

The Witch 691

Chapter 691: Second Memory (3)

After listening to Asura's concerned words, Varuna cracked a warm and gentle smile.

"I have pondered this choice for a long time and weighed all the consequences of failure, Little Brother. In this regard, I am more familiar than you. However, while it is probably the most illogical and stupidest choice to make, it is a choice only I can make."

"There is no one else more suitable for me." Varuna suddenly patted Asura on the shoulders and said, "We can't be turtles hiding in a shell forever. Someone has to go out there and see what is going on, and that someone can only be me."

"However, this is not a bad thing. In the distant past, the concept of everlasting was but a mere dream, and the end of a chaos cycle was also the end of all things; people believed it was absolute and couldn't be changed. It was Allfather who turned the impossibility into a possibility and forged the path to the everlasting, creating an eternal legend to be remembered throughout the ages."

"And now it is the turn of I, his eldest son, to also perform an impossible feat and create my own eternal legend. Allfather created the Eternal Heaven known as Chaos, but the emergence of Outer Beings now threatens its eternity. I shall be the one to clear out the threats of Outer Heaven and grant it true everlasting existence."

"So do not pity me or feel saddened by my decision, Little Brother. Instead, you should be proud of me, your Big Brother. This is my calling, destiny, and duty," Varuna stated with a firm resolution.

Asura softly sighed in resignation before asking with helplessness, "How do you expect me to explain this to our mothers, Big Brother?"

"We may be born from different mothers, but we share the same father. Our mothers love us all the same. It won't just be Mother Aria who will resent me for letting you leave, but also my own Mother Dunalumi."

"You're making things difficult for me, Big Brother," Asura lightly complained.

"Hahaha, you will find a way to cope with their rage. Also, they will understand my choice in time," Varuna lightly laughed before mentioning, "Besides, you were also hoping I would make this, did you not?"

"Why else would you invite me here, Little Brother?"

Asura trembled upon hearing that as his heart flooded with guilt. At their level, it wasn't difficult for them to see through each other's intentions.

However, Varuna also understood him.

While it was true that Asura hoped he would leave to investigate the Boundless Sea of Nothingness, he also hoped he would never make the decision.

Asura was deeply conflicted between responsibility and feelings.

"I'm sorry, Big Brother..." Asura apologized, feeling ashamed of his own heartlessness.

Since he ultimately invited his big brother to the edge of Chaos, it showed his sense of responsibility had prevailed over his personal feelings.

Nevertheless, Varuna shook his head without the slightest disappointment and only smiled with warmth and understanding.

"This isn't something you need to be sorry for, Little Brother," Varuna said.

"As Outerverse Originators and the Proud Sons of the Prime Originator, we can never shy away nor shirk from our responsibilities and duties. We were destined to lead lives different from everyone else's."

"We were born to lead the heaven and cannot enjoy the privileges of those who live beneath it. We make choices based on what needs to be done and not what we want to do. This has nothing to do with our feelings and does not affect our brotherhood."

"I'm saying this now because I don't want you to feel burdened by my choice; don't let this moment become your forever inner demon," Varuna stressed.

Asura knew the time of Varuna's departure was drawing closer, and the fear of losing him forever grew stronger. He felt like his heart was getting ripped out when he heard his big brother's considerate words.

His big brother could have left without a word. However, he chose to stay and spoke so much to put his heart at ease and give him peace of mind.

Back when he was still weak and lost, it was his big brother who looked after him and guided him out of the heartless cycle of endless reincarnation. Now that he had become the Lord of Chaos, the strongest being in Inner Heaven, his big brother was still looking after him.

Nothing had changed – he was still his big brother's little brother, and it was the duty of the big brother to care for his little brother.

"Is there anything you want me to do for you, Big Brother?" Asura asked with a heavy heart.

Varuna paused for a moment before grinning, "If you can look after my lineage, that would be great."

"However, there's no need to be soft and overprotective. If they err in their ways, don't hesitate to flog them or even throw them into the reincarnation cycle to repent," Varuna added.

Although his words made him seem heartless to his descendants, it was only a matter of perspective.

As an eternal existence above the heavens, reversing death was as simple as turning over one's hand. To an Outerverse Originator, death did not hold the same weight as it did to mortals.

To them, getting one's misbehaved descendants thrown into the reincarnation cycle was no different from getting them grounded to their rooms.

"I will, Big Brother. You can count on that," Asura promised earnestly.

"Well then, I'll be leaving now. Take care, my good Little Brother."

"Big Brother, wait—!"

Fear overwhelmed Asura at the last moment, prompting him to stop Varuna from leaving.

However, it was already too late.

Varuna didn't just leave; he left decisively. He did not spare any time to meet nor leave behind any words for his lineage. Doing so would have only weakened his resolve.

The supposedly durable Chaos Barrier easily gave way to Varuna as he disappeared into the unknown depths of the Boundless Sea of Nothingness. Every Outer Being within his sight also vanished along the way, reduced to nothingness.

That was the last time Asura saw any traces of his beloved big brother.

Chapter 692: Second Memory (4)

Boundless Sea of Nothingness

In an unknown region of emptiness, Varuna continued to be hammered by the dust of nothingness as he traversed the life-extinguishing void.

Usually, anything that touched the dust of nothingness would disappear from existence – whether it was life, matter, or energy, all concepts of their existence would cease to exist when they came into contact with the nihilistic power coursing throughout the Boundless Sea of Nothing.

However, this was not the case for Varuna.

When the dust of nothingness touched Varuna, he did not disappear. On the contrary, it was dust of nothingness that ceased its 'existence' as its nihilistic power disappeared, transforming into Origin Power that empowered and sustained Varuna.

In the first year of travel, Varuna occasionally encountered beast-like Outer Beings in the red void of nothingness. Alas, not much was known about its specific species.

Every Outer Being discovered in the Boundless Sea of Nothingness was nigh invisible. The only determining factors of their existence were their movements, which distorted space and provided rough outlines of their figures.

On rarer occasions, some would also sparkle with countless glittering colored light particles.

In the following hundred years of void traveling, Outer Beings were no longer spotted. Only the endless red void of nothingness accompanied Varuna.

As Varuna continued his lonesome travel, the situation remained unchanged for another ten thousand years before beast-like Outer Beings were spotted in groups. They numbered in the hundreds like the last group.

Varuna wanted to study and understand them, but unfortunately, even with his seemingly omnipotent power as an Outerverse Originator, he couldn't crack the secret of their existence.

It was as if they were protected by a power of invisibility from a higher dimension that hid their true appearances from the world. As such, Varuna's lower-dimension perception failed to perceive them.

Another possibility was that concentrated dust of nothingness had long integrated with their beings, becoming a layer of their flesh and granting them the ability of invisibility.

The last possibility Varuna thought of was that the dust of nothingness naturally became concentrated and gained sentience.

Nevertheless, Varuna never gave up on his pursuit of an answer – he continued to study the Outer Beings for set periods during his travels whenever he encountered new groups of Outer Beings.

The Outer Beings could not threaten Varuna with their meager power at Half-Originator.

This dull cycle of lonesome travel and study continued for a whole chaos cycle. In the second chaos cycle of travel, stronger Outer Beings appeared. Their powers ranged from Early-stage Innerverse Originator to Late-stage Innerverse Originator.

Varuna wasn't sure if he would encounter Outer Beings as powerful as him or even stronger if he continued his blind journey.

However, he didn't stop.

In the latter half of the second chaos cycle, Varuna finally discovered something other than the dust of nothingness and unintelligent Outer Beings – a fragment of a dead chaosverse that persisted through the decay of nothingness.

The chaosverse fragment was not very large, but not too small either – it only contained six thousand star realms.

Remnants of the chaosverse's laws also remained.

