

The Primordial Record

Chapter 71: Dawn of Battle (2)

Walking behind the captain, Rowan tried to ignore the screaming that he now heard constantly from the strings inside his body. He briefly wondered how it was possible that he could have been deaf to the commotion from these strings all these while.

Occasionally, around him, a small mouth filled with needle sharp teeth would appear and seemed to take a bite out of the air, and promptly disappear.

Rowan discovered the snakes could shrink until they were as small as a single thread, knowing this, he let them out, so they could hunt the flying eyes inside the mansion.

The captain must have sensed something, for he looked back and around him.

"Is everything all right, Captain Titus, you appear nervous."

"Nothing... My lord, it must be the strain of the last few days on my mind."

"I understand, it has not been an easy period for us all, but I promise you, that together we will free ourselves of this nightmare."

They proceeded towards the back of the manor, and the captain opened the door in front, where a group of people gathered, and they appeared distraught, they were mostly men, and a few women, who held swords and shields, with a few crossbows held by four of the women.

The rest of the women and children were kept in the expansive cellar underneath the manor, where the staff and the remaining survivors were. Certain hushed whispers went on between the people.

The moment Rowan entered the room, everyone went silent, as they all felt a certain pressure inside their chest. Rowan had never learned any skill to hide his Aura, and his presence was becoming difficult for mortals to bear, for it was beginning to carry a formless weight.

Rowan felt it was doubtful if any disguise skill would ever do him good, for he had two Omnipotent bloodlines, and he was becoming strong, he was a young chick that had now begun learning to fly, and as an Emphyrean, he was destined to walk across stars, the earth could not contain his steps for long.

Although unaware of it, that knowledge touched the heart of every person in this room, and Rowan's eyes widened slightly for he could see the changes in everybody in the

room, he saw the quivering in their bodies, the way their pupils dilated, their hearts beating out of rhythm, and the increasing frequency of their breathing.

He had felt that way once before in his previous life, it was when he climbed to the top of a mountain, and he had seen all the lands stretched far into the horizon. He had felt, so small.

Although he had felt the same feeling countless times over since he came to this world, he did not expect that feeling to be directed towards him, and for an instant, he felt a bit of shame.

There might be some bad eggs, among some of them, but for most of them, this was not how he wanted them to view him, as if he was a sort of god, or a messiah, he was aware of the reverence given to Nobles in this world, and he wanted none of it, for he did not feel that he deserved any of it.

The only reason he was alive, right now, was the result of the sacrifices of their kin. He looked around and through the souls that gave him their light, he saw their loved ones reflected through it.

Rowan paused, and he began calling them by name, "Bjorvir, Baloll, Maramyr, Genmir, Vigoll, Steikmar, Varaval, Raunir, Hronarr, Hrokul, Birrin, Dalrin, Dormilla, Hilly, Dordis, Declara, Norie, Brisha, Darny, Kriya, Srerma... You have done well."

Names are important, as one of the few things people consider as something truly of their own, it gives them a sense of identity beyond what most material possessions can ever give. In this world, to some people, their names are the most precious of possessions.

Rowan saw them perk up, the familiarity of their names being mentioned by him, broke a barrier that would have built between them if he had let it continue.

"Whatever went wrong, I will take it from here." Rowan had seen their eyes were fixed on a particular door before he entered.

"My lord... Is that you?" Declara, the stern owner of the Flying Hog, the only pub in town.

Rowan smiled and nodded.

"Well, you've certainly been eating a little too much, haven't you."

He had nearly forgotten her shrewd mouth, "I miss you too, Declara. Stand back, all of you."

"Of course, my lord." She said, "It's the priest... Something's wrong with him, it began a few minutes ago, he suddenly started screaming, and anyone who got close to him, lost their heads. It's just... Popped open." Her eyes were filled with the dawning horror of remembrance.

Rowan had already shot a burst of his sight through the doors and saw a shivering figure on the floor, around him were dozens of invisible flying eyeballs.

"I will take care of it." He walked towards the door and brought his hand to the handle, as the screams from the Strings seemed to intensify.

"That's an interesting story. I have never heard of that tribe." The hooded figure said.

"I would be surprised if you did." Said the Third prince, "One of the many casualties of the great push into the Northern continent. They were along the path I took, and I did not know it then—The brilliance of their work, else I would have spared some of them. These are the last batch of spices and herbs I collected from their farms."

"As fascinating as all these sounds, you still missed my point. You do not need to eat. All these..." The hooded figure gestured to the meat and wine, "... They are pointless, and in the long run are meaningless."

"You know there is a reason why no one likes you." The Third prince frowned, "There would be many things in this life you would be blind to, my friend because you refuse to see life as it should be seen. Your experience is behind a glass, you have shielded yourself from the very thing you sought to understand."

"Hmm... Fascinating. So, you think the way I should understand life, is to grovel in the dirt with the maggots, and eat sh*t with the dogs?"

"No... Yes! That is precisely my point. Life is to be experienced, not... Watched. I have no doubt that you know of millions of profound knowledge and events, but I would bet you, you have never tried to partake in any of them."

"And here I thought you were an enlightened being."

"Hey, don't knock it, until you try it. Tell me, when was the last time you went to the beach, and got your feet wet? When was the last time you left the shadows of your robes and saw light in all its glory?"

He must have hit a nerve, for the hooded figure growled, "That is not relevant, I am stronger than you because I focus on my goals, without... Distractions."

"Ouch, low blow. Here I thought Augustus was the petty one." The Third prince paused for a while, as he cut more sizable chunks of meat and stuffed it inside his mouth, "I tried regrowing them you know—The spices, but the taste was never the same. I guess you can't replace centuries of knowledge and practice. I found no tribes with this tradition, and I have tried... But it makes a proper send off, don't you think?"

The Third prince looked up at the skies, where a red line was tearing through the horizons, heading for them.

"Eating the last of such delectable flavor, before killing a child of Tiberius."

Chapter 72: Dawn of Battle (3)

Rowan closed the door behind him, turning to the priest, who jolted at the sound of the closed door, but his eyes were still closed, and his mouth opened and closed sporadically.

By the side of the priest were the bodies of three people, everything above their necks was gone, as fragments of blood and bone stained the floor and walls.

It was a harsh callback to his time in that room, it appeared to be two men and a woman, he had an urge to cover their bodies with something, it felt inhumane to leave them like that.

Rowan had shut off his energy sight, for he feared that his glowing eyes would draw too much attention. Activating it once more with a thought, his gaze fell on the priest.

He discovered that everything about him was normal, his Aura appeared dispirited, but it still blazed with warmth and health. Only his current state was an indication that something was wrong with him.

Inside his Domain, Rowan had seen there were more than twenty flying eyes clustered around the priest, a mental command to the snakes was all it took, and they began consuming the eyes.

He noticed with every eye that was consumed, the shaking from the priest got worse, until he opened his mouth wide in a silent scream, and the sparse flying eyeballs left, just three of them, flew into his mouth and he snapped it shut.

The priest gasped and sat up, holding his head, he groaned aloud, he appeared disoriented for a short while, before collecting himself.

Rowan's eyes tightened, in a brief moment when the flying eyeballs had entered the mouth of the Dark Priest, he had seen his Aura shift. It happened very fast, there

appeared to be a film covering the dark priest that could broadcast a sort of fake Aura because in that small instance, when the Aura had lifted, he saw the yellowish Aura of an Abomination.

