confusion, and he pulled and twisted, breaking the spine with a sickening crack, he used the body as a shield and began to push his way out of the pile.

His sword fell and killed and maimed any Abomination he could reach, while he used the body he held as a battering ram, limbs were thrown out and bodies were cut in twos and threes, when Rowan stepped out of the pile he was covered head to toe in yellow gore, and no Abomination bigger than a brick was left.

His chest was heaving and his legs were shaking, his mind burning like a furnace. Ahead of him, more Abomination poured out from the ruins of homes and fields, and Rowan began to laugh, for in his Primordial Record he had harvested more than a hundred and fifty soul points.

He poured them all into Ouroboros and his strength returned, his lungs filled with air and his leg steadied and grew stronger like a piece of divine oak whose roots could touch the core of the planet.

"Maeve... Weapons!" The sword he was using was now bent and useless, he discarded it, and it shimmered away.

She sent two swords toward him, he caught them and said, "I want bigger ones next time." Maeve was standing back and watching his surroundings, she held back, knowing Rowan wanted to vent. She would stay back and protect him, she materialized many 'Sparking Beads' and began burning the bodies he left behind.

And he charged towards the Abomination, going forward deeper into the town, the beacon behind him blazing blue, hoping that they heard him. Hoping that they still keep faith.

Rowan began to kill.

His thoughts were aflame. Why should he hold back his strength? He was different from Maeve, he did not need to measure his blows, did not need to fear weakness or tiredness on the battlefield, for with every slain enemy he got stronger, faster. His fatigue eased, his technique for slaughter got more refined, and with every step, he took he got better.

Rowan roared again, and this time it was as if two voices were roaring with him.

Chapter 33: Berserker

Declara held the hands of her two youngest waitress as she ushered her staff ahead of her, a few hundred people were around her as they were herded towards the manor of the noble, she looked around hoping to pick up more familiar faces, but many people she knew were not with them.

The fog gave birth to monsters and the missing people with it. But the people were not the same again. For they were no longer people they knew and loved, they wore a grin that extended until their ears, and the sounds they made led people to madness.

She saw fathers and mothers run to missing children and even when they were being killed, they laughed in happiness.

Wives ran to husbands who were killing their children and stayed lost in a daze, waiting their turn, while they were smiling.

They ran to them with open hands to be slaughtered, their faces holding delight, even as they were butchered by their missing kin, their bodies were then fed to the monsters.

The monsters, who at first resembled babies, but transformed into nightmarish creatures with fangs and claws.

It was sheer madness, and Declara wanted to hold her head and scream until she couldn't. She wanted to poke out her eyes. Death was a better option than whatever was happening here.

Thankfully, the distraught people had pillars of sanity, carrying them through the madness. They were the Guardsmen.

Around her were muffled screaming and curses, and the sounds of blades tearing through flesh, the men in Red Armour moved like whirlwinds, they cut down monsters after monsters.

The old priest Purdue had screamed himself hoarse trying to keep the morale of people up, and to distract them from the madness happening around. Dark lightning shot from his fingertips, turning monsters after monsters into charcoal, but he was beginning to falter, and he would have fallen behind, if he was not supported by a couple of boys.

She did her part comforting the girls she held and directed members of her staff, who were used to her commands, and in the madness her words were a source of sanity and guidance.

The thick fog made the scene resemble a hellscape, the only source of salvation they knew was the back of the guardsmen, who seemed to be tireless butchers and seemed to know the direction to the manor.

Glynn was also a terrifying beacon, he held a bloodied axe, his face was grim, and his hair was white as snow. He gave out long battle cries that were both terrifying and sorrowful, he had become the torch many of them followed through this darkness.

She always thought he was a miserable drunk and an overprotective father to a spoiled brat, after his wife died, he isolated himself and drank until stupor every day, his son was the only thing he treated with kindness.

This new side of him she saw was startling, he went after every monster with a vengeance and struck off heads and limbs, seemingly not defending himself, yet the wounds on his body did not seem to bleed. They were terrifyingly deep wounds, but they did not hamper his movement but fueled them.

The girl she held in her right hand, Lara, mumbled prayers to all the gods she knew and those she heard of. She squeezed Declara hand so tight she feared she was going to

lose the appendage very soon, her prayers abruptly stopped, and the pressure from her hand slowly began to disappear. Declara turned to ascertain the reason for her silence.

Holding her hand was just the bloody limb of Lara, even detached from her body it still held on fast to her hand, as though it was not willing to let go. Declara whimpered.

She heard a shrill scream over her head, and the air vibrated as a monstrosity flew over, it picked up members from the crowd and tore them apart in the air, as howling Abominations struggled to pick the falling pieces of flesh. The monsters seemed to be unending.

Furthermore, immense creatures the size of buildings began to emerge from the fog, and for the first time a guardsman fell, trampled under a massive foot, she saw him struggle to stand, but he was torn to pieces. The screams he made were haunting.

The carefully managed chaos that was the crowd collapsed into pandemonium.

Then the roar that froze the world and everyone in it, came through the fog.

Rowan's first Nascent cry as an Emphyrean was not loud, but it had a depth he did not fathom.

That cry pierced through the fog and ascended, it swept past everything and reached the clouds and it went past.

An odd bird flew through that cloud, for it was one made from fire and magma, it appeared to move through the air not by the power of its wings but by a fiery propulsion.

The red eyes of the bird burned with a piercing glow, and it seemed to be scrutinizing the events below. As the cry swept past the bird, it gave a squeak of surprise and shook its wings and bolted away to an unknown destination.

The cry went past the cloud and ascended to the heavens, but its rise was denied, it impacted on a sort of blue film that covered the heavens themselves. The blue film glowed and countless mystical runes flashed.

If one were to stand in the heavens and look at the earth below, it was possible to see that the blue film was like an upturned bowl that covered the entire region, shielding it from the outside world.

The cry penetrated the earth and also the lake, where it travelled to the deepest part of it, where a gigantic head lies.

The head was of a woman, who's had long flowing hair that covered the bottom of the lake, when the cry reached the head, its eyes snapped open, and inside her long flowing hair, eyes after eyes began to also open, like the feather from a Peacock tail.

Rowan moved forward, his sight pulsed ahead of him disregarding his protection and his surroundings, he wanted no more souls of his people. His body moved like a machine, he simply cut down every Abomination that obstructed him.

And then he saw them, and the number of people left was a few hundred. Calcutta was a small town that was the home of more than three thousand people. In a few hours, only a fraction of them were left.

Rowan knew if not for the Guardsmen and the prompt warning from the priest, no one here would be left alive, but that horrible eventuality was about to happen.