However, there was no normal life in this chaosverse fragment. Instead, it became a nest for billions of Outer Beings. Furthermore, there were Outerverse Originator-level Outer Beings among them.

If this piece of chaosverse ever reached Chaos, all life would end unless the Lord of Chaos intervened.

Nevertheless, it was also in this chaosverse fragment that Varuna made a surprising discovery – not all Outer Beings were hostile towards him. At the very least, the avian and aquatic-looking Outer Beings were docile and tameable.

As the Lord of the Boundless Seas and Skies, Varuna had created countless skies and seas, giving life to many avian and aquatic lifeforms. His unique aura as their creator made all avian and aquatic lifeforms naturally intimate and subservient to him.

Varuna didn't expect his unique creator aura would also affect Outer Beings.

Nevertheless, this pleasant surprise was only a small episode in Varuna's long, lonesome travel.

In the third chaos cycle of traveling through the red void of nothingness, Varuna finally made the ultimate discovery – the infinitely boundless world of a higher dimension.

Unfortunately, that was also where he met his end, perished at the hands of a celestial-like Outer Being that was as big as an entire chaosverse. In front of such a colossal entity, Varuna's size and power were simply far too insignificant.

Vaan almost lost himself in the long river of memories and time and believed himself to be Varuna at some point as he experienced everything through his eyes.

And yet, when it came to the most crucial ending point of Varuna's life, everything suddenly became blurry and disconnected. He was robbed of the truth before he was given a chance to perceive it.

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As Vaan's mind drifted through a seemingly timeless and pitch-black void, just when he thought the recollection had ended, he was pulled into a new memory – Varuna's first reincarnated life.

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The 127th chaos cycle of Chaos, Primeval Chaosverse, Everblue Star

In the Year 723 of the Dark Age, a Solaran prince was born in the Memoria Royal City shortly after a pandemic outbreak. It should have been a time of joy for the Memoria Royals as they welcomed the new member of their house into the world.

However, the newborn prince was born with one ocean-blue eye and one blood-red eye, causing confusion, panic, and fear to arise within the Memoria Royal Family.

"This is my baby...?"

Queen Lumina glanced at the blood-red color in one of her baby's eyes with horror and repulsion after her hard labor.

Caw! Caw!

A murder of crows suddenly started flocking and gathering outside the castle with excitement as they circled the sky in celebration of Prince Victor's birth.

The unknown phenomenon startled and frightened royals and servants alike.

"Curse... It's a curse! It's a cursed baby!" a maidservant screamed in horror as she blocked her ears to deafen the crows' cries.

"No! My baby is not cursed!" Queen Lumina cried as she held her newborn, profound sadness flooding her heart. Shortly after, she glared at the maidservant and barked, "Drag her out and execute her!"

"N-No! I didn't do anything wrong! I'm not mistaken! Please don't kill me! That thing should be killed instead!" the maidservant cried.

Alas, her pleas fell on deaf ears as the soldiers dragged her out of the castle and executed her.

At the same time, all details of Prince Victor Memoria's birth were hidden from the public. Unfortunately, a small bucket of water couldn't extinguish a forest fire.

As the murder of crows grew in numbers, blotting out the sky of the royal castle, rumors of the cursed prince easily spread like wildfire. After all, the day of the prince's birth was also the day the murder of crows gathered.

Bodies littered the streets day after day as people died from the Black Death, and the atmosphere of the royal city became heavy with the stench of death and fear.

After enduring months of such suffocating gloom, public unrest reached the boiling point of eruption, and people crowded outside the castle gates with pitchforks, shovels, and axes—any tools they could use as weapons.

They demanded the royal family hand over the cursed prince for execution, believing the cursed prince was the source of the plague.

"Uneducated and ignorant swines! These peasants know nothing but speak a lot of rubbish! Your Majesty, you mustn't listen to them!" Queen Lumina pleaded to her king.

However, her hopes were dashed by the following words, "I'm sorry, my love."

The public outrage was too great, and King Luther Memoria submitted to the external pressure. Prince Victor was dragged out and burned to death in public at the tender age of three months.

As a result, Queen Lumina turned crazy.

Unfortunately for the Memoria Kingdom, the death of Prince Victor did not solve their pandemic crisis, but it worsened instead.

On the day of Prince Victor's death, the endless murder of crows cried as the heaven itself seemingly mourned his loss. At the same time, the numerous crows went mad and attacked all humans on sight with frenzied rage. They wanted to avenge Prince Victor, even at the cost of their lives.

They gorged on human eyes, ate infected rats, polluted wells and rivers with their corpses, and devastated crops, causing widespread damage beyond everyone's imagination.

The entire kingdom trembled at their wrath.

A week later, the Crazy Queen was also dragged out of the castle to be burned at the stake in public after she was labeled as the witch who gave birth to the cursed prince.

At the moment of her death, Queen Lumina looked at the crowd of peasants with hollow eyes of endless despair, desolation, and resignation and spat vengefully, "Ignorance is not a sin, but even ten thousand deaths won't earn you my forgiveness! I will wait for you in hell! I curse you, curse all of you to die ugly, miserable, and pathetic deaths!"

"Did we do the right thing?" a peasant questioned his morals.

Nevertheless, even after Queen Lumina's death, the Memoria Kingdom continued to be plagued by the Black Death and the wrath of all winged creatures of the sky!

It wasn't just crows but all birds that joined the war against humans later!

The people of the Memoria Kingdom were finally aware of their grave mistake, and there wasn't a single person who didn't know how to write the word 'regret,' not even the illiterate.

Unfortunately, the Memoria Kingdom was already doomed to fall, and the whole country eventually fell to ruin in a short span of six months without a single survivor.

Later, the incident shocked everyone living on Everblue Star.

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Chapter 693: Second Memory (5)

A hundred years after Prince Victor died on Everblue Star, Varuna's second reincarnation started in the Great Desolate Chaosverse, Grand Blue Star.

The world was frighteningly cold in the Grand Blue Star, making life extremely difficult for humans. Nothing could grow on land, and humans could only live in coastal regions next to the sea, where aquatic lifeforms thrived limitlessly.

Although fishing wasn't easy, it was still possible and was the only source of survival the primitive humans knew.

When Varuna's second reincarnation, Venice Delmar, was born, his fishing village was blessed with countless stranded fish on shore as if they were trying to reach him and pay their respects.

However, the villagers saw it as god's gift to them instead. After all, what kind of delusional idea was a newborn getting worshipped by fish?

Nevertheless, it wasn't a one-time blessing. Since the day of Venice's birth, fish have been found stranded ashore each morning, in amounts fishermen could only dream of catching before.

Each day was like a yearly harvest, and they didn't need to work for it.

Such a miraculous situation couldn't be kept secret, and the news spread to other villages.

In those days, many people visited the Frostbone Village to verify the truth for themselves. After the truth was confirmed, Frostbone Village experienced a large influx of migrating villagers.

In a mere five years, the small Frostbone Village developed into a large, prosperous city of twenty thousand people. Frostbone City became the future of humanity in the dark ice age.

Unfortunately, good times did not last forever.

The daily offering of fish failed to keep up with the population, and even the amounts became lesser and lesser. People began to despair when even the fishermen returned from their daily trips with poorer harvests than in the past.

Famine struck Frostbone City, and people started dying from malnutrition and hunger. Bodies piled up by the day, and greater despair seeped in.

With nowhere else to turn to, the people of Frostbone City prayed to the gods of the sea for more abundant fish blessings. Alas, the sea answered them with silence and a further reduction of daily stranded fish.

Around that time, five-year-old Venice visited the sea with his fisherman father for the first time and discovered his ability to communicate with aquatic lifeforms and befriend them.

At the same time, they started to gather around his father's fishing boat with joy as they greeted and paid their respects to Venice.