"My lord? Apologies, it appears that I have caused great harm to my people." The eyes of the priest were filled with shock and horror, and tears threatened to pour from them.

He looked around in a fit, calling the names of the bodies on the floor, he completely broke down, and began to cry.

"I am so sorry Mersha, Levri, Apham, I don't know what happened... I am so, so, sorry..."

Rowan walked up to the priest, and standing behind him, placed a hand on his shoulder as if in condolence.

The priest began crying loudly, tears and snot running down his face, the commotion was so loud, that the door opened, and the people outside could see what was happening in the room.

A bit of anger flashed through Rowan's eyes, he could see that the door was opened by the Captain, he had been joined by the remaining Guardsmen.

The people looked inside confused at first, and seeing the kneeling priest who was crying his eyes out, compassion overcame them, and some of them began to tear up.

"My lord, I suspect it's the strain of battle, that made him lash out and made his powers uncontrollable." Captain Titus said, "By all accounts, he was a priest who hardly used his powers, it's no surprise that he broke down... This is my fault, my lord... I should have anticipated something like this from a non-combatant."

The people hearing the captain looked at the priest in compassion, they knew that without his contributions, most, if not all of them would be dead, he was a kind man who placed his life on the line, and stood with them. Even colored by the sadness of their loss, their hardy nature prevailed, and Rowan knew at that moment these people had forgiven the priest for what happened here.

"Please... don't say that captain, I accept the blame for my actions, I should have known that using my powers in such an intense manner would cause a backlash. It is all my fault."

"We all understand, purdue, we all bear scars." Declara said as she looked to the others for support, and they all nodded their assent, "Please, let us focus on burying our dead and figure a way out of this situation."

The priest, still crying his apologies, attempted to stand, but Rowan's hand was still on his shoulder and he could not. He looked up at Rowan, and made a weird expression, as if he was trying to smile, while still crying.

"My lord, I'm alright now, please let me perform the least of my duties and say the last prayers for the people my negligence has killed."

He attempted to stand again but Rowan's hand was like a mountain, and he was an ant, he could not move an inch. In a bizarre manner, Rowan began touching the fabrics of the priest's black robes, a slight frown on his face.

"Is anything the matter, my lord." The priest stammered, he was clear something was wrong, the people also became silent, as the mood instantly changed.

Rowan saw the Guardsmen becoming tense, and he sighed, "Is it not the clothes? No... It's the skin, right."

"Wha— I don't understand, my lord."

Easily picking him up with one hand by the shoulders until his feet dangled in the air, the priest grimaced in discomfort as he cried, "My lord, punish me if you will, but let me say the last prayers for these poor souls."

The people began to shift in discomfort, but Rowan ignored them, and he set the Axe by his side so that the shaft rested on his leg, he seized a handful of the priest's robe and yanked it off, it tore apart in his hand like tissue paper. He was wearing a prayer chain around his waist, and gray briefs.

It revealed his surprisingly toned body, he nearly forgot that the priest was a legendary state Dominator, so his physique would still be far better than a mortal.

Rowan ran his hand over the priest's skin as he looked at him with curious eyes.

"My lord, is something the matter?" Captain Titus cried out, "The priest must be under Battle Shock. Let me take care of —"

"Silence Captain! Do not speak unless I tell you." Rowan yelled at him, forgetting the power of his voice, everyone inside the Room winced, and they all fell silent. The captain's mouth closing with a resounding clack.

Rowan turned to the priest and said, "I thought you were a follower of the Fallen god Malakith?"

"Yes my lord." the priest said as his teeth began chattering, his image of confusion and despair touched the heart of the people and confusion and fear began growing inside their chest.

The priest continued speaking, "but that does not mean the rites I would say for the dead are blasphemous, I only wanted to pray for their souls."

"I do not recognize the god on the prayer chain around your waist." Rowan fingered the chains.

"This? I fear that is a misunderstanding. Malakith takes many forms, and unlike the Orthodox gods, he chooses to wear any form of his choosing."

Rowan sighed, "Your cover... is so perfect. Everything here reminds me of that father of mine. In everything he does, he leaves no stone unturned. He takes his games seriously... I grow weary of this endless charade."

His left palm stopped over the chest of the priest, as if he was fondling him.

"My lord... I don't understand." The priest sorrowfully whispered.

Rowan smiled sadly, "Did they change you into this, or have you always been this way?" With his palm on the priest's chest, he grasped the flesh and he pulled.

The priest's torso exploded in a spray of blood, as Rowan held in his hands the skin of the priest.

He had taken all the skin around the entire upper body of the priest.

Chapter 73: Dawn of Battle (4)

Rowan's strength was great, and his high Agility and Spirit gave him a strong control over his powers. Skin, although it was elastic, was still surprisingly strong and was fastened firmly to the muscles of the body, and a Dominator skin was far tougher.

If he had just pulled with brute force, he may have torn away the skin only on the priest's chest, but Rowan vibrated his palm at the moment he squeezed the skin, severing all the connection of the skin to the muscles, and as if he were pulling away clothes from a body, he tore the skin away from the priest.

His screams were loud and shrill, as he wept in pain, and he kept apologizing to Rowan.

The people cried out in shock and horror, as some of them tried to push forward to stop Rowan or plead to him, while being held back by others.

"My lord!" Declara screamed, "We all know he did wrong, but it was a mistake." She pointed to the bodies on the floor, "Mersha was a sick child, the priest took care of her

for years, my lord. Every single day for three years, he never failed to bring her the herbs

that she needed, even if he had to scrape through every bush in the forest..."

"Levri and Aphon were troublemakers." Rowan interrupted her, "They had lied to the priest countless times, about needing money for food, but they drank it all away, even after you all warned him about their trickery, he continued giving them money, his reason for doing so, was that if one day, they really needed the money, and they came to him, but he denied them, that he would never be able to live with himself."

"So if you know..." Declara muttered, "if you know this why torture him, Lord Rowan. For a mistake, he did not deliberately commit. I have always thought you were a greater man than this, why do... Ugurrk"

She stopped in mid-sentence, when the gore finally flowed down the body of the screaming priest, and what was below revealed itself.

*****"*****"

On a quiet hill under the moonlight, a couple of wolves rummaged around a dead fire, there were remnants of a sumptuous meal around the fire, and the smell that was left was driving the wolves crazy.

A dull rumbling sound began to echo around the hill, and the hackles of the wolves were raised as they bared their teeth and let out growls, as they warily peered around.

The rumblings increased in intensity, and the sounds were calamitous. The wolves yelped in panic, and began to flee, suddenly reality seemed to twist, and the wolves paused mid-flight, in fact, everything around the hill was still.

And like a mirror, the space began to develop cracks, and it shattered as a red glow tore through the air. After it passed, a rain of blood followed behind. Two seconds later, two bursts of black light followed.

The flood of blood that fell from the sky landed on the ground like meteors. Each drop that touched the ground sizzled and brought forth an awful stench. In a brief moment, the ground, trees, rocks, and animals touched by the blood melted into a bloody pus.

The trail of devastation of the raining blood extended for as far as the eyes could see. The ground groaned and shook, and the Earth rearranged itself, as if the pain from the blood touching it was too much to bear.

The speed of the Red glow was beginning to falter, and General Augustus Tiberius' figure was revealed inside. His face was very pale and every now, and then he vomited a huge amount of blood.

Suddenly, one of the chasing black lights accelerated in a zigzag motion and appeared at the front of the General. The two glows clashed.