Abominations in their hundreds buzzed around the people like flies, thinning their numbers, and a more ominous rumble was behind them as massive figures moved through the fog. Rowan saw with despair that three giants burst from the ground ahead of the people.

He had to hurry or everyone would die in the upcoming moments. It was not much, but he had another hundred and twenty Soul points, he poured it inside Ouroboros, and his speed got faster, the remnants soul of the dying prince screaming inside him.

Faster!

Faster!

Faster!

Chapter 34: Berserker (2)

Rowan would have been shocked by these giants. If he had not seen bigger in that world with the Red Moon. And unlike those giants that felt unassailable, these just felt powerful. Enough to kill him? Maybe, but Rowan was not going by logic currently.

Events around him had pushed his mind to a singular purpose. Which was: Protect what was left of his people and put down the monsters.

He had no time for fancy introspection. No thought on the actions he was committing, just a sheer drive to stop the souls that were coming to him for solace.

Their remembrances these soul brought with them were tearing his psyche apart.

These monstrosities ahead of him should be the Giant battle form. Which was a fusion of hundreds of Battle Form Abominations.

Their appearances would put all nightmares he had in his previous life to shame. How do you even begin describing a chaotic creature such as this?

They generally walked on two legs, but none of the giants were the same, one had dozens of snarling faces of Abomination on their chest, with a head that had only a single eye.

As always, they had no skin, so a massive pile of warped muscles and viscera adorned the bodies of the Saints, with bones poking from unexpected areas of the bodies.

Another giant had three arms and its fingers were the arms of individual battle form Abomination. The shapes these giants had were so disjointed that it would drive a normal human insane, for their proportions spoke of a thoroughly alien mind, that was impossible for a sane mind to comprehend.

An Abomination was a lot like a colony of insects, and there were many theories on how they were created.

The most popular was that Abominations were a Mutation of a powerful Dominator who failed in transcending his state of change. Moreover, there was much evidences that supported this theory. Abominations were mostly seen where powerful Dominators died.

Legends spoke of entire dead empires and forgotten civilizations, where underneath lies ancient Abomination with the power of gods.

Maeve zoomed past him, perhaps she judged he would not make it quickly enough. Although Rowan was fast, she was still clearly faster. Rowan was sure she was a Peak Legendary Dominator. He was encouraged however that now he could clearly follow her movement.

Silver sparkles began to materialize around her charging figure, and she entered battle with the giant.

Rowan shook his thought away from his musing on the origins of Abomination, the mind it seems would always wander.

He pushed his focus into the coming battle, he observed the fray ahead, and the figure that battled the Giant Abominations.

Maeve had gone all out, she held two giant hammers—Her favorite. Her figure flashed between the legs of a Giant Abomination, and she swung her hammers, when they made contact, a sound like mountains exploding rang out.

She had been with him ever since he was a child, and every so often he forgot how gifted and powerful she was, even though he now suspected she was at peak legendary, she seemed able to draw more power than she should be able to from her bloodline.

She moved with the grace of a ballerina, the preciseness of a mechanical watch, and hit like a tank. Her twin hammers pressed against the air, creating shrill sounds and leaving a red glow behind that faded after a short while.

There was already a collapsed giant, with his head caved in. The giants were slowly recovering, their vitality burned the air, as their bodies shifted and realigned, yellow blood that resembled pus flowed down like rivers, and whatever damage she could dish out, the giants slowly recovered.

These giants appeared to be unkillable. Their bodies seemed to discard the damaged parts whenever it was needed.

But Rowan was not going to let this fallen giant recover, if he could help it, and he thought he might have the right weapon for the job.

Rowan called upon the full might of Soul Seizer and the bracelet around his wrist floated behind him, creating a circular ring of bone that appeared eerily majestic. The bones were now stained a shade of gold. This was a result of his Constitution surpassing a hundred points, his bones began to transform to metal.

Rowan had reached the battle, and he leapt on the fallen giant that was on its way to its feet, he used the bumps and pustules on the bleeding giant to find a way to its head. With a loud cry, he used both hands to forcefully plunge his blades into the forehead of the giant. The floating ring gave a long-drawn-out hum and the giant collapsed.

The body fell with a loud thump, that shook the ground and the battlefield stilled for a second. It would seem that the giants had many bodies merged, and so were their souls. Killing one was enough for Soul Seizer to gain access to their combined souls.

Rowan ripped it out.

Rowan slid down the body of the fallen giant, and yelled at Maeve, "Break them and I shall kill them."

Maeve nodded in understanding, and with a fell grace, she twirled around a giant, building up momentum in her hammer. With bone crushing force, she hammered the

shin of a hulking Abomination. The bones broke with a crack, and it began to fall to its side with a pained roar.

Rowan timed the fall of the giant and jumped, adjusting his trajectory, he used the momentum of the falling giant to slit the throat. There was a thick layer of muscles and cartilage, and Rowan blade failed to cut through.

Like a monkey, Rowan climbed the giant, dodging grasping fingers, when he got to the stomach, he could no longer hold on. The giant defensive movement grew in intensity. But he did not need to go higher. Rotating the blades, he stabbed deeply into the stomach, and he began to run across the torso to the other side, while his blade slid through the tough muscle of the stomach.

The twisted internal organs of the giant exploded out of the massive opening he created, but this was not a fatal wound to these monsters; however, Rowan had killed a couple of the fused Abomination inside this Giant and that was enough for Soul Seizer.

Free to battle only one giant. Maeve began to show her ferocity and power. The giant legs became two pieces of broken pillars. Its reaching hands were crushed, and with a yell, Maeve hammered its skull into mush.

Even with all this punishment, the body of the giant was realigning itself, a massive vein that was filled with glowing red energy began to emerge from the spine of the creature.

It didn't heal its wounds, it forcefully joined its body to those of the two fallen giants. Wounds were fused back to a close, limbs were bent and reshaped, flesh was melted together, glued in place by the glowing vein.

The loud cry of the Abomination shattered the fog. Broken bones penetrated its skin, and a rib cage that grew to protect the skull.

Maeve sighed, breathing hard, as she blew a strand of hair out of her face using her mouth, "I think I might have gone too far with this one."

"You think!" Rowan yelled back, his sights fixed on the disgusting spectacle happening.

This giant was growing and evolving in battle! The giant shook Maeve away, and pounded on her with two great limbs that were a mishmash of bones, gristle, and muscles held together by ropes of glowing red energy.

Maeve dodged the assault with stellar footwork, then she was blasted away by a third limb that emerged from the giant spine. Rowan barely dodged the body of Maeve that was flung into the fog, she had somehow materialized a shield quickly enough to avoid the full brunt of the blow.