Venice's father, Marvin Delmar, was almost frightened to death when so many large aquatic lifeforms rose above the sea surface, rocking the small fishing boat with wave after wave of icy cold seawater.

"You scared my Papa. Can you not scare him?" Venice asked the large dolphins and whales in a childish voice.

Marvin was immediately surprised to see the huge sea creatures retreat into the sea and draw some distance from the fishing boat to make them feel more comfortable. These huge sea creatures actually listened to his son!

Suddenly, he recalled that the day his son was born was also the day the old village started receiving the gift of fish.

'My son was born to rule the seas!' Marvin thought excitedly.

Unable to suppress his urge to test his theory, Marvin quickly made a request of his son, "Hey, Bud. Can you try asking them to give us some fish to eat?"

"I'll try, Papa," Venice agreed innocently.

Shortly after, he asked the large dolphins and whales as per his father's request, and sure enough, they disappeared into the sea for a moment before returning with schools of fish in their mouth.

Marvin lost his breath in his excitement on the spot. After a moment, he quickly reeled in the fish with a net before filling the boat to its load limit.

That day, Marvin earned the praise of the entire city when he brought the fish back. And in the following week, Marvin would always bring Venice fishing with him every day. The loads of fish he brought back daily for the city earned him great awe and envy.

Many fishermen figured Marvin must have found a golden fishing spot. They decided to tail him on one following morning secretly. It was then that they witnessed the shocking sight of oversized dolphins and whales offering fish after Venice made the request.

Before long, the whole city knew the secret after the fishermen shared the discovery. Venice's happy days ceased the same night, and his nightmares began.

The city authorities deprived Venice of his parents and dragged him out to sea from morning to late night, forcing him to ask the sea lords for schools of fish every day. Such laborious travels were naturally too much for a five-year-old boy to handle.

But even though Venice was tired and cold, he had no choice but to follow the forceful whims of the adults.

Everyone in the city abused his gift as much as they could without caring for Venice's health and happiness. They weren't sure if his gift would last forever. Thus, they sought to stock up as much seafood as possible while his gift lasted.

Much to their pleasant surprise, Venice's gift did not disappear, even after several weeks. But at that point, he was already too weak to walk. He did not get the rest that a child should.

As a child messiah who brought salvation to his city with his special gift, he did not receive the respect and care that he was owed. Instead, all he got was physical and mental abuse due to his naivety and young age.

"Brother Dolphin, Sister Whale... Please don't give us fish anymore... I'm tired... Too tired... I don't want to do this anymore..." Venice cried before receiving an abrupt slap from an angry fisherman.

"Nonsense! How can we eat if you do not ask them to give us—"

Roar!

The sea itself was seemingly enraged as the fleet of fishing boats was rocked by heavy waves of water. The furious cries of the Sea Lords summoned the wrath of the ocean as countless more members of their kind answered their call.

"Q-Quick! Back to shore!" The fishermen cried in fright.

Fortunately for them, the angry sea life chased them but did not hunt them down for fear of hurting Venice in the process. As a result, the fleet of fishing boats made it all back to Frostbone City safely.

Since that day, no fisherman dared to venture out to sea again.

However, they found a more effective method to receive their daily offering of fish from the sea – by torturing Venice at the shore and letting his painful cries echo to the sea.

Even though the furious Sea Lords summoned a whole army of sea creatures to the shores of Frostbone City, they failed to advance further due to the city's effective threat to kill Venice if they continued.

Ultimately, the Sea Lords could only give in to the greedy and desperate humans' demands and retreat.

"Scream, Boy. Call out to them. Ask them to bring us fish from the sea," the heartless city lord demanded.

"Bad man! You are a bad man!" Venice cursed the city lord before saying, "Brother Dolphin and Sister Whale are so nice to give us fish to eat every day, and yet you seek to abuse our kindness!"

"You bite the hand that feeds you! You ungrateful, bad—"

Pah!

The furious city lord slapped Venice without restraint, barking, "If I tell you to scream, you scream! I don't need to be lectured by a little shit!"

"City Lord, you..."

Several guards and fishermen were startled by the city lord's excessive display of force, fearing he would hurt the child badly.

After all, in this blizzard hell, where no crops could be grown, and the only source of food came from the sea, any heavy injury would likely lead to death since they couldn't make any medicine.

This was especially the case for children.

How could the weakened and dispirited Venice withstand such a heavy blow? He was instantly knocked out with some blood dripping from his mouth.

Seeing this, the City Lord finally showed a bit of concern. How could he let their golden fish die?

"Someone, tend to him at once!" the City Lord ordered.

Alas, Venice would no longer wake up. His weakened body already lacked strength and barely had enough energy to maintain their functions. Now that his body had suffered an injury, his deficient energy was used to heal his body.

However, without the strength to eat and ward off the cold, Venice's body continued to weaken on its own until death took him away.

Meanwhile, Venice's father was filled with regret, while his mother was completely heartbroken by his situation, not knowing their child had already passed away. Ever since they tried to fight back for the custody of their son, they had been locked away in prison by the city lord.

"Gone... How can he be gone...? Why is he so weak?!"

"City Lord, it's not good. The furious people have gathered outside your home; they are demanding your head, blaming you for killing the Sea Child."

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Frostbone City was quickly engulfed in chaos as people fought and blamed each other for not treating Venice better.

But no matter what they did, everything was futile; they could undo what had happened.

With the last vestige of Venice's unique aura disappearing from the world, the Sea Lords became aware of his passing. The sea was immediately boiled with endless fury and madness.

Not long after, Frostbone City vanished from the face of the earth along with all its residents, washed away by the wrath of the sea.

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In the first reincarnation, Varuna died because of ignorance. In the second reincarnation, he died because of greed. Before Varuna's reincarnations were given a chance to grow their wings, they were mercilessly clipped by human malice.

Hundreds... Thousands... Tens of thousands... Millions...

Varun continued to reincarnate into different worlds with low life value and development, dying tragic deaths before reaching adulthood. They couldn't resist the first tribulation given by the heavens.

Nevertheless, with each death and each cycle of reincarnation, the aura of the Lord of the Boundless Seas and Skies was washed away, bit by bit, until all traces of it were gone.

Since then, the difficulty of the tribulations given by the heavens has lessened.

Ding!

<You have finished viewing the first half of Varuna's tragic cycle of reincarnation>

<You have recovered some Boundless Sea and Sky Aura from your first life as the Lord of the Boundless Seas and Skies>

<[Warning]: The heavens have noticed you and grown envious of your talent>

Vaan's heart suddenly felt cold after hearing the last notification; he completely understood what it implied.

Tribulation was coming.

Chapter 694: Terrible Premonition

After absorbing the second soul fragment, Vaan's status underwent great changes. Although the recovery of his Boundless Sea and Sky Aura was most likely his greatest gain, it was not his only gain.

That said, it was definitely his most concerned gain.

Having glimpsed through millions of short reincarnations, Vaan had learned much about Heaven's Envy and Life Tribulation.

The so-called Heaven's Envy was a type of law that had existed since the beginning of time. The purpose of its existence was to control the growth of life and not let it grow aggressively like cancer. This was to prevent the universe from getting flooded with powerful beings capable of destroying worlds.

In simple words, Heaven's Envy was a law of balance and self-preservation, and its purpose was to prune life. Only by overcoming the Life Tribulation would one be allowed to continue living.

Although the Prime Originator, Allfather of Chaos, granted the path of everlasting to all life, he also thought it was necessary to keep such a law. Thus, even the Lord of Chaos did not touch or alter it.

Nevertheless, the heavens weren't completely heartless. It wouldn't give people Life Tribulations without recompense. There were plenty of benefits to overcoming them.