There was first silence, and then a bright light like the dawn of the sun, and then a Shockwave that tore the skies apart. The circular wave of force reached the second black light, who conjured a Dark Scythe and tore through the wave and rushed towards the location of the clash, and impacted the glowing sun again.

Another wave of force erupted from the impact. This time it reached the ground and the surroundings for miles across were destroyed. A small mining town that contained thirty thousand people with two legendary Dominators that acted as overseers were all wiped out instantly.

A cry filled with anger and despair resounded, and a pitiful figure missing an arm with a frightening hole in his chest flew out. It was the General. He touched his waist and drew out a long wand, he waved it, and it ignited, bringing forth green lightning.

The lightning wrapped around him and flung him North. The sky brightened from the flash of green lightning, and he disappeared far into the horizon.

The black glow stopped and two figures appeared. The Third prince and the hooded figure who was holding a black scythe.

The hooded figure growled, "That was sloppy of you. I warned you not to underestimate him."

The Third prince was in front of the hooded figure, his eyes tracing the last of the disappearing green lightning, he turned his head to the figure behind him and smiled, his teeth flashed white, and he said, "Did I?"

He fully turned his body to face him and held out his right hand, which held a beating heart. The heart appeared very strange because it was almost transparent. The pericardium was almost like a thin mesh you could see through. The Arteries and veins were all visible, and you could clearly catch a glimpse of all the operations of the heart. "I got myself a present."

His smiling expression suddenly changed, and he became razor focused. He closed his eyes and muttered in Thulle for a while.

"His heart is strong. It can sustain more than five jumps."

The hooded figure gestured impatiently, "Then let's get to the hunt. There is a limit to which I can keep the eyes of fate closed. We all underestimated Augustus,

clearly has an Artifact close to the Origin grade."

"Yet he did not activate it during the fight." The Third Prince mused as ribbons of black light streamed from his fingertips and began etching mystical runes in the air.

"That is worrying. The child is more crafty than I gave him credit for." The hooded figure stroked his chin. "What a waste."

The Runes the Third prince was setting up were completed, and it shimmered before it faded slowly. The surrounding immediately darkened, and an ephemeral weight settled in the air.

From a mysterious angle, a wooden door emerged in the sky. It was gray and had an open palm bone as the door handle. In the center of the door was carved the grinning face of a child.

The child's eyes were opened, and within it burned the light of nothingness. Chaotic flashes of light and darkness burned inside the eyes, and various scenery appeared within.

The Third prince took the still beating heart and presented it to the face. The child looked at the heart, then it nodded, the motion drawing loud creaks from the door.

As if held together by glue, the child struggled to open his mouth, and with a snapping sound like wood breaking, it opened its maws. The prince unceremoniously stuffed the beating heart inside.

The mouth closed and it began to chew. As it did, the colors of the door began to change, starting from the face. In a short while, the door was now red. A word appeared in Thulle above the door. "Three."

"Hmm... Less than I expected." The Third prince lampoon.

"It is still more than enough, that is, if you don't play with your food."

"Got it. This hunt tires me. I prefer easier pickings." The Third prince grasped the palm bone and pushed the door opened and showed a new place.

The scenery that presented itself was different. It was of a jungle that was on fire. The desiccated corpses of countless animals were scattered everywhere.

At the center of the jungle was a single-fallen animal. It was a Silver Tiger, more than forty feet long. Its growls were weak, and its tail slapped at the ground as its struggles reduced.

A figure of a bloody man was latched at the throat of the Silver Tiger. As if the man felt something, it turned and saw a door in the air.

Two figures stepped through the door. A chubby man and a skinny hooded figure. The former waved at him, "Hi, there."

Chapter 74: Dawn of Battle (5)

What lay under the skin of the priest was something that resembled an insect. It had sleek black chitin that resembled plate armor, and apart from the two black arms that strangely had six fingers with wicked long claws, there were also two insect-like limbs folded at the chest.

He also noticed a series of openings by the side of the creature like the gills from a fish, and it opened and closed in the likeness of breathing, they expelled a sort of fog, that felt very dense as they fell to the ground without dispersal into the air, and in a short while, it was hard to see their legs beyond the knee.

Creatures like this must be the source of the fog, Rowan thought, though judging by the amount this one produces, it would take tens of thousands of such creatures to produce the overwhelming amount of fog outside the manor that nearly reached the clouds.

Or maybe there was another way of producing the fog, that requires less of such creatures to produce it, he clearly hoped it was the second option, not because they were a danger to him, but protecting his people would be far harder otherwise.

Yet, since these creatures appear to be the source of the flying eyes, that would mean that anywhere there was deep fog, he may find them.

Strangely, the priest he held aloft, kept weeping and crying out for his forgiveness, he seemed to be disconnected from what was underneath his skin.

Rowan had grown more perceptive as his Spirit increased, and he had a frightening notion, that maybe the priest did not understand what he was under his skin.

The terrible guilt that Purdue felt, made him accept that it was the right thing for Rowan to torture him, and what he only implored, was for him to say the prayers for the departed souls.

Indeed, except for the gut twisting pain he must have felt when Rowan tore his skin away from him, there was nothing else to indicate that he understood what he was underneath. Almost as if he were two separate individuals occupying the same body.

The whole room went silent, except for the weepings of the priest, everyone was dumbstruck.

"Is he... like one of them?" A nervous man said, the sword in his hand shaking, "was he taken over by the Abominations?"

"All of you, step outside." Rowan said, "Not you, Captain, you and your men should stay behind."

The captain seemed to be deep in thought for a moment, before he settled and gestured for his men to stand beside him.

Rowan was still holding the priest up, and he gently shook the crying man, "Look at yourself, priest."

His words were like a command, and the distraught man seemed to be forced against his will, as he bent down and looked at himself. The action he took was a cruel thing, it was mostly to confirm if truly the priest was not aware of what had taken his body.

Many expressions passed through the face of the priest, from perplexity, to incredulity, then anger and finally fear. Then he began to scream, and he soon broke into prayer, "Holy dark one, free my... flesh from this defilement. I, your son, come to you, seeking your favor and mercies, as my flesh has been desecrated, and..."

This was the extent to which he could pray, before he broke down into sobs, he looked at Rowan confused and looked back at himself, at the alien creature beneath his skin, and his eyes slowly took the alacrity of acceptance, "I once... I once had a dream, you know, about the end of my days, and although I had this dream as a boy, I have never forgotten a single part of it.

"Tell me." Rowan said to the priest.

"I saw myself in a fall that never ended, it was as if I was thrown from the highest mountain and as I fell, the anticipation of the end kept building without ceasing, yet I never reached the ground, and even though the fall seemed endless, the fear of my body touching the ground never decreases, until it became everything I was... Fear. It was a dream that seemed to last forever and instantly.

The Priest looked at Rowan, "My lord, I never knew of this thing below my skin, I would not betray all I stood for, just to become a Thrall of an Abomination."

Rowan nodded, "I believe your words, Purdue. Please know that I deeply apologize for thinking that you allowed yourself, to become a Thrall of an Abomination. Forgive my lack of faith in your strength."

The priest burst out in pained laughter, "Believe me my lord, it was nothing about my strength or will, I was just too weak to know or understand that I had been taken over."

"I do not believe so. Nothing says more about your strength for an enemy to attack you with deception. We do not have much time, and I hope you can help me, tell me anything you know, no matter how small or how insignificant you might think they is."