The giant Abomination wailed at Rowan. He could hardly move before the Abomination raised both hands and smashed the ground. The ground caved in. A massive number of rocks flew through the air. The vibration from that blow reached Rowan and his body was shaken and tossed into the air.

Inside his shell. Rowan vomited blood.

Chapter 35: Berserker (3)

Rowan struggled to his feet, picking himself out of the wreckage, the damage he sustained rapidly healing. He felt the surrounding air pressure increasing, and he was covered in shadows, his sight detected a massive rock the size of a car hurtling down towards him.

He could barely raise his hands to shield his head before he was smashed into the ground.

Rowan's arms went numb as the rock shattered itself against his body, and his body was mangled into pieces, but his shell contained all the pieces of his body and he rapidly healed, his only concern was his head, if it was crushed, then he was done for.

Thinking how lucky he was for the shock absorbing properties of his shell, he knew the only reason he was in this fight was because of the protection it's offered.

Pushing himself out of the broken rocks, he rapidly picked himself into a crouch and when the next rock came, he vaulted forward, dodging the projectile.

"Where the hell, is it getting rocks?" Rowan screamed in exasperation, before his sight showed him piles of large rocks just below the ground, they were at least twenty feet down, but the giant made it look deceptively easy for it could easily reach below and collect the impromptu missiles.

He focused deeply on the movement of the giant. He would need to anticipate the next moves, or he was going to be played like a fiddle, or the next lucky strike would end him.

Aware that time was of the essence, he pushed his concentration into overdrive. Presently, Rowan did not feel fear. Instead, what he felt was a heightened sense of things.

His sight detected Maeve picking herself from the small crater her body made, she did not appear to be seriously injured, Rowan bared his teeth and pushed his focus to overdrive as he raced to get close to the giant, so he could deliver a killing blow.

These creatures possess cunning, or at least in this Giant form, they now fought with a sense of purpose.

The giant was wary of Rowan getting close, it must have seen the manner Rowan had dispatched the first two, and now it kept its distance and hurled heavy rocks at him.

When Rowan got too close, it began to smash the ground with two heavy misshapen limbs, vibrating the grounds so much Rowan's insides became scrambled. From the destroyed ground, it picked pieces of rocks and threw it at the disoriented Rowan, who was barely dodging.

Knowing he had to break this stalemate, his mind ran through different methods. Currently, Rowan knew he had no feasible method to get closer to the giant.

He regretted not having a range attack weapon like a bow. He could not risk throwing his swords at a very wary giant. If he missed the chance to take down this giant, it would fall to near zero.

Rowan heard a shrill whistle, and a hammer flew out from behind him. Maeve!

Clearly, she had been analyzing the battle and took the optimal decision.

The heavy hammer impacted on the head of the giant, flinging a large gout of yellow blood into the air, it roared in anger. Nevertheless, the Giant was bent backward from the blow, but its two legs on the ground were like two infernal towers attached to the grounds.

For something so large, it was remarkable how limber it was. Rowan knew the strength and tenacity of these creatures could not be judged with common sense. For it devoured two other giants, and this creature must have Rift state capabilities.

A second flying hammer slammed into the disjointed left knee of the Giant. Maeve flew out from the mist, her appearance that she meticulously kept in perfect order was in disarray.

Her hair was loose and floating in the winds, her eyes shone with the brightness of rage. Her uniform was torn and Rowan could swear she had gotten bigger. Unlike the giant, her growth was symmetrical and perfect. She still managed to appear elegant even at eight feet tall!

Picking up one of the fallen hammers, she attacked the other knee, on her lips, words that appeared like chanting and music came forth, and her Hammer began to glow green.

"Anihuruhdda, Guardian Of The Green, Grant my weapons your favor!"

With a battle cry, she struck the leg of the giant, there was a flash of bright light and a green spike grew from the point of contact where the hammer touched the leg.

It pierced through the leg and rooted itself in the ground, the spike grew and with a harsh cracking sound, it transformed into a tree. Maeve collapsed on one knee in exhaustion.

The giant howled mournfully as it

attempted to rise, the root from the tree continued to spread up the limbs, piercing its flesh and driving the giant to the ground.

The roots of the trees were like countless spears, as they pierced through the giant, and feasted on its flesh to grow. The tree grew green and lush and held, in its roots, a howling Giant.

Rowan was amazed at her capabilities, if Maeve broke through his shell and used this technique on him, he was a goner.

He turned to the incapacitated giant, who had begun to slowly fight against the tree. Yet, the Giant must be exceptionally nutritious to the tree, for it grew faster and pinned all the limbs of the giant to the ground. Except for the red vein waving in the air like an enraged serpent, the giant could no longer move.

Seeing his chance, he raced towards it. The red vein must have had a way to detect enemies, and it began to whip itself at him, but its movement was sluggish, the tree must have drained much from this Abomination.

Sidestepping the feeble whipping of the wriggling red vein, he reached the neck of the Giant and with two quick slices, he cut deeply into it. Its struggles seized, and its soul was his.

Rowan took a while to gather his thought. This battle was getting more complicated, he had to be prepared for unexpected eventualities. He would rather not be caught flat-footed again. In the battlefield, that would most likely lead to his death.

He heard crunching above him and looked up. In a short while, the tree that grew from the giant leg had borne fruit.

They were red and resembled apples, they carried a delightful fruity aroma that seemed to clear the air.

The fruit appeared delicious if one could discard it, grew on a pile of Mutated flesh. Clearly Maeve did not care, for she had climbed the tree and was munching on one, as her body began to shrink back to her normal size.

Sensing his gaze, Maeve had the decency to blush, "That ability is tied to a contract I made with a Nature Spirit, it makes me famished my lord." She looked away and muttered, "Plus they are delicious."

Rolling his eyes, Rowan said, "I am promising you a hearty feast after this nightmare is over, but before then we have people to rescue and Abominations to kill."

Rowan waited for her to fish her hammers and ran to the dwindling sounds of battle ahead. Rowan looked at Maeve, "These swords are not that effective against these giants. Do you have a bigger blade or a hammer that I can wield?"

Maeve running beside him replied, "I do, my lord. I have heavy mace, cudgels, and clubs. If your present form grant you great strength, you can choose from my selection."

Rowan nodded, he could see the battle ahead clearly, and their fights had drawn attention, plus the bright beacon behind them drew cries of excitement from the crowd ahead.

"These Giants are clearly smarter." Rowan said, "To keep an element of surprise, give me the weapons, the moment we clash with them. Be ready!"

"Yes my lord. I shall be." Maeve smiled, this battle was bringing out the inherent nobility and power inside Rowan, and even with all the disasters happening, she was glad she was witnessing this growth.