As such, Life Tribulations couldn't be considered the Damnation of the Heavens but trials or tests – those that complete them would be rewarded.

However, the problem was that the difficulty of Varuna's Life Tribulations was so great that he was mired in the vicious cycle of reincarnation millions of times.

It was no different from a death sentence.

Furthermore, Life Tribulations weren't events that only came once. So long as one lived under the heavens, they would continue to receive Life Tribulations.

'I overcame death once when I activated the system, and since then, my rise has been relatively smooth and swift. This could be considered passing a Life Tribulation and receiving its reward...'
Vaan thought.

As a man living in a matriarchal society, his life had been truly difficult; death was just around every corner, waiting for him to stumble.

There should have been many more unreasonable witches like the City Lord's daughter, who ignored all rules and reason throughout the kingdom.

However, he had actually encountered so few of them and met many more reasonable witches that he had always been suspicious and doubtful of his heaven-defying luck. As it turned out, this was part of the heavens' blessings for passing the Life Tribulation.

'I have achieved a level of power others wouldn't even dare to dream of achieving in several decades, let alone in less than a year. With my present abilities, I should be able to contend with weak Divine Beings now...' Vaan deeply mused.

The Boundless Sea and Sky Aura had raised the difficulty of his future Life Tribulations. Thus, he had to consider everything that could threaten the current him. In fact, there were too many to list.

There was nothing he could do to resist if the sun suddenly exploded or Outer Beings descended from the sea of stars.

However...

'As I thought, the closest things that could threaten me right now are the seven Great Devils...' Vaan felt a tremendous weight bearing him down.

He wasn't ready to contend with Peak Rank 6 Divine Beings like the seven Great Devils.

However, that was only the case if he was in Gehenna. If they came to Pangea, their powers would be suppressed. He wouldn't mind slaying a few Divine Beings in that case.

But if the Great Devils found a way to ignore the worldly power suppression...

Vaan's heart chilled.

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Imperial Capital, Delarosa Household

Shortly after Fraegar discovered the weakness of Blood Magic, she quickly instructed her fellow peers, "Destroy his blood reserve with Poison Magic! He won't be able to use his Blood Manipulation if there's no blood to control!"

"Yes, Lady Fraegar!" the other dragons answered.

After they fended off the Double Contractor Galen's attack, they immediately targeted his blood bank with poison spells. They knew they couldn't compete with Galen directly. Thus, they chose to weaken him first by destroying his advantage.

All of a sudden, Galen found his blood bank bombarded with poisonous green spells. The highly venomous power seeped into the pool of blood and fused with it, altering its properties.

Not only did the blood coagulate, but they also became heavy, like dense metal. Even though Galen could still control the coagulated blood to an extent, it was too burdensome compared to normal blood.

The coagulated blood drained his mental power like crazy when he tried to force the issue.

Galen's expression darkened instantly.

"Pesky lizards, you have enraged me! Do you think you can stop me if you ruin my blood bank?!" Galen roared.

He quickly separated the normal blood from coagulate blood to salvage what he could before drawing them all into his blood.

Despite the huge volume of blood, Galen's body was like a bottomless abyss, swallowing it without an issue. However, his flesh became increasingly flushed, and his eyes glistened with greater crimson intensity.

At the same time, the entire Blood Slaughter Domain was quickly shrouded in darkness with a wave of his hand, obscuring everyone's vision.

"You fools. Blood isn't the only thing I can control," Galen spat with contempt.

Vampires were the rulers of blood and darkness. Since he was bestowed the concentrated blood essence of the Vampire Ancestor, he was no different from a Royal Vampire.

Naturally, he inherited the power of blood and darkness.

Inside the shrouded region of darkness, Galen's presence vanished as if he had become one with the darkness. At the same time, he could still see the concentrated blood of everyone's heart.

Every heartbeat was like a pulse that allowed Galen to hear and see people's entire network of blood vessels. Furthermore, by studying the blood flow and heart rate, he could sense everyone's emotions and predict their movements.

Galen's vision was enhanced while others were robbed of theirs.

"Let the hunt begin—"

Galen's smug look abruptly froze as powerful beams of light erupted from the dragons' locations, dispersing their surrounding darkness.

"You pesky lizards and your magic are truly annoying," Galen spat gloomily.

Although he was powerful, he was still a newly awakened Royal Vampire. He was still in the testing phase of his abilities.

Chapter 695: Galen's Declaration

Although Galen's power of darkness was strong, it wasn't enough to blot out the sky. In the end, it failed to cover the whole Blood Slaughter Domain due to the suppression of light.

Light and darkness canceled each other out, but the darkness was still slightly stronger. Thus, the light spells from Fraegar's group failed to reach Galen.

Nevertheless, with Galen's power of darkness reduced to half its effect, his big hiding ground was also reduced to half. Although the others still didn't know where he hid, they knew he was somewhere in the other half of the domain, which was still covered in darkness.

"Your Majesty, should we also make our move?" Commander Jhoru inquired.

However, Emperor Varan shook his head, saying, "No, we will only get in the way. This is a battle of magic. Forcefully joining this sort of high-level battle will only result in unnecessary casualties."

"We will focus on the Delarosas. Apprehend those who surrender and kill those who resist, then have the regular soldiers bring them out of this killing field. We will also retreat once that is done."

"As it stands, we will become that Old Demon's blood supply if we stay," Emperor Varan stated.

"You're absolutely right, Your Majesty!" Commander Jhoru furiously nodded, adding, "While we might still be able to help, the rest of our men won't be. Not only will they not contribute, but they will even help the Old Demon."

"I will mobilize the troops right now!" Commander Jhoru shortly followed up on Emperor Varan's instructions.

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Meanwhile, Kuvat took the chance given to him by his fellow peers to absorb the Divine-rank Stalactite Milk given to him by the Supreme Leader.

"Kuvat, heed my words – a True Dragon's physique is far different from a Human's physique; it is physically superior and much larger. However, this is both a blessing and a curse. While you enjoy superior talents, the resources you require to advance your physique are also thirtyfold that of a human's."

"What I will give you now is enough to advance your physique to the next level. However, it is of a different element to your nature of fire. I must also add that this Divine-rank Stalactite Milk is extremely precious in terms of quality and quantity. You can easily trade it for any type and quality of precious resource you desire."

"However, I must also remind you that this type of resource is also one of its kind. Whether you choose to take it or not is completely up to you."

Kuvat recalled the Supreme Leader's words as the Divine-rank Stalactite Milk fell from a spatial portal and into his possession.

'Whether I continue pursuing the sole path of fire or walk a different path, the choice is mine – This was the Supreme Leader's message for me. However, I do not need to make a choice, for destiny has already chosen for me!'

After Kuvat decisively swallowed the Divine-rank Stalactite Milk, he experienced the potency of the miraculous water remolding his fire-attribute physique, changing it into one that was also closer to the earth.

The earth rapidly strengthened him as the rich energy within the Divine-rank Stalactite Milk erupted, coursing through every part of Kuvat's body.

The earthly energy of the Divine-rank Stactite Milk wasn't violent in nature. But given its sheer quantity, even thirty Transcendent Humans would have imploded from energy overload.

However, Kuvat's robust body was able to withstand it, not a bit more and not a bit less; it was just the right amount required. As Kuvat's physique upgraded to Middle-stage Transcendent rank, he also acquired the dual physique of earth and fire.

'Right now, I am the foremost talent in my generation!' Kuvat's eyes glowed with endless confidence due to his advancement.

Unable to contain his excitement and joy, he immediately let out a mighty dragon roar.

Roar—!!!

"Thank you for protecting me, everyone. I have succeeded! Leave the rest to me!" Kuvat announced as his draconic aura erupted with grandeur.

At the same time, Galen glanced in his direction with shock and disbelief.