"I don't think I have anything to tell you, but ... maybe this might be important, I began having a reoccurring dream a few years back. I saw myself going to a secret passage underneath my church, and inside that place were thousands of people who were being killed as they slept. I..."

Rowan noticed that the two folded limbs in front of the priest began to twitch, they seemed as if they wanted to silence the priest, but their motion was weak, ignoring it for the moment, he nodded to the priest, encouraging him to continue, "I see myself, also underground, where there were endless passages, that goes ever deeper into the earth, until I fear they would reach Moloch halls."

Throughout this speech, the movements of the body underneath the priest's skin had increased in its intensity, and he was beginning to bleed from all the orifices of his face.

"My lord, if these are not dreams but the memories of this thing inside me, I fear that underneath our feet are countless souls being tortured and killed, not only for the purpose of creating Abominations, but for something more sinister."

The voice of the priest cracked, and he sounded more like a haunted old man. No more blood could escape from his head anymore and his face began to tear open, exposing sections of bloody bones beneath.

"My lord... those people..."

"Will die!" Rowan said to him, "All of them! But first, you should perform the rites for the fallen, as it is, your duty."

"My lord... I am unclean. I am no longer worthy of that right."

"Shhh... In my eyes, there is no one more deserving of this right, than you." Rowan knew gods traditionally served as figures that bestowed forgiveness to people. He had the bloodline of Empyrean, making his potential far higher than any god.

Although he did not know if he was worthy to absolve the sins of a tortured man, but as it is in many things in life, it was the appearance of power, rather than true power itself, that held sway.

Rowan spoke to the dying man in a loud voice, and he let his presence as an Empyrean come through him, the eyes of the priest were shocked awake as Rowan gently dropped him on the ground, holding his head up, so the rest of him was hidden by the fog.

Chapter 75: Dawn of Battle (final)

Behind him, the captain and his Guardsmen fell to their knees, except for the captain, who could barely stay on his knees, the remaining Guardsmen faces were pressed to the ground, their faces all held in horror.

"Purdue Milenuius. Priest of the Dark god Malakith. Would you accept my words of absolution?"

"I would... My lord... but how do you know my last name? I only ever told... Mersha"

Rowan smiled at him, "Does it matter? Know this, proud priest of the Dark one. I have seen your deeds and I do not find it wanting. You have conducted yourselves in a noble manner, beyond reproach, and even under the shackles of evil, your heart was not laid astray. Whatever misdeeds the enemy has done using your flesh as a guise shall not be counted as your burden to bear."

The priest seemed to breathe easier, "Thank you... my lord, for giving me peace. Every night, my soul burns. It hurts... no more. Forgive me for not having the strength to perform the last rites for the fallen, but, I believe, your presence was more than enough to give them rest."

The priest smiled at him, and breathed his last. Rowan gently lay him down, and the fog covered his body.

Rowan bowed his head in grief, he had made a mistake again, he had assumed that everyone responsible must have full knowledge of what they were into, or at least they were like henchmen, only here for a profit.

But something far more diabolical was going on, for the participants in this scheme, may not even know that they were part of it. He remembered the drawing he had of Maeve, and he shuddered.

Rowan felt like a fool. Once again reminded that there was always more that met the eyes, when he played on the same field as a Dominator.

High on the powers the Legendary State of his bloodline had granted him, he became quite rash, although a large part of him knew there was no other option before him. He had made the right decisions, it was his methods that felt wrong.

The priest was simply a shell, his blood, flesh, and bones had been consumed, he was simply a puppet held by strings of an invisible puppeteer, yet he still felt guilt for the way he had approached the situation, although he knew it was quite illogical, he did not dismiss this feeling inside his heart.

Because that was what made him human, and it was an easy thing to forget.

Even in his rage, he had to learn to direct his anger, or he was nothing less than an animal, if he were to kill, it must be clean and precise. He did not have the power to free the priest of such a deep level of corruption.

Nonetheless, the methods he used could have been more humane, he had been too quick to condemn, it would be a different case if he was the weaker party here, but he was stronger, and he had exercised his powers without hesitation, and he had been cruel. That troubled him... deeply.

Waking up in a world, where life was treated like dirt, it would be the easiest thing to change to such a mindset, he could butcher hordes of enemies without a backward glance because it was effortless, and it felt wonderful.

To destroy all those that did you harm, to slaughter until you were bathed in blood, to know he was paying back in the same coin as he was dealt, must feel really good, yet Rowan knew he had to draw a line.

He had no doubt he was going to kill, what he had within him was too valuable, his bloodlines, , any of it would cause a calamity that would drag even the gods from their thrones to fight over his flesh. He had within him, a potential for endless power, and his power would draw enemies, more than a stinking corpse drew maggots.

Nevertheless, he did not have the habit of submitting to fate, or laying down and taking countless abuses, and so he was going to fight, and yes, he was going to kill, and perhaps the number of people he might end up killing would end up to be greater than every piece of sand on an endless beach, but he would never glory in mindless torture.

He was taking a life... Even in his rage, he should respect that.

He would be a killer, but never a monster. The difference between both was a very fine line, but he suspected that if he did not keep an awareness of that line in his heart, he would be capable of far more terrible deeds than what was happening here.

It might seem as if he were overreacting, but his abilities, made it straightforward for him to abuse it for evil.

This world is an abyss. He was not just gazing into it, he was inside of it, and the only thing holding him back from being one with the abyss was the warmth inside his soul—The people who have up their flames of life so that he should live.

For their sake, he would do better, he would be better, for he would not let this abyss take him.

Although his head was bowed, his sight still covered the entire room, and he captured everything happening inside of it, he could clearly see, the apparently dead priest whose eyes now shone with a glow of new intelligence, slowly rising from the ground, the two sets of arms he had, making him resemble a giant cockroach, he could also see the Captain and his Guardsmen also silently pulling out their swords.

Were they going to attack him, or this creature?

Yet, Rowan's attention was not really on them, he had sent his snakes to scrub through the entire manor, now that he knew the methods for detecting the hidden wolves among the sheep, he decided to strike while the iron was hot.

Two of the snakes descended to the basement below where most of the survivors and staff were, Rowan discovered they had sharper senses than him when it came to the aspects of energy. They had discovered an excessive amount of energy inside the priest, that even his Aura could not cloak the excessive energy from their sights.

They were to search through everyone inside the manor, and detect the outliers, when they did, he gave only a single command—Eat.

It would be quick and painless, for these people, taken without their wills, do not deserve his wrath. Of course, he sent the One and Two eyed snakes, for their temperament was suitable for such delicate work.

The last snake— Three Eyes (He really should give them names) was the far more energetic one, his quest was to search for Maeve, a cursory search from him did not reveal her presence. It was also to eat every single flying eye it saw.

Though he reduced its search radius to within the grounds of the manor, forbidden it from entering the fog. Even though he suspected that without killing him, his snakes were virtually immortal, they tended to draw a lot of energy from him when they resurrected. He needed to be at his peak state to avoid a state of weakness at a critical time.

They were already drawing a lot of energy from him, and this was them at their base forms. He had not even started upgrading the Legendary State level of Ouroboros; when he did, he expected that the expenditure would increase drastically anytime they resurrected.

Feeling the smelly breath wafting in his face, he turned most of his concentration to the creature in front of him, it was wearing a grin, making the mouth of the priest stretch unnaturally wide, its eyes blazing yellow.

"Greetings, O' Fallen Prince." The creature said to him.

"To whom do I speak? " Rowan said.

"Your death." It replied, and Rowan smiled.