Chapter 36: Berserker (Final)

Rowan took the chance to look at the amount of soul points he had harvested, they were a whopping one hundred and seventy-five and change. Each of those Giant Abomination should have given him at least forty points of souls.

Leaving seven points, Rowan funneled the rest into Ouroboros. The welcoming sensation of his body strengthening was intoxicating. He felt his body transformations beginning to accelerate, and he knew he must be approaching a new threshold.

This was while, for all intents he was still a Mortal State Dominator. Rowan had broken every law of power in this world, and he was beginning to have a hint of how terrifying his powers were.

This revelation did not bring him any elation, only intense wariness, power such as this would attract attention, maybe it already had and he did not know it yet.

Perhaps if he was lucky to become legendary before his lifespan elapses, he would be invincible in this world? But only if he survives.

His Constitution was ticking upwards at a rocket pace, and his body was becoming denser, but his growing Strength was compressing his muscles, making his frame smaller and Agility was reducing his weight.

Each of the stats were important. He suspected without those two stats he would have become a colossus, more than twenty feet tall and weighing multiple tons!

He was sure other Dominators with the same stats would not have a body like his own. The Ouroboros bloodline made him intrinsically different from the inside out, and he was sure his same stat would be multiple times as powerful compared to other Dominators with the same stats.

Then Ouroboros hit a thousand points in the record and everything changed. He paused and fell to his knees, and slowly picked himself back up, yet he could not really move from his position, gesturing for Maeve to go ahead of him, he checked his Record.

P

Name: Rowan Kuranos

Age: 11/11

Strength : 96.7

Agility : 95.9

Constitution : 200.4

Spirit : 56.8

Class: None

Title: Plane walker

Aspect : Spatial Sight (Tier 1)

Skill: (None)

Passive : Decipher language (complete), Icy soul (level 4)

Records:

[ATAVISM]- level 0 [1000/4000]

– level 0 [0/1000]

Soul Point :7.4288

Remark : Divine Runt

His robes were torn to shreds, he would be requiring better clothes going forward, else he would go through his wardrobe in no time.

Outside his body, he was not too different. He may have grown a few inches, and his shoulders had become a bit wider, but his stats were almost triple of what it were before he began this fight.

On his chest, three gleaming tattoos were inlaid on the shell, and he felt joy when he saw no more tattoos being created. His shell was now darker, almost turning black.

No matter how powerful he would become, he was not sure whether he would be able to gather enough souls before his lifespan ran out.

His Strength and Agility were so close to reaching the Rift State, and the world almost seemed like it was slowing down. With his present Constitution, he may not need to breathe for hours, and now he was sure he that stat wise he was now far superior to Maeve, but in every other aspect, he was solely lacking.

Glenn's body was tired.

His rage and anger were not.

So, he burned his body. He burned what was left of his life and gave it to the damn Axe. In his mind, he heard the deranged laughter of the weapon.

He remembered the promises he gave himself. The oath he swore to his wife. "I am so sorry, my dear. I have been away from your touch for far too long. Our boy is now with you, and I am on my way home. My bloodline has ended. But I return to your arms triumphant."

Glenn pumped more life force into the axe, and with a yell, he thrust the weapon at the sky. A green phantasmal Axe appeared above him, and the phantasmal image of the Axe grew, it brought forth intense light and heat.

There was a single giant besieging them. The rest had retreated into the fog for reasons unknown. But this one stayed behind. The horrifying Visage of this giant seemed to be grinning.

This particular giant enjoyed the slaughter, for it took pleasure in slowly pulling men, women, and children apart. If it was the last thing he did, Glenn was going to kill this bastard.

His eyes were fixed on it, and as the phantasmal image of the Axe grew, the light spread across the battlefield, revealing the transpiring carnage.

Of the guardsmen who came to their rescue, only four remained. The valiant captain of the guardsmen had only one hand left, but he still fought like a machine. The body of a dead giant laid near his feet in small chunks. These men fought like demons.

Of the towns' people, only about a hundred remained. The rest that survived either by luck or sheer will had grim faces, they did not expect to live past tonight.

Nevertheless, this knowledge gave them a crazed determination to tear off a piece of flesh from their enemies. The men and women left behind protected their children in a wall of flesh and bone.

Luckily, for them, a few moments ago, most of the Abominations fled. Only a few assaulted them, but this last giant was clearly unwilling to leave.

The mind of this Abomination came in shades of color and vibration, its ways of thinking were unknown to the human mind, yet like all things, it had goals. Its purpose of existence was before it, and that was all that mattered. But the urgent summoning from deep within his blood troubled it. It still wanted to feast to glorify the One.

The giant turned to Glenn and its eyes narrowed. Hints of cunning flashed inside, and it attempted to leave. Turning around, it began entering the fog.

Glenn panicked, he could not fully wait to charge the technique to deliver a killing blow.

With a yell that came from inside his soul, he . The glowing phantasmal image shuddered and seemed to fade away. But that was a trick of the eye, for it moved extremely fast.

A painful roar echoed from the escaping giant. The glowing axe image had sliced deeply into the spine of the giant. It feebly tried to reach for the weapon, but it was like mist beneath its hands.

Glenn looked at the giant and grinned, all the while he had been holding the Axe up to the skies. With another powerful roar, he brought the pommel of the Axe to the ground. And the green phantasmal Axe stuck in the back of the giant exploded.

The explosion brought light that momentarily turned everything white. When eyesight returned, the battlefield turned silent and everyone looked at the giant who was still whole and standing.

Before the wave of despair drowned, everyone fighting for survival. The giant body slid apart in two, from the shoulder down to the waist.

Their relief was short-lived, when the top half of the giant suddenly exploded with motion, only one hand was connected to the top half, as the giant moved, it began to growl.

The sound was grating, and the eyes of those close to the giant bled. Its eyes fixed on Glenn. With one hand, it began to wriggle towards him like a worm, while dragging long piles of offal behind him.

Glenn appeared dispirited, his aura was weak. He was like a flame about to quench, only a slight breeze would snuff him out.

And yet, he drew strength from somewhere unknown and roared back a challenge to the creeping giant. He raised his arms up and charged at the giant. Only to collapse as he neared the creature. He was overspent.

"Oh.... I curse the weakness of my body." His voice came out in a harsh whisper. Glenn closed his eyes in defeat as the leering face of the giant descended on him.

He was going home.

He suddenly heard a loud roar from a voice that reminded him of his son. "Foul Beast! Give me your Head!" It followed by a low thump and then silence. He opened his eyes, and they widened further in amazement.

A god wrapped in black and gold stood on the head of the giant. A rotating spiked wheel of gold floated behind him. The god put forth his hand and said, "Glenn, thank you."