He knew the dragons were up to something, but he didn't expect one of them to achieve such a startling transformation in such a short time.

After all, unless one relied on special means, such as accepting the divine powers of the Great Devils, it was extremely difficult for Transcendents to advance with each step. And yet, one of the dragons actually possessed something that special!

"What the hell did you just take?! How did you raise your power so much in such a short time?!" Galen barked with unease.

He felt like he no longer had everything under control after Kuvat's power grew to a level that could rival his.

"Are you nervous, Old Demon?" Kuvat grinned before boasting, "Hehe, this is the gift granted to me by our god!"

'Our god!' Galen noted with great emphasis.

Only Divine Beings were worthy of being called gods. The Great Devils were such beings, but most people wouldn't call them gods, especially not the dragons. The Red Dragon Clan only had one god.

"The Dragon God?! How is that old thing not dead yet!?" Galen panicked with alarm before abruptly smiling with frightening calmness and cruelty, spitting, "Is that what you think I would say?! Even if your god intervenes now, it's already too late!"

"My Master's plans have been set in motion for two hundred years! A small setback will not change the final result! Pangea has been far too quiet! You all have grown complacent with the peace you enjoyed and forgot the terror of three hundred years ago!"

"Fret not! We will bring back the terror of those days! Darkness will descend on these lands, and the world will know fear once more! Let us welcome His Greatness and his people together!" Galen declared with feverish valor and excitement.

Kuvat and the others suddenly paled as they heard Galen's declaration.

Galen could be a mad demon, but they couldn't simply pass his words off as the nonsensical ravings of a lunatic.

"You... Old Demon, what the hell are you trying to do?!!" Emperor Varan roared at the top of his lungs before quickly urging, "No, we must kill him right away!"

"Hahaha! It's too late, you fools! I was only serving as the distraction!" Galen laughed with insanity.

He valued his life so much.

So, why in the hell would he bother risking his life by expending all his efforts in a battle with unclear results?!

Chapter 696: Great Losses

"Kill him! Kill him now! Don't give this Old Demon a chance to retaliate! If there's even an ounce of truth in his words, we must never let it come to fruition!" Emperor Varan roared with madness.

Emperor Varan immediately lunged at Galen, sword aimed straight for his heart after a barrage of light-piercing dragon spells exposed Galen's darkness-shrouded body.

The aura-enhanced sword pierced straight through Galen's heart region, but no physical contact was felt as Galen's body dispersed into darkness.

Emperor Varan's expression fell, but he immediately slashed at the rest of Galen's darkness-dispersing body in rapid succession, dicing it up in hundreds of pieces in an instant before swiftly retreating from the darkness-filled area.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Ballistic dragon spells immediately bombarded the location a split second after Emperor Varan leaped. However, Emperor Varan didn't retreat fast enough and got caught by the blast force. But, besides getting pushed away by the blast force, he was unharmed otherwise.

"Are you alright, Your Majesty?"

"I'm fine."

Commander Jhoru quickly checked on Emperor Varan and felt relieved after confirming his condition.

Meanwhile, fire and smoke rose from the pits under the heavy magic barrage, mixing with the black clouds of darkness. There didn't seem to be a spot within the dark clouds left intact – the draconic fire barrage laid waste to the land hidden within.

Galen's figure was repeatedly deformed and blown apart, but it didn't wipe away his cold, ridiculing smile.

Only his shadowy clone was struck. As for his real body, it was hidden elsewhere in the darkness.

"You fools. I've already told you that I am just a distraction. Why are you still here, targeting me? You must know that if you truly want to leave, this Blood Slaughter Domain will not stop any of you!" Galen's voice resounded from the darkness.

"Do you think we will believe you just because you said so? That would be true foolishness! How can a devil's lapdog like you not hold a key position in whatever scheme your master is cooking?" Kuvat retorted with contempt.

At the same time, Kuvat quickly summoned a pseudo-black hole with a powerful devouring force and fired it into Galen's region of darkness. In a short instance, the pseudo-black hole swallowed up everything in the area—regardless of whether they were dust, debris, light, or darkness.

In the blink of an eye, a dumbfounded Galen was stripped out of his hiding spot as he tried to resist getting pulled into the pseudo-black hole.

"I'm willing to bet that you are just trying to lure us away so you can buy some time to signal the next step of your master's grand scheme!" Kuvat added with confidence before barking, "Kill him!"

Emperor Varan and the dragons immediately locked onto Galen's figure and assaulted him from every angle.

There didn't seem to be the slightest opening for Galen to exploit. Yet, he somehow managed to slip through their concentrated attack by burrowing himself into his own shadow and re-emerging from someone else's shadow.

In that brief instant of relocation, Galen's entire physical body seemed to have been converted into a spiritual state.

"Sigh! This is why being too smart is not good for you, Foolish Lizard!"

Galen indirectly admitted his intention as he punctured a hole through the imperial soldier whom he appeared behind and drained all of his blood.

"Why must you force my hand? I was going to let you all live to witness the grand arrival of my master and his people. But now, you can all die and become his offerings!" Galen's gaze flickered with a cold light.

"Not good! Everyone, get away from there!" Emperor Varan quickly warned.

However, his warning came far too late. If a Peak Transcendent wanted the imperial soldiers to die, their lives were as good as gone without third-party interference.

Galen's flesh rapidly inflated with spiky surfaces before countless blood needles burst out of his body, shooting in every direction.

Kuvat and his peers hurriedly used their barrier magic to save as many lives as possible. However, thousands of imperial soldiers and several dozen imperial guards still lost their

Even a couple hundred Delarosan members got killed by the blood needle volley.

"No!" Emperor Varan cried, instantly filled with regret.

The killing power of Galen's blood needles was just too fearsome.

They were just too crowded within the Delarosa Household. He should have ordered everyone below Transcendent rank to evacuate the premises at the earliest chance they were given.

Alas, his desire to capture the Delarosans and extract their knowledge cost him dearly.

Nevertheless, Galen was not content as he prepared another killing spree after getting locked down by the dragons. However, his ability failed him just as he tried to escape through his shadows again.

Galen ended up smashing his head into the shadowy ground; the shadows in the area seemed to have been sealed.

"Do you think you can use the same move twice after I've seen it once, devilspawn?" Kuvat coolly spoke as he watched Galen's true body get bombarded by dozens of ballistic poison spells.

In a short instant, Galen was reduced to a bloody, wretched state.

He had suffered grievous injuries from the concentrated attack, and even his powerful regeneration failed to restore him quickly due to blood coagulation.

Galen coughed up chunks of coagulated blood. He glared at Kuvat venomously while his body was pinned to the ground with persisting poison arrows.

"Kekeke, I must admit I have greatly underestimated your kind," Galen chuckled sinisterly without the slightest concern over his life as he spoke, "However, my original intention has still been achieved."

"While it was still shorter than I had hoped, I should have bought sufficient time for the grand array to gather its energy. You should feel honored! It seems you will all get to witness my master's grand arrival after all!"

Galen suddenly drilled into his own stomach with his barely-recovered left hand and activated the hidden totem inside with a crushing motion.

Rumble...!

The entire surface of the Delarosa Household suddenly lit up with intensifying blood crimson light.

At the same time, all the spilled blood on the ground instantly vanished into the light before a powerful pillar of blood crimson light soared into the high heavens from Galen's location—or, more specifically, his stomach, where he hid his totem beacon.

Chapter 697: Ceremony of Great Cleansing

After the powerful, heaven-reaching pillar of blood-crimson light soared into the skies, Galen's Blood Slaughter Domain dispersed like the strong light had pierced through it, allowing the people outside to see the situation inside.

"What happened? What is going on with that red light? Why does it give me such a terrible premonition?"