Chapter 76: Battle Without End

The yellow eyes of the dead priest began to glow more brightly, and Rowan felt his head begin to throb, and he flinched backward a little as if he were bitten by an insect.

Clearly expecting a more severe reaction than this, the priest snarled, and his eyes glowed brighter, and the irritating headache he felt increased.

Rowan frowned, and slapped the creature, even though he reduced his strength as much as possible, he still broke his jaws, and one of its eyes exploded. "What are you?"

This creature was clearly focused towards the Spirit Attribute, and lacked a strong physique, the ability it used on him was something that affected his spirit, like a spiritual attack ability, and even though his spirit was the least of his Attributes, it was still extremely strong, and he was just realizing that his physique could passively repel malicious energies to an extent, including mental attack.

Even though an Empyrean was weak in the Spirit Attributes, it did not mean they did not have a proper defense against it. They were naturally resistant due to their insane regeneration and tyrannical physique.

The creature began picking itself from the ground, the fear in its eyes was clear, Rowan saw its single eye shifting around, did it want to escape? Rowan found it interesting that the Thralls of Abomination, despite their intelligence, were ultimately weaker because of that trait.

A normal Abomination would keep attacking until it was torn to pieces, their sheer savagery could tip the scales in their favor, where skills and intelligence could not.

"So you have self-awareness?" Rowan said as he walked closer to the retreating figure, he lifted his Axe, and pointed it at the Abomination, "You are a Thrall of the Abomination in the lake, aren't you?"

The creature began to laugh, as the dislocated jaw quivered with the motion, the mouth of the priest was open in a leer due to the broken jaw.

Although the sound of laughter was coming from the priest's mouth, it was not moving, the creature had finally stopped the charade of using the body of the priest, "I am not a lowly Thrall, fallen prince, and I would advise you to stop destroying the Winged Eyes, or you would find the consequences of that action difficult to bear."

"It's good you don't want me to destroy them." Rowan said, "That means that is what I should focus on."

"You are a child." The creature snickered, "Who plays with powers you can never understand! Great minds have put together powerful workings that would shift the very foundation of this world. You are too irrelevant to hamper this event. So stop your shenanigans and die in peace, knowing you were part of something greater than you would ever know!"

At the end of the rant, the creature was beginning to scream, Rowan realized he was not just dealing with something evil, but a fanatic, which in his mind was far worse.

If he was expecting proper reasoning from this creature, it was now a moot point, for nothing was stronger than a conviction that is believed in its totality, there would be no room for arguments or finding a common ground.

Every sentient creature was born a blank canvas, they were a repository of ideas and dreams just waiting to be filled up. This was the greatest magic of intelligence but also its greatest deficiencies.

In a perfect world, a budding child should be guided with firm hands, taught the difference between good and evil but also provided the opportunity to understand what both signify and also the freedom to choose their path.

It was a shame in all the universes, that there was no perfect world, knowledge was not given freely, but instead a biased set of rules were indoctrinated, and the greatest gift of sentience was warped, and their ability to reason was stunted.

All for a single purpose. For the benefit of the powerful. Control was their currency.

Rowan knew that trying to learn from this creature was a waste of time, he would kill it, and every other thing in his path, and leave this place.

Rowan raised the Axe, and flaming chains shot from the ground and wrapped around his wrist. "I can't allow you to do that, Lord Rowan. The supervisor is one of the keys used in controlling the Abomination outside."

"Captain, so you are one of these things too?"

Captain Titus grimaced, as disgust flashed through his face, "I serve the interest of your father, Lord Rowan and I believe if he sees how powerful you have become, he would allow you to live."

"Allow me, Captain?"

"You cannot win this fight, my lord. It would be the wiser option to leave your fate in the hands of your father, I believe that if he sees you now... he would never allow you to die."

"I wish I could believe you, Captain." Rowan shrugged and the chains around his wrist shattered to pieces, the captain fell to his knees as he vomited blood, clearly this flaming chain should be his Legendary ability.

"I am not in the habit of dancing to the tunes of those who wish to control my mind." Rowan swung the Axe, the creature attempted to flee, but it was too late. The Axe sliced through its waist, cutting it in two.

Rowan was careful not to rip out his soul, as he felt a new sensation as he had cut through this creature. He had touched its soul.

It was something of damp and rot, and when his Axe had cleaved through its spine, he nearly saw an image, but it was gone faster than he could process what he saw.

Soul Seizer had never given him the sensation of touching a soul before, perhaps it was the upgrade to Soul Reaver. Rowan wanted to collect the soul of this creature, but similar to an Abomination, it was broken and disjointed, he bent down and hauled it up by its neck, and raised his Axe.

"Stop him!" The Captain screamed!

Rowan frowned, the battle cry of the captain and the remaining Guardsmen pulled his attention. They all held their Swords and charged at him.

The captain was at the forefront. Rowan received his charge by blocking his blade and slapping him away with the flat side of his Axe, in a single motion.

The sword in his hand bent to a C shape, and the Axe slammed into his chest, the captain's leg dug two furrows in the ground, the Armour covering his chest caved inward, and he vomited blood and internal tissues. He would have fallen if he were not holding on to the walls.

He was not as merciful to the remaining Guardsmen. They held no important information, but they were fiercely loyal, they would only sabotage him if he left them alive. They attacked him from both directions.

The first Guardsman swung at him furiously, his sword leaving a silver flash in the air. Rowan replied with a single overhead blow, as if he was splitting a log. The Axe blade sliced through the sword and into the head of the guardsman.

The blow did not stop, and he was cut in half, armor and all. He stood still for a second, a red line bisecting his body from head to crotch, his eyes rolled in two different

directions before he exploded into gory bits. The weight and power behind Rowan swing, nearly vaporizing him.

The second Guardsman had leapt up, his sword pointing at Rowan. He yelled a valiant war cry as he drove the sword down. Rowan struck upward, he clashed with the sword, and it simply disintegrated. The Axe blade barely paused before hitting the chest of the Guardsman, reducing the upper part of his body to nothing but bloody stains in the air. His legs dropped to the ground strangely in a kneeling position.

Chapter 77: Battle Without End (2)

The two charging Guardsmen were a feint, for they had brought enough time for the last Guardsman to set up his crossbow. A flurry of red tipped arrows flew at him. Rowan slapped the first away nonchalantly, and his eyes crinkled slightly before it exploded, barely pushing his hand back, but the damage was already done.

The remaining arrow covered his body, but Rowan simply blocked them, by raising the creature in his right hand as a shield, but the explosion was unexpectedly massive. The exploding arrows seemed to undergo a chain reaction when many of them exploded at once, for they threw him backwards over the table into the sidewall, which soon became covered in flames and smoke, as the Guardsman did not stop firing, until his quiver was empty.

Rowan's soft sigh came from the flames, and a glimmer of gold and green shone through the flames, and the flames were blown away.

The Guardsman with the crossbow shattered into pieces of flesh and the wall behind him exploded, also followed by the wall behind. The Axe rested on the rubble of the last wall, the air swirling around violently in its wake.

That glint was Rowan throwing the Axe, and the incredible momentum from the throw had put out the flames and killed the Guardsman before destroying three walls.

Rowan looked at the creature in his hand, it was barely alive. The explosion had torn what was left of the human shell it inhabited. Rowan's body, however, was still pristine, free from dust or smoke, for the damage the arrow inflicted on him was so minimal, that it could hardly penetrate the field his vitality had over his body.