Glenn replied, "You know my name. Take me. I am ready to go home."

Rowan stood on the head of the giant and heard the last words of Glenn, now a shrunken old man, who said he wanted to return home, his heart ached.

Perhaps it was instinct, the power of Soul seized or because his soul had been chafed raw by the endless death, and he needed to give solace.

Rowan came down from the head of the Giant. He knelt before the fallen man and cradled his head on his lap, he stroked his white hair, that drifted slowly in the evening breeze, and tried to keep the tears away from his voice.

"Rest well warrior. The warmth of your home awaits."

The glaze cleared from Glenn's eyes and it sharpened. He chuckled, "Warrior? I never thought I could be called that one day. I fear I have done little to deserve that honor."

Rowan paused for a moment, his heart was heavy, but his voice was steady "I call you warrior not by the strength of your arms or the might of your feats."

Rowan's voice gained in strength as he used two fingers to touch the old man's chest. "I call you warrior because of the valor in your heart. The terrors of the dark tested you, and you were not found wanting. Mighty warrior, how many Abominations tasted the edge of your blade? How many mortals can claim such honor? Can you hear the voices of everyone you've saved? Who would see a new day, because of your sacrifice."

"I did... I did not do it for them... But for me... I wanted blood."

"And yet." Rowan said, "You stood by their side, and protected them until the very end. You have done for them."

The light dimmed from Glenn's eyes, he strained to lift the Axe and presented it to Rowan, "I am glad, for so long I thought I would die a failure... I go home a warrior... I only ask you let the legacy of our name live on"

Rowan took the Axe. The moment he touched the weapon, he felt it shiver. He felt an emotion like the cold of an endless winter. He felt an intense lust for battle, and the last cries of dying gods.

What sort of weapon was this?

stirred in his heart, and he saw a new Aspect: Berserker.

The Aspect brought memories and skills, and his body shivered as it was .

As the intense rush of memories and skills continuously flowed through his veins. He gently carried the old man up and supported him against the head of the fallen giant, his light was fading but there were still embers smoldering.

"Before you go home, warrior. Witness the glory of your weapon, and know that all that caused you grief shall die by its edge."

Rowan hefted the Axe and turned.

Chapter 37: The Last of Me

He quickly called up , for he was sure that the new Aspect he received had altered the harmony inside his body, and he was right.

He had gained far more than he had expected, and with the new revelation from , his most glaring weakness had been patched.

P

Name: Rowan Kuranos

Age: 11/11

Strength : 116.7

Agility : 115.9

Constitution : 200.4

Spirit : 56.8

Class: None

Title: Plane walker

Aspect : Spatial Sight (Tier 1)

Berserker (Tier 1)

Skills:

Enrage (Level 10— Mortal State Completed) Vortex (Level 10— Mortal State Completed) Bash (Level 10— Mortal State Completed) Dash (Level 10— Mortal State Completed) Smash (Level 10— Mortal State Completed) Combo Attack (Level 10— Mortal State Completed)

Passive : Decipher language (complete), Icy soul (level 4)

Records:

[ATAVISM]- level 0 [1000/4000]

– level 0 [0/1000]

Aspect Gained: Berserker [Strength +20. Agility + 20. Constitution –10 (Negated)]

Soul Point :9.7654

Remark: Divine Squire.

There were many changes in his Stats. They were simply night and day in comparison to a few days back when he came to this world, and he received .

His Attributes had been in single digits, and the current him could turn his previous self into a smear on the ground with no effort at all.

What does it mean to become hundreds of times stronger than he was a few days back? The feeling was simply unmatched, and even though he was drowned in a swamp of sorrow and carnage, it was hard to deny, the pleasure of continually growing stronger.

Wielding power and abilities far beyond what was capable of mortals was addicting, it was no wonder a world like this was mad.

In his previous life, men committed countless atrocities, made heart-wrenching sacrifices for what simply amounted to a measly pile of paper.

What would the men of this world do, to acquire powers such as this. He already knew the answer.

They would do anything!

In a world like this, weakness would always lead to sorrow, here the lambs do not inherit the earth, they get tortured, taken advantaged of... They got devoured.

He was but a weak mortal, easily bent to the whims of fate, but now, he had begun to see hope, all his Attributes had broken through the Rift state, and he could it.

He felt more steady, sturdy and sharp, and his mind was clear. The Berserker Aspect came with many great attributes and skills, and his bloodline negated all the negatives the Aspect brought.

What gave him great joy was the skills that came with the Aspect, his body was still digesting the wealth of memories that came with the Aspect; he knew it was only a matter of time; he would grow these skills to their full potential.

This had patched a big hole in his combat style, and he looked again at the Axe. This weapon was too strange and powerful and all these while it had been tugging at his body, like a set of icy teeth seeking to bite into his flesh, only his shell kept them away.

Rowan should be glad about his progress, but something bugged him.

Was it not too easy? Maybe he had become used to setbacks and suffering, so that when he now had so many goodies dumped on his lap, he grew suspicious.

Awfully convenient, wasn't it? Where is the hook?

Sigh. Why am I thinking about this at this moment? Where I can drop dead in the next instant.

Rowan guessed he was just deeply wary.

Yet, you only had to look at the events of his transmigration and the subtle warnings from , and the suspicious events surrounding this disaster, and it was easy to see why he should be cautious.

When his stats all broke through the Rift state, something peculiar happened, his eyes had narrowed in shock, but he dismissed the sensation for the moment. There would be time for deep soul-searching after now.

He remembered why he was here and the promise he gave the dying man, at least one thing he had learned from the past days was focus and committing yourself to one action at a time.

The Axe had a powerful technique intrinsic to it. To activate the technique requires consuming the Body Essence of the wielder, in simpler terms, it meant Vitality.

If there was one thing he had in spades, it was Essence. His constitution was enormous, and his vitality would put a cockroach to shame. His only weakness was the soul, or Rowan knew he would be unkillable to a large extent.

It was impossible to drain him of his vitality and he had a show to give the dying man to send him on his way, deeply suspicious of the Axe as he was, you do not slap a smiling face. He had been given a mighty gift, and the least he could do was send Glenn home with a smile on his face.

This weapon brought its unique sets of problems, but he would accept them, anything that gave him more power would be utilized and if he survived to the Legendary state. Well, he would have the time to start untangling himself.

He opened himself to that devouring mouth, and something inside the Axe clamped on his body, and the Axe gave a hum of pleasure.

Rowan breathing slowed when the Axe began to draw on his physical essence. Disregarding his regenerative abilities, for his Constitution that had broken through the Rift state, it was not a considerable expenditure.