Countless high-ranking warriors interrogated the fleeing soldiers and surrendered Delarosan members for answers.

"Please take me away from me, Lord! I'll do anything you want and answer anything you ask! Just take me anyway from this place, please!" a terrified Delarosan member pleaded.

"Oh?" Duke Gamliel glanced at the Delarosan member with interest and disdain. "Aren't you from the Delarosa Household? You're a little too quick to flee your master, aren't you? Where is your loyalty?"

"Loyalty? My loyalty lies with the Holy Mother, the giver of life and knowledge! What else am I supposed except flee if the Holy Son, the Holy Mother's Chosen One, had turned his back on her and served another Great Devil?" the Delarosan member replied with horror.

"The Holy Mother?" Duke Gamliel raised an eyebrow before demanding an answer, "And who is this Holy Mother you speak of?"

"The Holy Mother is the Giver of Life and Knowledge, the mother of all witches and witchcraft! Her Divinity is what the world knows as the Great Devil Hecate! However, Her Divinity is a good devil who looks after humans and views them like her children!" the Delarosan member explained with blind faith.

"A good devil? The only good devil is a dead one!" Duke Gamliel snickered with contempt before barking dismissively, "Men, take this boy away for further questioning later! He looks like he will provide some useful information!"

"Yes, my Lord!" several men answered.

At the same time, similar situations occurred throughout the vicinity of the Delarosa Household as people fled the territory.

...

Meanwhile, Kuvat's group and Emperor Varan's close retainers remained within the Delarosan Household. They did everything they could to destroy the source of soaring red light.

However, no matter what attack or spell they used, they couldn't get close to the totem beacon embedded within Galen's stomach. The intense blood-crimson light was in and of itself a barrier—one that was far more powerful than anyone could imagine.

"Dammit! How could this light barrier be so damn powerful?!" Emperor Varan cursed with urgency.

"It used the blood offering of several thousand lives as the fuel," Kuvat chuckled bitterly, shaking his head, "How can it not be powerful?"

The red light's main function wasn't meant to act as a barrier. However, it was more powerful than any barrier-type totem the Delarosa Household had revealed.

This was because of the quantity and quality of the blood sacrifice used to activate.

Blood sacrifices could grant power beyond one's imagination, depending on the quantity and quality of it.

That was also why it was usually considered taboo.

"We have failed the Supreme Leader," Fraegar sighed with regret and disappointment.

However, her regret and disappointment didn't come from her inability to stop Galen from activating the totem beacon; it was from failing to live up to the Supreme Leader's expectations.

Nevertheless, this wasn't something that could be blamed on their group.

The truth was that even if the Old Demon hadn't used the blood of thousands of lives as the offering, the Old Demon would have still been able to activate the totem beacon upon his death.

The blood potency of a Peak Transcendent would have achieved the same result, albeit a little weaker.

As such, no matter what they did, they were doomed to fail. The enemy had been scheming for a very long time and wouldn't leave any room for error; they were too meticulous.

...

As the pillar of blood-crimson light soared into the heavens, it was easily seen throughout the Great Ratholos Empire, let alone the Imperial Capital, the heart of its source.

As such, the Sacred Tirtha was definitely not an exception, given its relatively close distance.

"The first beacon has been lit! The Holy Son has sent his signal! Activate our second beacon at once! The Ceremony of Great Cleansing shall commence henceforth!" the Great Shaman Laemana quickly instructed.

Following her command, hundreds of Sacred Tirtha members immediately activated their fire-type totem powers on an enormous pit-like furnace located underground.

A shocking wealth of several million mana stones were quickly burned within the pit-like furnace, melting into liquid form. The liquid-state mana soon traveled into designated pipelines, spreading throughout the Sacred Tirtha's sacred ground, connected rivers, and even the Imperial Capital's sewage system.

As the entire Sacred Tirtha lit up with an eerie red light, Great Shaman Laemana, Ex-Great Shaman Laetitia, and everyone else within Sacred Tirtha suddenly felt weak and lethargic.

They immediately realized something was wrong.

"Something's not right... The Ceremony of Great Cleansing... Great Cleansing... Hahaha, so that's how it is... Even we are not excluded from the Great Cleansing...! You are too cruel, Father," Laeticia felt bitter as she was enlightened at the moment of her death.

Shortly after, she was turned into withered skin and bones, completely void of blood, along with Great Shaman Laemana and a hundred thousand other members within the Sacred Tirtha.

After the underground array received their blood offering, a heaven-reaching pillar of blood-crimson light also soared into the skies from the heart of the Sacred Tirtha.

However, that wasn't the end of it.

After the two pillars of blood-crimson light appeared, the blood-crimson light started to spread to connect with each other and create an even wider pillar of blood-crimson light.

Every living being caught within the blood-crimson light also became a blood offering to the grand array. Within a matter of minutes, countless lives perished in the red light.

Ten thousand... A hundred thousand... Several hundred thousand... A million...!

When the two pillars of blood-crimson light connected after fifteen minutes, the number of deaths reached a terrifying two million count!

Two million blood offerings! The generated power would be unimaginable!

Fortunately, thanks to Kuvat's fast thinking, he realized the danger early and withdrew from the red light with his peers. Even Emperor Varan and most forces gathered outside the Delarosa Household managed to retreat safely.

The veil of blood-crimson light didn't move very fast, but it wasn't slow either; there simply wasn't enough time to notify all the citizens.

As such, only the oblivious people living in the area of the blanketing blood crimson light became its victims.

If the grand array hadn't been sabotaged to a great extent, such a horrifying light would have covered the entire capital city. In that event, the death toll wouldn't have been as simple as a mere two million.

After all, the grand evaluation event was just around the corner. Thus, the Imperial Capital was in its most bustling period. The population during such a period definitely exceeded fifty million.

But even though the worst situation had been avoided, a death toll of two million was a disastrous loss in the history of humankind, let alone the Great Ratholos Empire.

On a hill outside the blood-crimson light-covered region, Emperor Varan knelt on the ground with a pale look, feeling a sense of inexplicable loss and defeat.

"This... is the worst day in human history since the period of the Holy War..."

Chapter 698: Dark Day

While Emperor Varan felt saddened by the unprecedented death toll, he also felt a little fortunate. Perhaps due to the Armstrong family's great destiny, the imperial palace did not get caught in the blood sacrificial zone.

That said, only his empress wife stayed in the imperial palace.

His daughters spent all their time at the Martial Hall, and the Armstrong family's branch members all moved to a place called Dragon Palace.

On the other hand, Bellor Ravesk of Duke Gamliel's faction and Lord Nuvemze of Duke Zohar's faction were not so fortunate. Their territories were all located in the blood sacrificial zone.

In other words, their entire families were wiped out—reduced to withered skins and bones.

"Arghhh—!!! Why did something like this happen? Why?!" Lord Nuvemze roared in anguish and sorrow as he lost everything. "What kind of heartless fiend would sacrifice so many lives!?"

"Cease your tears, Lord Nuvemze. You can grieve after you avenge your loss. This is the clear work of a devil... No human would do this..." Duke Zohar consoled with a pale look, feeling his scalps tingle with cold shivers.

In mere minutes, such a large piece of the Imperial Capital was reduced to a land of death.

Nevertheless, they have a bigger problem now.

...

Imperial Capital, Black Mountain

The enormous blood-crimson light zone had long attracted everyone's attention with its first appearance. The martial warriors gathered around the Black Mountain were no exception.

Crack...

Vaan's body moved slightly, and the shell of dry blood crumbled apart like fragile rocks, exposing his true figure underneath without any disguise. However, no one noticed him, nor did he pay them any attention – they were all looking toward the blood-crimson sky.

Ba-dump! Ba-dump!

Many warriors felt their hearts beating loud and erratically as they sensed unfathomable darkness and evil hidden within the blood-crimson sky.