Rowan still had little knowledge about the capabilities of his Legendary Empyrean body, as he was unaware of this passive field that was generated around him, it seemed linked to his constitution; anything that could not break his defense would not be able to touch him

He looked at the dying creature he held, the remaining eye in its skull had been burned off and most of his skin had been burned to charcoal, the sounds it made were weak.

"No, no. Do not die on me yet." Rowan slapped the face of the creature repeatedly, trying to force out the last spark of life from its stunned body; using this method, he could barely touch its soul.

He searched through the noxious darkness, to grab anything he could from its soul, and he finally saw a single static image, it was hundreds of hooded figures bowing before a throne made of webs and darkness.

Rowan strained to see what lied inside that darkness, but was denied. His touch must have been the final straw for the creature suddenly spasmed before it gave a long cry, "Moootherrrrrr....." Its head fell and it was no more.

Rowan dropped the dead body. The soul that streamed into him was cold and broken. Like those of the Abominations, the Guardsmen he killed were also the same. The implications of these were very troubling.

Rowan turned to the captain, who by now knelt on the floor, his crushed Armour had bound him fast, and he could hardly move. His breath came in short and hard gasps. His face was pale, but still set in stubborn lines.

"You are making... a mistake, Rowan... You are playing...playing, with forces that are far beyond your comprehension." He bent down and gave a rough cough, spitting out more internal organs.

"Is that so, captain? Well, I'm all ears." Rowan began walking to him, "Tell me the mistakes I am making." Rowan bent and drew the captain up, looking at the crushed part of his Armour, Rowan fished around and held a bent section and began pulling the crushed Armour away from his body. The sound the metal made as it was slowly bent and pulled out was irritating.

Captain Titus was able to breathe properly again. He breathed deeply, disregarding the pain of his crushed chest and collapsed lungs.

The captain gave a thousand miles stare to him. His hand surprisingly still held his bent sword. His words were spoken as if he was in the depth of dreams, "Every action we have taken, no matter how bizarre or cruel, was for a greater purpose. We are going to save the world! We will bring it all back. Our glory. The pride of man shall rise again. We shall crush every infidel. Every usurper. Every traitor. And the glory of man shall light the ages past and present."

Saliva poured out from the mouth of the Captain, his eyes were lit up by a fanatical glow, they sought for understanding from the cold gaze of Rowan, who watched him silently.

"Don't you see, it's not too late to turn back. To return to the path laid down for you. We can forgive everything that has happened here and can rebuild everything you have destroyed.

"Go back to sleep and everything will be back to the way it was. Trust me, please, my prince. Your sacrifice would be edified for all the myriad races. Your name shall be praised until the end of the world. On your Divine Corpse we shall build an Empire that will conquer all things!"

Rowan looked at the captain, with a strange gaze, he silently showed the captain the blood that had begun falling from his body. It was no longer red, but yellow.

"Tell me captain, you said you served my father, and a glorious empire, then what are you now?"

The captain looked at his blood confused, there was a moment where panic entered his eyes and he looked at Rowan.

"We have been betrayed!" His eyes were beginning to turn yellow, but he shook his head, clearly his willpower was strong, "You have to inform your father that he has been betrayed... The Nexus is no longer his, but... But..."

He seemed to have lost his train of thought, and his eyes began to glaze over. Rowan shook him, "How do I reach my father? Talk to me, captain, or your glorious vision is relinquished."

"Below... processing facility, sigils must have weakened, for we have all been corrupted. Leave this place... please run, we cannot allow them to have it. The order... "

Roars began to enter Rowan's perception, as his three eyed snake showed him, tens of thousands of Abominations charging towards the manor. Giant form Abominations in their hundreds and dozens of flying Abominations were stirring the fog with massive wings.

If they reached the manor, it would be overrunned instantly and everyone here would die. Rowan's face changed, he must have alerted whomever must be in charge, and they were trying to stop him.

Rowan looked at the captain, who was shaking and delirious, as his eyes were slowly turning yellow. He did not see his father as someone who would willingly give his subordinates to others, clearly things were not going smoothly among the co-conspirators.

This could work in his favor, if there was disunity among the heads. He looked at the captain who had slipped into a form of coma, and as Rowan spirit penetrated his flesh, he saw a similar creature like what was inside the priest, beginning to grow inside him.

Rowan gripped his neck, and twisted, severing the spine. The Captain's head flopped onto his chest and he let him fall. The growth of that creature was halted.

The howls of the incoming Abomination had reached the manor, and the shaking ground felt like countless mini earthquakes happening simultaneously.

Since the charade was falling off, Rowan commanded his serpents to return, he was going to cut the strings bounding him.

His sight swept through the approaching army as he wondered if they were enough to push him to the Rift State.

Chapter 78: Battle Without End (3)

The commotion from the short battle had reached the people standing outside, and the destruction of the walls had allowed them to see the final part of what transpired. They may not have understood what happened, but seeing the insect like creature inside the priest and the ravings of the captain was enough to frighten them.

He looked at the shaken people, a hint of pity in his eyes, but battle was upon them, and he could not risk their lives in what was coming.

The army charging towards them was a testament to the ridiculous number of people who had been killed in whatever horrifying experiment was happening here.

Rowan was glad that out of everyone inside the manor, only three people had been corrupted by those insects - like creatures, who Rowan feared were not Abominations themselves, but something else.

He now had several clues he could pursue, the first was that there was apparently a giant facility underground that was responsible for processing Abominations en masse.

Rowan knew the attacks of the Abomination were not natural, everything pointed against it, for it would be impossible for an infestation of this size to grow to this level without outside interference.

The second most important clue was a term—The Nexus. This name was not strange to him. In fact, every Alchemist worth his salt would know this term.

A Nexus, was a self-contained bio-containment unit, used to grow and experiment on diverse specimens isolated. The poisons Rowan used for his first sojourn into that world with the Red Moon, were cultured in a Nexus.

But, operating a Nexus was a ridiculously expensive affair, and he had never heard of any unit being greater than the size of a small house, but this was Calcutta—An entire town! Although its population was small, it did not mean it was a small town in terms of size.

Apparently he was one of the specimens under sturdy here, the Abomination core was still one of their subjects, and those insectlike supervisors were controlling its spawn using this fog.

In a manner, Rowan could understand why the Abomination Core was placed here inside the Nexus with him. They ranked as one of the most dangerous creatures on the planet, because of their capacity for endless evolutions.

Given enough material, an Abomination could evolve to reach the peak of existence in any given biodome they found themselves in; that meant given enough time and resources, in a world like Trion, an Abomination could spawn gods! It was a scary notion, and it was the reason they were ruthlessly crushed in their infancy, for their growth meant the decimation of all life around them.

He also had the capacity for endless evolution and growth, and unlike the Abomination he fed on something more ephemeral, which was souls.

Unlike the Abomination Core who had been hopelessly controlled, he felt the noose around his neck was looser because they had no idea how he was getting stronger, and so, a mistake was made on his rate of growth.

Else there would be no way, they would respond to his apparent new abilities by sending an Army of Abominations to stop him, they were just fueling his growth. Not that it would matter if he could not escape the Nexus.

The highest State of Change, Rowan knew of, was the Incarnation state. No doubt there were many more states of change above that, and he had no doubt that his father would be in a far higher State than himself, and although he was an Empyrean, it did not mean he could not be crushed like a bug.

But he did not need to challenge him for now, for that would certainly be very foolish, what he needed to do was escape.