In fact, the recovery capabilities of his body rendered any amount of essence the Axe collected moot, and Rowan would have been able to wild this Axe even if he was far weaker than now.

This weapon was a Great Battle Axe. It should normally be deployed two-handed, but the Axe fit comfortably in his one hand. The shaft had enchanting runes that resembled the trunk of a giant wood.

The drain of his body essence slowly began to intensify. To him, it was negligible, but for a normal human being or even a Dominator, it would almost feel like your skin was slowly being peeled away. The feeling of aging years in a few moments must be a torture few could accept.

Rowan, of course, remembered Glenn, he was now old and feeble and not far from death. Nevertheless, he remembered the jolly drunk with a crow's mouth. Judging by the time the battle began and for how long Glenn fought, he should already be dead ten times over.

He had mentioned his bloodline. Was Glenn a part of a Noble family? And was this weapon an intrinsic weapon of that family? Except for the Tiberius Noble family whose emblem was a pair of great axes, he did not recall knowing any Noble family with a Great Axe associated with their bloodline.

Nevertheless, that was not too surprising, there were many minor Noble family, that had various broken bloodlines, it would be impossible to know them all. Compared to the chief seven Noble bloodlines, the rest were not that important.

A green phantasmal Axe image silently appeared above Rowan, The light had a penetrating quality that pierced through the fog showing scattered patches of Abominations, who were slowly withdrawing.

Glenn smiled in satisfaction. It was nearly impossible to find somebody that the Axe would acknowledge outside his bloodline, he had tried.

That was what made his family unique. And that uniqueness brought their doom and also endless shame to Glenn, as the last surviving member of his line.

He was too weak and cowardly to wield this weapon until the end. He had given it up for family, a decision he did not regret, and he was willing to bear the shame of it.

Rowan felt a slight release, and the drain from the Axe began to decrease, yet Rowan felt it was not enough, this had not even scratched a single itch, and if his vitality was an ocean, the Axe had only collected a few buckets

So instead of lessening the amount of essence it was attracting, he pushed more to the Axe. There was a slight hesitation from the weapon, and then it accepted it with maniacal glee.

Show me everything you are capable of.

Another spot of light appeared again, it grew clear and another Axe blade floated. He continued pouring Essence into the Axe and slowly another image appeared and when it seemed like the limit had been reached, another phantasmal image appeared.

The light from the Axe drove away all the mist, and like four pale moons rising, the phantasmal images illuminated the area. The air seethes with potential for incalculable menace!

Chapter 38: The Last of Me (2)

Rowan knew he could give more, and he let everything loose, and he opened the floodgates.

Rowan blood was currently a whitish gold color and contained an incomparable amount of vitality.

If not for the burden of carrying Soul Seizer and having died true deaths multiple times. He should be able to easily live for thousand of years.

He had a sneaking suspicion that even if his soul were to die at this moment, his body would still live on as a Divine Artifact, powerful and indestructible.

It gave him an odd sense of solace. His body would walk this lands far after his death. A silent slap to his enemies. Although he would prefer to be alive, and with every moment his chances increased.

Every drop of Rowans blood was equivalent to the amount of blood in a thousand men, perhaps he was underestimating this number. Every drop. Incomparable precious.

His blood boiled, and they released a pale mist of dense vitality. His twin hearts began to beat faster, and Essence flowed from him in a rush. Rowan discovered another use of his shell, which was accelerating the transfer of energy.

It multiplied the speed of which Rowan used to transfer his Essence to the Axe, and the weapon began to shiver and the hum emanating from it increased, almost like a prehistoric battle machine emerging from slumber.

Rowan doubted this weapon had ever tasted Essence such as his own. He had no way to measure his vitality with anyone else, but he doubted he had any to compare in this world.

At the spot Rowan gripped the Axe, a pale vein of gold began to snake up the shaft. And the shaft of the Axe was slowly turning a pale shade of gold. Three more phantasmal images appeared, and these were golden, like the first ray of a rising sun.

The reason Rowan stopped at three was not because his physique could not sustain more of the images, but because this was the limit his spirit could handle. Anymore and he could hurt his allies.

He felt a link to each of the floating phantasm, and he knew he could control each of the deadly Axe phantasms but in a rudimentary manner.

For better control, Rowan felt it would have been better to only unleash one Phantasm. What I need here is no control, Rowan thought, but sheer destructive power.

Rowan remembered the look in the eyes of the dying man, and he wanted to send him off with glory. It was a consolation of a sort. He wished his help could extend beyond bringing death to their foes. But for the moment, this was all he could do.

For a moment, he wondered if his blood could heal the wounded, but he doubted it, even the blood of lesser Dominators was a dreadful poison to a mortal, but still if he had time to breathe, he intended to check the healing capabilities of his blood on others.

The night had turned to day under the illumination of the Seven massive phantasmal images of the Axe, and everyone was silent, their eyes falling to Rowan and then driven back up to the skies.

Captain Titus and the remaining Guardsmen removed their faceplates, eyes fixed on Rowan, for there was something unnaturally magnetic about his presence.

Rowan looked at Glenn and said, "Witness warrior... The glory of your bloodline." as he gestured above with his left hand, and the phantasmal image shone brightly before they disappeared into the mist, leaving trails of phantasmal light.

Faster than what would be deemed possible, Rowan released another wave of attack and immediately following that he released another, his spirit was beginning to scream in exhaustion, but he scrapped at the bottom of the barrel and released a single bright golden phantom.

They all disappeared into the fog. His Agility that had broken past the Rift state had allowed the world to slow down in his perception, and he was able to rapidly release those onslaughts.

And for a moment, all was silent.

With a great roar, Rowan struck the hilt to the ground.

There was a slight boom that was felt rather than heard. Several bright lights flashed ahead of them, and the ground rumbled.

There was an intense whooshing sound, as the winds screamed past and leveled the fog until as far as the eyes could see, even the clouds above parted and were swept aside.

Except for him and Maeve, who crouched to withstand the hurricane force winds, the rest of the people were blown off their feet, and they cried out in astonishment and fear.

The surroundings were devastated, and the fading howls of Abominations reverberated in the distance. Chunks of Abominations fell like rain, and the body of seven Giants slowly unraveled into pieces.

There was silence. Before the loud cheer of the dusty people resounded, the winds carried a healthy amount of dust and smoke. There were weeping and hugs, and even the Stoic guardsmen pulled off their helmet and laughed along.

Rowan wished he could pull off the shell on his face, so he could laugh along with them, so they could see the joy in his eyes.

Rowan eyes set on Glenn. He was wide-eyed and a grin decorated his mouth. His hands were clenched. But he was already dead. His open eyes seem to never want to close.