Meanwhile, as blood energy continued to channel into the sky through the pillars of blood-crimson light, tremendous changes began to take place in the affected region.

The sun waned, the sky darkened, the white clouds spread, and the black clouds emerged from within, replacing the original white clouds.

On a sunny day, a fraction of the Imperial Capital was shrouded in the darkness of the night within mere moments. And from within that darkness, unbelievable sightings could be discovered.

The entire veil of blood-crimson light trembled, and a red moon appeared, illuminating the dark sky with its cascading, gloomy, crimson moonlight.

Soon, an ancient floating castle shrouded in clouds of black bats reflected on the other side of the crimson moonlight. It looked like a mere illusion, a trick on the eye. However, this mere illusion was only as thin as the veil of crimson moonlight existing between it and the rest of the world.

On the surface, cold winds blew, distorting space as sophisticated gothic-style homes briefly replaced the existing stone buildings in the Imperial Capital. Intermittent changes to the scenery continued like a flickering candlelight in the night – ghostly quiet, weak, and yet, people couldn't take their eyes off it.

At the same time, within this blood-sacrificial zone, the original thin traces of mana suddenly became aplenty and boundless like Gehenna itself—No, the boundless mana actually came from Gehenna.

Furthermore, the affected region became dominant with the Gehenna Laws!

Just when everyone thought and believed the intermittent changes of sceneries within the blood-sacrificial zone were fake, clouds of black bats suddenly flew out of the crimson veil.

Chaos quickly descended on the Imperial Capital as the black bats preyed on the helpless commoners. Terrified screams resounded wherever the clouds of black bats went, followed by trails of drained corpses in their wake.

"Vampiric Demon Bats! And there's so many of them!" a terrified man exclaimed as he fled in horror.

However, the terrified man didn't make it very far before a group of Vampiric Demon Bats reached him, only leaving after they turned him into a bloodless corpse.

"Draw your swords and steel your hearts, proud warriors of the Great Ratholos Empire! The darkest days of our nation have descended upon us! However, we will neither run nor go down without a fight!" Emperor Varan roared with his treasured sword raised.

"Don't let fear dull your blades and cloud your minds! Before you stand the greatest challenges in your lives! Can you hear it? The screams of our people? Now is the time when they need you most! If you don't have the courage, then find it!"

"Prove to me that you are truly proud warriors of this land! We will eradicate these blood-sucking fiends and save our people!!"

Following Emperor Varan's warcry, the warriors behind him roared at the top of their lungs and beat their chests in unison, letting their blood boil and numb their fears.

Swoosh!

Suddenly, Duke Zohar charged ahead of everyone else before turning his head back in laughter, "Hahaha! Brothers, I'll be going first! The glory of first kill will be mine!"

"Hahaha, do you think I will just let you out-perform me, Brother Zohar?! I don't give a damn about your glory of first kill! The glory of most kills will be mine!" Duke Gamliel followed without hesitation.

Seeing the two Dukes charged ahead fearlessly, the rest of their factions also charged after them.

Just half a day ago, they were still at odds with each other. But when duty called, they didn't hesitate to work together to overcome the greater threat.

"Death to the demons!" the incited warrior started roaring.

Meanwhile, Emperor Varan shook his head with a slight smile, feeling proud to be the emperor of such fearless warriors.

Shortly after, Emperor Varan turned to Kuvat's group.

"Venerable Dragons, that Old Villain still lives, and there is nothing I want to do more than to tear him apart. However, the city needs me. May I entrust the task of finishing him off to your group?"

"Naturally," Kuvat answered without hesitation, adding, "Our god tasked us to assist your empire in eliminating the Delarosa Household. How can we leave before we see its completion?"

"Thank you! If we live through this, I'll be sure to show you and your god my highest regard and gratitude!" Emperor Varan solemnly promised before departing with the rest of his men.

Chapter 699: Wyverns Arrive

After Emperor Varan departed for battle, Kuvat also turned to Sephira and the rest of the dragon reinforcements that came, albeit a bit late.

"I thank you all for coming to help. However, it would be best if you all assist the humans. The humans cannot help themselves; if we don't help them, their losses will be even greater," Kuvat mentioned before he stated resolutely, "I will deal with the Old Villain from the Delarosa Household."

"Will you be fine on your own, Kuvat? We had enough trouble dealing with him as a group..." Fraegar said with surprise.

"I will be fine, Fraegar. Thank you for your concern. The last round of attacks had dealt the Old Villain a serious blow. Even if he heals, his energy would be greatly consumed. Furthermore, I am slightly stronger after I advanced," Kuvat assured.

Fraegar, Sephira, and the other dragons gave Kuvat a hard stare before they quietly acquiesced to his request. Then, they took their leave one by one.

Nevertheless, Sephira briefly glanced back and left behind some words, "I don't care what happened between you and the Delarosa Household and your feelings about it, Kuvat."

"However, the Supreme Leader's will is absolute. If you fail again, I will be the first to condemn you. Keep that in mind," Sephira warned before catching up with the rest.

Kuvat lightly smiled, but he became even more determined to succeed.

"The Double Contractor and I are virtually equal in power. If I cannot overcome him, how can I hope to remain a proud dragon and stand tall in this world? If I fail here, I won't have the right to keep following the Supreme Leader. This is my trial!" Kuvat thought.

"Old Villain, wait for me. Your head is mine!"

...

The appearance of the enormous blood-crimson zone alarmed the entire Great Ratholos Empire, and the Red Wyvern Clan was no exception.

However, by the time the Wyvern Ancestor emerged from Red Wyvern Ridge with his clan members, the Vampiric Demon Bats of Gehenna were already preying on human lives.

Roar!

Looking at the tragic scene within the Imperial Capital, the Wyvern Ancestor immediately let out a furious, earth-shaking roar – powerful enough to paralyze the nearby clouds of Vampiric Demon Bats for a brief moment.

The Wyvern Ancestor was the guardian beast of the Great Ratholos Empire, duty-bound to protect its people and stability as per its agreement with an ancestor of the Armstrong family.

However, after it emerged from its seclusion, all the Wyvern Ancestor saw was death everywhere.

How could it not be angry?

"That roar... It's the Wyvern Ancestor! The Wyvern Ancestor has come to save us! Praise the Wyvern Ancestor—Arghh, n-no! Stop! Don't eat me—Ahhh!!!"

Before a young warrior could finish celebrating the Wyvern Ancestor's arrival, he was quickly drowned in a sea of bloodthirsty Vampiric Demon Bats. His death was more tragic than most; other corpses were at least left with their skewered layers of flesh, but only bones remained of him.

In this city, swarming with blood-sucking demons, the loudest ones were the easiest targets to track and prey upon.

"Go! Rip all these blood-craved fiends to pieces for me!" the Wyvern Ancestor roared in its natural language, as the wyverns did not understand human speech as well as it did.

After all, they had yet to live as long as the Wyvern Ancestor, who had lived for more than a thousand years and was easily the most ancient living beast on the lands of Pangea.

Nevertheless, after receiving the Wyvern Ancestor's command, the flock of red wyverns plunged into the clouds of Vampiric Demon Bats with full savagery.

The red wyverns did not use any special attack; they simply relied on their robust bodies to pulverize the fragile Vampiric Demon Bats with their heavy collisions, then used their sharp teeth and claws to tear apart the fleeing survivors.

Puff! Puff! Puff!

Bodies smashed, wings torn, and blood spewed.

The clouds of Vampiric Demon Bats terrorizing the skies of the Imperial Capital were slaughtered in large numbers and turned into rains of blood and chunks of flesh.

Shortly after decimating the largest groups of Vampiric Demon Bats in the sky, the red wyverns split off to look for their companion riders after hearing their summoning whistles.