The facility underground must certainly exist because it would require an insane amount of energy and organization to properly manage a Nexus of this size. And he could not see any sort of facility above ground that would serve as a Control Hub.

The approaching Abominations beckoned his consciousness, and Rowan began splitting his mind, although it may appear that he had lots of time, that was only referring to his lifespan, his time of freedom inside this Nexus was running out.

He may have an hour, or a day to make his move, but he had a glimmer of hope because he knew he was inside a Nexus, and he had an idea how most work, regardless of its size.

He finally saw a light of hope through the darkness because someone slipped up, and he understood where he was, his upgrade to the Legendary State would give him the power to seize that opportunity.

Time seemed to slow down, as the cold flames of his Agility Attributes ran through his frame. He separated his consciousness into multiple parts, one of them took a portion of his Spatial Sight and zoomed underground, searching for the underground facility, for the Control Hub would undoubtedly be there.

The Control Hub would usually have a powerful Guardian to restrict the specimens from escaping using one of the few points of egress in the Nexus.

That tied to his second goal, exterminating every single Abomination inside the Nexus, and using the souls to power up for as much as possible, he did not know if it would be able to push him to the Rift State, but he was willing to try.

He would need every advantage he had to fight the Guardian of this gigantic Nexus, anything put in place to stop an Abomination Core in case of any mishaps would be mighty. Killing it would be a challenge, but if he could, he would leave this place, and he could finally disappear into the crowd.

The Third was the strings that tied , he split his sight to travel down the strings, and discovered that one of them led underground, and the other two disappeared far into the sky.

Following the path of the one that led underground, his sight was blocked by a metallic barrier, and he paused, he had reached the Control Hub!

The last of his consciousness addressed the frightened people before him, he did not give them time to think, only orders.

"Genmir, Kriya, Srerma, you are the fastest men here, there is a key to my Alchemy laboratory above inside my room, at the workstation, check the fourth drawer. Inside my lab, there are a series of blue vials on the shelves to your right, carefully pack them and bring them to the cellar. Be careful, for they are quite delicate, and your survival would depend on them."

He turned to the rest, "Gather every available resources inside the manor, and bring them down to the cellar, I would be sealing the doors with Sigils, you have five minutes. Hurry!"

About to leave, he saw the fear and concern in their eyes, and Declara was the boldest among them, she gestured for the rest to leave and took a single step towards Rowan and said, "My lord, what about you?" She looked around her as a hanging frame fell and shattered on the floor, the manor was vibrating with the incoming steps of the Abomination.

"I am going to stop what is coming, before any of you gets hurt." He nodded towards the approaching sound. Seeing more queries and concern on her face.

He sighed, and flared his powers for a brief instant, and she went white, "Do as your lord commands, I will be enough."

Nodding mutely, she followed the rest, Rowan looked at her for a few moments, he had heard her whispers as she wished for his safety, in a manner, she reminded him of his mother.

He shook his head before turning away, and disregarding the passage he would take to go outside, he simply broke through the stone walls, they felt as if he was walking through cardboard.

Chapter 79: Battle Without End (4)

Walking past the Axe, he gripped the handle, and he made the snakes appear around him, they had succeeded in the task he gave them, and except for Maeve that he could not find, they had killed all the so-called supervisors inside the manor.

He came outside, his seven-foot frame was intimidating, coupled with his grace of movement, he appeared in control of everything, his jacket gently flapped in the wind, and he tightened his hold on his Axe.

This time he was stepping out into the world, and he was not inside his shell, a small frightened child who was confused, with no meaningful direction, who had but a few moments to live.

He was still confused, but he was no longer frightened, that was growth, right? The one-eyed snake, flying beside him, spat out a metallic plate and Rowan took it. It was a Sigil plate.

He had a suspicion that he had to verify, as the first time he saw the strings, they had reminded him of something.

The first time he saw a Sigil plate, his Spirit and Spatial Sight were far weaker than they are now, but he was able to verify some patterns that he had memorized.

Focusing his sight on the Sigil plate, he began to zoom into it, the metallic plate served as a sort of barrier to his probe, but not for long as he soon entered inside it.

His Spatial Sight passed through a layer of darkness, and he saw... Strings.

Unlike the strings bounding the pages of , this one was far simpler, and although he could not trace every single line used, he was able to figure out certain patterns, also unlike the screams he heard when he looked at the former, the sensation he received from these strings were muted, almost as if it were non-human.

Pulling his sight away, he finally figured out what had bound the Record. It was Sigils. He sent the snake to return it to the door of the cellar, as the Army had crossed a greater part of the way.

He could now really appreciate the magnitude of what was arrayed before him, it would be hard to describe the sight of ten thousand marching men, talkless of an army of monsters of these proportions.

They were like an Army of darkness, as their movement tore the earth to pieces, and the presence of so many Abominations twisted reality. He saw that the clouds over this Army appeared faded, as if the Abominations we're draining the life of everything around it.

Rowan touched his chest, the familiar beating of his hearts was gone, only a black void remained. Apart from the human sensibilities he had in his last life, he was truly no longer a man.

No man would see such an array of monsters charging at him, and feel nothing but calm.

Was it not amazing that it was the little things that really affected his mental state. It was not the prospect of him being able to control tens of thousands of planets in the future that influenced him, after all, it was still a distant goal.

His missing heart struck him deeply, the blood flowing in his veins could well be liquid metal, they were heavy, and its flow was steady.

No fear.

There would be a time when he needed his human emotions to guide his decision, but not now. His golden eyes began to glow, as lightning seemed to be flashing inside of it.

Holding the Axe with both hands, he began running towards the fight. His snakes were still in small shapes, about ten feet long, resembling pythons.

His first step made the ground explode, the sound was like a bomb blast. Rowan's figure turned to a blur, as his second step was made at the boundary of his manor, nearly one hundred meters away from his first step.

He angled his feet, so he did not just go forward but upward, the force of the second step made a massive crater, as his body was launched into the air.

His snakes roared as they expanded, and he landed on the head of the Two eyed snake, who pushed the others aside, so it could be the one to receive him.

Rowan chuckled, and with a mental command, his giant seventy-foot-long Ouroboros Serpents began to ascend to the skies.

Their ascent was both graceful and still equally terrifying to watch, for their appearance in their full form seemed to strain the very atmosphere they flew through.

This was the first time an Empyrean had walked the skies of this world. Rowan had enough mental capacity to appreciate the first time he sort of flew through the skies, he dispelled that thought, however, he did not want his memory of this event to be tainted by battle and bloodshed.

The air around his hand began to pulsate, as he began gathering his vitality, the Axe in his hands began to hum, as it was the first time he was giving it his vitality as soon as he broke into the Legendary State, there seemed to be a barrier holding back the amount of Essence he could give the Axe.

Then he understood that it was not a barrier, but that the Axe could not handle the amount of Essence that he was giving it.

The Axe began to glow red, as the green parts left on the Axe head and the shaft seemed to burn. Above him, seven gigantic phantasmal Axes, nearly twenty meters across, winked to life, and they seemed to be burning with flames.

Rowan looked down at the charging Army, and with a roar, he let loose. The air exploded with a shriek, as the seven Axes descended like burning meteorites, slicing in half an unlucky Avian Abomination, and quicker than the eyes could follow, they reached the ground and exploded, flinging dead and wailing Abominations hundreds of feet into the air.