This was a power he was sure at the Rift State. The great divide between Dominators. Thanks to this weapon, he could finally unleash power at this level.

Rowan felt a rush of heat, as countless souls were funneled to his body, he shudders as his consciousness traced the growing soul points, as it broke past three hundred soul points and kept rising.

Yet, this victory left a stale taste in his mouth. His delight for his growing soul points tempered by the fact that some of the Abominations he killed had been transformed from his people.

Although he knew they were no longer his people after they turned, not all truths were easy to accept, he imagined in all the Abominations he had killed, that there as traces of the people that he once knew.

Maeve was the only one not celebrating, her eyes were fixed on him, showing concern, he ignored her caring gaze and to distract himself from his grim thoughts, Rowan analyzed his surroundings, especially the route that the Abominations were escaping towards.

The explosion had cleared the fog and Rowan could see quite far. It had leveled a greater part of the town and had blown out any fires.

Perhaps if he had looked a little later he would have missed it.

The Abominations were heading towards the sylvan lakes. This part of the town was in an elevated position where an observer could easily peruse the beautiful lakes.

Hundreds of Abominations jumped into the river, and dozens of giants followed. At the center of the lake he saw a woman.

It was only her head that floated above the lake. She appeared to be smiling. But her eyes were yellow and diseased and held no amusement only madness, her pupils were horizontal as a goat's.

Rowan watched as she opened her mouth and a giant crawled inside, she slowly chewed, yellow fluids spilling from her mouth. Her eyes fixed on him, and he heard a whisper by his ears. As she sank below the water.

"Well played, my child!"

Chapter 39: The Last of Me (3)

"... '... "

An emaciated boy, with white hair, walked slowly towards the village, his directions were towards the shores of the lake, he held two bundles in his hands and at every set interval they vibrated, and muffled sounds came from them.

He shivered when an intense explosion happened ahead, and was blown to the ground when the resulting shockwaves hit him, he did not wait for long before he picked himself up and began walking again.

The boy had shocking wounds running all over his body, he had deep clawing wounds as if he was mauled by a bear and his legs were bereft of any skin, just a bleeding pile of muscles and ligaments holding his bones together.

He must have been suffering an incalculable amount of pain, yet he still walks with them, and from his mouth whispers, that sounded like different people, some whispers were high-pitched, some were mellow and some were nothing but growls.

" ?.

.."

' ? '!

The open wounds of the boy had stopped bleeding red, and were slowly turning yellow. Yet after a while it turned back to red.

This was not necessarily a good thing, for he would have collapsed a while back, but the yellow blood healed him enough and in so doing prolonged his suffering.

.

His eyes began to change, his brown eyes that often exude warmth and laughter began to turn yellow, and the whites of his eyes turned blood-red.

.

The bundle on his arm was the head of his mother and sister.

Steisa eyes were closed as if she was asleep, tears had dried on her face; her skin was pale.

Rose had an annoyed look on her face and her mouth was curled in a snarl, from her open mouth fragments of whispers emerged, and the boy seemed to nod along, and every so often he would shake his head in disagreement.

But his steps were sure. He goes to the lake.

!

Rowan's journey back home was in a haze.

His heart was in turmoil.

He dimly heard the whispers of the people inquiring about who he was. Yet, he was too distracted to hear the reply Maeve had given them.

Rowan did not think his appearance would cause undue alarm to them, for as a Noble, he was permitted a level of eccentricity far more than regular folks.

Besides, his shell now had an appearance of armor. All he knew was that they went silent, and followed him, he could not ask for anything more.

He walked ahead of them, with Maeve was directly behind him, followed by the captain, the rest of the people and finally the last three Guardsmen.

As he moved, he sought to clear his mind, and deliberate on what he had seen and the hidden link between them all.

A while back, when his Attributes of Strength and Agility broke past the Rift State, he felt a familiar sensation. It was the same as what he felt when he transmigrated to this world.

He had felt suffocated and tied down, it was as if he was weighed down by countless chains, that had wrapped around his body, and they were being tightened.

He had felt a deep disgust in his soul, as if he were being violated on a fundamental level, and as the sensation reached its peak it vanished.

Almost as if someone adjusted the parameters to correct a mistake, for, he was certain, that he was not supposed to notice.

He had felt this particular feeling three times, the first was when he came to this world, the second time was when he touched that mysterious tattoo on his chest, and now he had felt it again.

The Soul point he gathered from the last eruption with the Axe was 532. It was a lot, and he expected his growth to enter another explosive phase soon.

Currently, he felt assured enough about his chances for survival, as his bloodline had stopped evolving and if he was not dying in the following days, he had a shot of becoming a Legendary. He hopes he was not that unlucky for his lifespan to end in the next hour.

That world with the Red moon that he visited through that yellow rock held a deep attraction to him. It may be more dangerous than he could fathom, but it was undoubtedly the key to his salvation.

If he could gather soul points without having to wade through a mountain of corpses, he would take that options any day.

This new option to grow give him leeway to think. He did not have many chances to with all the events occurring around him, with the speed of the crowd, it would take at least one hour to get to the manor.

Who knew what he might find when he returned, he trusted nothing, and he needed a few moments to gather his thoughts.

It was a surprise that there were few injuries among the remaining people, with none debilitating, Rowan did not know whether he was to attribute that to divine intervention or the sheer effectiveness of the Abominations at killing.

The children were mostly silent, which Rowan attributed to shock, but no doubt when the dust settled and the full weight of this day came to bear, it would leave scars that would never heal, yet they were not out of danger yet.

He shot a burst of Spatial sight into the sky, he heard reports from Captain Titus about a winged Abomination, but it retreated before Rowan reached them.

He also peered deep into the ground, he could not afford to be careless, even though his Spirit was at its limit.

His Spirit still felt strain from the amount of power he had just slung towards the Abomination and, unlike his body, it was not recovering quickly enough, and using it in this manner was torturous.

But these were a minor concern to what plagued him. Rowan felt like a rat in a maze, he should be seeing something that had been placed in front of him, but he could not.

It was like an itch he could not scratch, and it gnawed at his mind, reminding him that he would pay a price if he ignored it for long.

What was he missing?

Well, let's return to what he knows, he woke up in a slaughterhouse with a disorganized memory, and with a special condition, his lifespan was short. He was knocked out by his father and woke up in his manor, which was shortly attacked by Abominations, and the only thing that had kept him alive was .

Was this the Singularity his father spoke of? If it was, then it meant they knew or at least suspected he had it, and if that was the case, do they have an idea of the sort of power it gave him?

If they even suspected half of what was capable of, there would be no way he would be left out of their sight. Does that mean he was being monitored, but by whom?