His Vitality was endless, and he unleashed the technique, again and again. The savagery of the snakes beside him was ignited. The one eyed went for the flying Abominations, while the three eyed descended to the army below.

The three - eyed Ouroboros serpent was fast, and when it reached the ground it did not stop, it slammed into the earth, tearing apart dozens of Abominations, and drilled underground, only to emerge underneath a Giant, where it first bites severed the Giant

at the waist, and it curled around the broken Giant, and the next bite was at the head, slicing through it like a hot knife through butter, and it promptly swallowed down the head, disregarding the rest of the corpse, it cold three eyes surveyed the battlefield as if it were a dining hall.

It shrieked and, like a high-speed train, it began to move, it stayed a few feet off the ground, but its speed was churning the earth as it moved past, it started going after the Giants, and every single Abomination in its path was turned to mush.

The motion from its tail slapped the air like thunder cracks, and any Abomination within a hundred feet of that snapping tail was turned to a yellow stain in the air.

By now, the One eyed snake had finished consuming close to half of the Avian Abomination in the air, and there were barely twenty left...

The Ouroboros snake moved through the air with unearthly grace and power, the Avian Abomination covered it, and they tried to bite through its flesh, they all failed, and with a shake of its body, they were pulverized.

Rowan grinned at the sight, this part of him, this utterly inhuman part, was glorying in this battle.

His golden air fluttered with the wind generated by the massive Ouroboros snake below him, as massive streams of soul power poured into him.

No, this was not battle, this was slaughter.

Not realizing when he began to laugh, Rowan continued releasing phantasmal Axes into the pandemonium that was the battlefield below, as that stretch of land turned into hell.

Chapter 80: [Bonus Chapter] Battle Without End (Final)

General Augustus Tiberius had ten seconds to live.

He roared and channeled the inexhaustible Aether granted by his Incarnations. He burned the roots of his bloodline down to his marrow, as his flesh wilted into a dry husk, but the Tiberius family controlled blood, and he was refilled instantly.

Augustus gathered everything into a blood orb the size of a pin head, and he made it explode at the two reaching hands that had been tearing into him for the past three hours.

Space collapsed and chaos emerged, everything instantly was destroyed, his body quaked and shattered into pieces multiple times, and his third Incarnation went lackluster, he was down to his last, but he knew it would not be enough.

The tool, he thought would be the source of his protection, became the source of his impending demise.

His mind returned, to a faithful night, fifty-five years ago, when he received a cryptic message from an organization called The Order of The Broken Eye. They came to him when he had just returned from the front lines in the Northern Continent.

The last battle there had been rough, and he knew he could not take much of this fight before he would inevitably fall. The losses in the last fight had been catastrophic.

He had nearly died a true death multiple times, but that was not what bothered him. He was a child from the bloodline of Tiberius—The God of War. Likewise, he did not expect he would die in his bed of old age.

No. He expects to die screaming in his own torn out guts, with endless miles of devastation around him, yet he wanted his death to have meaning.

Tiberius, unlike the other gods, did not value potential all that much, what he gave importance to, was power!

Augustus had the potential to become one of the strongest weapons in the hands of Tiberius, but that would take a long time, and he was not particularly unique in that aspect, as he knew of a dozen Dominators with his potential. The War God was not a patient one, he would not wait for him to bloom.

What he craved was endless battle, and he saw no difference between the fight between two mortals or two dominators. In his lofty position, they were all the same, what he craved was the endless song of blades, the torrential downpour of blood that would flood the world.

What the War God craved, was a Battle Without End.

In the endless rat race of a Dominators life, as they strived for powers under the gaze of unforgiven gods, Augustus knew he would not make it. Somewhere in that unavoidable next battles he would fight, he was going to perish there.

His death would be meaningless, just one of the countless statistics that was war. His life and story would be buried below an ocean of blood and bodies, and the name Augustus Tiberius would be nothing but a footnote, under a pile of footnotes a mountain tall.

How could he accept this? He had broken past the First Great Cycle and was on the threshold of the second, he had tasted power and longevity, why would he let all that slip from his grasp?

The Gods were eternal and merciless, and no matter how much the pitiful Dominators struggled under them, hoping for recognition and care, it was nothing but a fever dream.

"Placing your hopes in the gods, is building a castle on a foundation of loose sand." A few decades ago, Augustus would have killed anyone who made such a blasphemous statement, but now he just gazed at these two figures before him with apathy.

"Surely, there must be a good reason, why you would speak such words to me." Augustus snarled, "A member of The justice council is somewhere behind that mountain, I scream a little loud, and your heads would lie at my feet in a moment."

"Oh, but we know you would not do anything, Augustus after all, how many people would spurn the chance to transcend the tyranny of the shackles placed on them by the very gods they serve?" The Third prince smiled.

"You speak of a fairy tale. It is impossible to escape the Pathways of power" Augustus whispered and turned away, his eyes peering far into the horizon.

"Did anyone tell you that your eyes are beautiful?" The Third prince said.

Augustus smirked, and looked at the hooded figure, who was sighing in exasperation. The hooded man cleared his throat, and said, "Forgive the thoughtless words of my partner, you get used to his antics after a while. Listen to our fairy tale, and be the judge of the truth."

Augustus Tiberius listened. At first, he was not too invested in their tale, that quickly changed, when he heard more, his fingers went white, and his eyes widened in surprise and dread. He had not felt true terror in a long time, and he felt it now.

If the stories were true, and with the mounds of evidence this hooded figure had shown him, he could escape this rat race, of endless battles.

After what seemed like an eternity, Augustus licked his dry lips and said, "If I agree to enter into this venture, then this partnership cannot be maintained by trust alone, the benefits are too massive."

"As is expected, that is the second reason we came to you, of all we could have selected for this partnership." The hooded figure said, "I trust you know the ritual for the Thorn of Blood."

Augustus paused and nodded agreement, he awoke the ability to enhance agreement when he broke past the First Great Circle, if he used it on a binding ritual such as the

Thorn of Blood, a technique that could also be enhanced by his bloodline, then it would take a god to break it.

He had trusted them because of that, not suspecting that they would have a god behind them, for he did not believe a god would ever support any venture to break their control over the bloodlines of Dominator.

Well, he was mistaken, and he would die for his oversights.

He was fighting two battles, the Thorn of Blood was hampering his abilities, every move he made against the two of them, would tear his hearts to pieces and reduce the might of his techniques.

His two attackers were not affected by the Thorn of Blood in fact, their powers were enhanced against him, as the Thorn of Blood believed he was the one breaking the pact.

The very fact, that he was being killed by the very workings he cast, nearly drove him insane from anger.

He had eight seconds to live!

In a thousand years, he might be able to reach beyond the Second Great Circle and begin to touch the realm of the gods themselves.

General Augustus knew that far off hope was gone, and with rage in his cry and despair in his heart, he stripped away the essence of his Incarnations.

He drew forth the Power Of Tiberius from his core, pushing past every restraint his bloodline had over his flesh, down to the very root of his being, and for a brief moment, he touched the next Great Circle, and he would have wept if he were able to.

He had finally seen the instrument of his desires, had briefly touched it, but he will never experience it ever again.

The world went still, and even chaos itself went mad from seeing the essence of Tiberius. There was no way he could control this power, he did not attempt to do so, he only gave a single command: Destroy!!!

Existence for a brief moment ceased. Everything was stained red, down to the atoms, a consuming force of endless hunger swept through the endless chaos.

It is said at its end when an Incarnation falls. It would burn brighter than every star that ever graced the skies.