His sight swept through everyone behind him, there was a total of a hundred and seventeen people behind him, including Maeve and the Guardsmen. There were seventy-three children and youth, which included boys and girls, twelve men and twenty-seven women.

Among all these people, who was the spy? At his manor, who could he trust? And if he were to look at it on a deeper level, what information had he been fed that he took for truth but was false.

He was a stranger in this world, with a bad memory, if he was told black was white and assumed that to be the truth, every inference he drew from that point forth would be incorrect.

He would be like the fool, who sells himself and helps his buyer to count the money. He needed a source of clean information in order to take effective actions, that should be his next goal.

Trying to find a traitor among people he hardly understood was a lesson in futility, even though the princely part of him frowned at this line of thought, he would not deceive himself.

Chapter 40: The Last of Me (4)

Rowan called for Maeve, she and Captain Titus were behind him, and the Guardsmen were at the rear, eyes peeled for any dangers, "Thank you for your efforts earlier. I would not have made it here without you."

"It was my honor, My Lord. Without the strength of your arms, any contribution I make would be useless" Maeve replied.

Rowan also gestured to the captain, who came closer to him, "Captain. Nowhere in your contracts as Guardsmen of my family was it stipulated you had to fight against Abomination. I salute your bravery and of your men. The tales I heard of the Guardsmen bravery do not do you justice."

Captain Titus bowed formally to him, "We are your shield and spear, My Prince. Our lives are given worth by service to the Throne of Kuranos."

Service. Rowan mused internally. For men like this, that word carried a heavy weight. Rowan nodded at the captain, "I want you to know this captain. That I would do all in my power to make sure the fallen are given all the honor they deserve."

Rowan dismissed him. The Captain bowed once more and stepped back.

Rowan turned to Maeve, "We are going to call a general meeting to deliberate on the current situation, but I would like your opinion on our next action"

Maeve thought for a while, "My Lord, Abominations are a regional disaster. If the infestation is not kept in check, then theoretically they could expand forever, creating stronger battle forms until they would overrun the entire continent.

"I have sent missives to the Family Palace and the Army barracks at Wurhold, which is the closest to Calcutta. We could hold out for a while inside the manor. I am sure reinforcement would soon arrive."

Maeve sighed, "At first I thought the safest alternative was to leave this region and flee to Aroth the Capital, your family home lies there. We could easily bring enough firepower to scour out this infestation.

"The presence of saboteurs in the manor and the quantity of Abominations we are encountering means that if we leave, we won't be able to defend ourselves adequately, for we lack any credible intelligence on our foes.

"I cannot be sure which level of battle form they might have achieved. And if there is a possibility that they have a champion, then we are doomed.

"As you know, we have two main routes of passage: Through the forest or the lake, we have seen the Abominations retreating into the lake, so that's a death trap in the making, and I have no doubt there would be more Abominations inside the forest, we are effectively surrounded with no path of escape.

"We could decide to flee with the Guardsmen and try to push through the obstacles that we would encounter, but I would leave that as our last option.

"Staying and creating a defense in the manor would be the lesser of two evils. We would wait for reinforcement, and we can mount an effective defense, with the Defensive Sigils on the manor, we might be able to survive."

"How could this happen?" Rowan said, "How could such a sizable amount of Abomination surround this town without any indication?"

Maeve frowned, "Logically it should be impossible, for the amounts of Abomination we have encountered, they would have needed to have killed tens of thousands to grow to this level, There had been no reports of towns around here falling to their infestation. The only adequate explanation would be Dominators... Powerful ones or a Dominator with a niche ability."

"So how do we fight against that." Rowan grunted in acceptance, "Abominations I understand, they come to kill and consume, but how do we fight an enemy that we don't know their intent or purposes and most worrying of all is that Abomination Core, it is the root of this disaster, and I don't think we have the capability to destroy it yet."

Maeve frown had slowly been heightening with apprehension as Rowan continued, "We may be able to guess the intent of the Dominators or group of Dominators that would cause this infestation, do you have any ideas?"

"If this is induced by Dominators, then If we examine this situation with the perspective of money and resources." Maeve replied, "This town is at the end of nowhere, we produce no valuable goods or are we on any gem lodes or valuable minerals.

"The offshoot of our lake does not particularly lead to any important destinations and there is no particular valuable beast to be hunted inside of it, also the Misty mountains behind us are notoriously barren.

"There has been no new development or changes in this town, except... "

"Me." Rowan whispered, "The new change was my presence. Because of me, all these people have suffered a terrible fate."

"Master, I do not agree with this statement of yours." Maeve sternly said, "You are in no way responsible, and you have risked your life for your people, you have gone way past your duty and defended them."

"I know of most Nobles that would rather flee than stand and fight against even lesser odds. Please, Master, do not assume any responsibility for this crime in your heart."

"Oh, I know I'm not personally responsible for this." Rowan shrugged, "But... It can also be said my presence brought disaster, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Do not get me wrong. I hold no guilt in my heart, except for the guilt of powerlessness, if I were capable enough, none would plot against me in this manner. I am just too weak"

Rowan sighed and brought the Axe forward, it hung on his back, tied with the strips from his robe, the weapon had been vibrating and soon calmed, the moment Rowan held it. He peered at the weapon, running his hands up the handle that now had, multiple veins of gold growing inside.

Maeve struggled to hold her laughter and Rowan turned his blank face to hers, and she said, "Master, with the ability you have shown. I know of no Dominator your age that could best you, and you became this powerful in a matter of days. Forgive me, master, for what I am about to say next... I hate your father, for numerous reasons, but he gave you the chance to grow powerful, and by the gods I believe you have surpassed all expectations."

At what cost. Rowan sighed inside, could the infestation of these abominations be a way to test the ability of the Singularity? Well, he would get the answers soon or not, he was helpless in his approach to tackling this conundrum.

Rowan spoke in a soft voice, "I believe the core of the Abomination is here. Within Sylvan lakes."

He was silent for a while as he adjusted the Axe and shifted it to his shoulders, "Did you see the direction the Abomination fled to?"

"I believe it was towards the lake." She said, "Though I saw a few proceeding to the west of the town towards the woods."

Rowan paused for a while before he said, "Did you see a gigantic head of a woman, with the eyes of a goat?"

"I did not, Master, and with the chaos, I might have missed it, but that would be quite difficult for me to overlook such a sight. I do think, however, you might have seen what

you saw because of your perception. Whatever methods you use to see, had shown you a world that is blind to me."

My sight! Had he not been searching for a way to see the truth, to understand his situation? This could be the key to start unraveling the darkness he found himself. He could glimpse a world outside the sight of most, then he would see truths that were denied him.