"Wyvern Ancestor, congratulations on your breakthrough!"

Suddenly, Emperor Varan's surprised voice trickled over to the Wyvern Ancestor's ears, causing it to steer its head in his direction.

"Varan Lad! What the hell happened here?! How did you let the situation become this severe?!" the Wyvern Ancestor reprimanded.

Emperor Varan smiled bitterly before recounting the events to the Wyvern Ancestor in detail.

The scheme of the devils had been brewing in the Great Ratholos Empire for far too long that it couldn't be stopped; it was already a ticking time bomb waiting to erupt.

All they did was make it erupt earlier than planned in hopes of weakening it.

"To think such a thing happened..."

The Wyvern Ancestor was deeply shocked to learn of Galen's plan to summon the Vampire Ancestor and kin.

"Right, Wyvern Ancestor, you have superior observation and aerial advantage. What's the situation at the Sacred Tirtha?" Emperor Varan quickly inquired.

The Wyvern Ancestor briefly observed the Sacred Tirtha's location before snorting, "What kind of situation could there be at Sacred Tirtha? Everyone inside the red light region is dead. It's a completely dead zone!"

"They're all dead?!" Emperor Varan's eyes widened in shock.

"Right? After listening to your report, even this Ancient One was surprised to learn that so many foolish humans willingly sacrificed their lives for the demons," the Wyvern Ancestor mentioned with doubt and contempt, thinking humans were truly stupid.

However, Emperor Varan quickly frowned in thought. At the same time, he ward off the incoming Vampiric Demon Bats with his sword.

"That's not right. There were numerous signs suggesting the Sacred Tirtha worshipped the Great Devil Hecate. So why would they sacrifice themselves for the Great Devil Abaddon? Even the Delarosas were shocked by Galen's reveal..."

Emperor Varan contemplated for a moment before his eyes suddenly flashed with insight.

"That Old Demon Galen was far more heartless than I thought. He actually tricked everyone at the Sacred Tirtha into sacrificing themselves to the Great Devil Abaddon! Even his own family wasn't spared!"

Clap, clap, clap...

A round of applause suddenly alarmed Emperor Varan, causing him to turn around and locate the source.

"Who?!" Emperor Varan barked.

Chapter 700: Descent of Night Parade

Emperor Varan fixed his gaze on a dark corner filled with dozens of blood-red eyes staring back at him. They belonged to a group of Vampiric Demon Bats. However, this group did not blindly attack him like the rest of their kind.

For a moment, Emperor Varan thought he had seen wrong as the dozens of eyes merged into a single pair of blood-red eyes.

A few moments later, a humanoid male emerged from the dark corner, revealing his defining black hair, blood-red eyes, and pale skin. He was also dressed in a high-quality, silky black suit.

These were the clear traits of a vampire.

Furthermore, based on his aura and attire, the humanoid male appeared to be a notably high-ranking vampire.

The vampire displayed a seemingly harmless smile, but the battle-spirited pair of red eyes betrayed his intentions for a peaceful engagement.

"It seems I have finally caught your attention," the high-ranking vampire smiled as he spoke, "I wasn't sure how much longer I would have to wait before you notice my presence."

"I am someone who has always been interested in fighting strong people, and you look like the strongest person in this area. What do you think? Will you be my opponent?" the high-ranking vampire suggested with refined mannerisms.

The high-ranking vampire patiently waited for Emperor Varan's response when a Rank 4 Body Refiner suddenly launched a sneak attack from the side.

"I will be your opponent—!"

Poof!

The Rank 4 Body Refiner's roar abruptly ended after his head miraculously fell into the high-ranking vampire's grasp and popped with a slight squeeze.

The high-ranking vampire did not even do so much as spare the Rank 4 Body Refiner a glance. He simply raised his hand, and the Rank 4 Body Refiner lost control of his movements, falling right into his grasp before dying.

Emperor Varan took a deep breath before re-evaluating the high-ranking vampire's strength.

"Before that, I want to know who you are. Are you the Great Devil Abaddon?" Emperor Varan asked.

However, his question immediately threw the high-ranking vampire into a fit of laughter.

"Am I the Great Devil Abaddon, you ask...?!" the high-ranking vampire shook as he glanced at Emperor Varan with scorn. "You think too highly of yourself, human. Do you think you are worthy of challenging my master?! I am far beneath my master's strength, but being permitted to challenge me is already your greatest honor, you ignorant buffoon!"

"Alas, the fault lies with me for forgetting to introduce myself. Forgive my unsightly conduct. I shouldn't have insulted you and blamed your ignorance. Let us start over, shall we?"

The high-ranking vampire quickly calmed down before properly introducing himself, "This Noble One is the Noble Vampire known as Kazamir, the ninety-ninth demon in my master's, the Blood Ancestor's Night Parade."

Ninety-ninth demon!

Emperor Varan felt heavy-hearted, knowing there were at least ninety-eight other vampires as powerful or even stronger than Kazamir.

...

Meanwhile, other members of the Blood Ancestor's Night Parade also made their trips around the Imperial Capital, looking for suitable opponents to test their strengths.

The Wyvern Ancestor and the dragon elites were no exceptions, as they found themselves before refined-looking vampires of unknown strengths.

None of these demons of the Night Parade seemed interested in feasting on blood as they had no such urges; they were only interested in doing battle after entering a new world.

"Good day to you, Venerable Dragon. I am the Seventy-Third Seated Demon in the Blood Ancestor's Night Parade, the Noble Vampire Velorina," a pretty vampire elegantly introduced herself in front of Fraegar before revealing a hint of envy.

"You are the most beautiful dragon I have ever laid eyes upon. Do you think your pretty scales will make good garments for me? I feel like a dragon-scale battle dress would look very dazzling on me."

Fraegar immediately frowned before cussing, "Bitch!"

...

While one-third of the Night Parade descended upon the Imperial Capital, the remaining two-thirds visited the Black Mountain alone. Moreover, it was the strongest two-thirds of the Night Parade.

It seemed the Black Mountain possessed something rather special or enticing that attracted most of the Night Parade to it.

However, the sixty-six members of the Night Parade weren't the first to be drawn to the Black Mountain. Several hundred thousand Vampiric Demon Bats flocked to the Black Mountain before them.

It was only after noticing the odd behaviors of the Vampiric Demon Bats that the sixty-six members of the Night Parade paid attention to the Black Mountain and visited it.

Of course, Vaan knew exactly what attracted all of them – his unique aura.

The martial warriors at the foot of the Black Mountain were shocked when sixty-six high-ranking vampires showed up next to them, each with a level of strength most likely beyond the Transcendent rank, according to their unstable auras.

"D-Demigod-rank demons...!"

A senior martial warrior was horrified after identifying the semi-divine auras found within each of the high-ranking vampires.

Although he couldn't be completely certain as he had never encountered Demigods before, he was confident that their auras surpassed most Transcendents.

The crowd of martial warriors at the foot of the Black Mountain quickly panicked with alarm when the powerful vampires appeared. But after some time, astonishment replaced their fears.

None of the Demigod-rank vampires attacked them as if they hadn't noticed them—No, they simply viewed them as nonentities.

"Ahhh! Everyone, look! Vanderlin Pendragon is live! Hahaha, I knew he was alive... Huh? Wait a minute..." Berucha's joyful voice resounded at the foot of the mountain before it was mixed with confusion and doubt.

At the same time, many more martial warriors finally noticed Vaan and got caught off guard by his appearance.

Only one person had ever reached the top of the Black Mountain – Vanderlin Pendragon. Everyone already knew about his appearance. As such, they were astonished to find an unfamiliar face up there.

Furthermore, the unfamiliar face wore the most magnificent attire he had ever seen – it seemed to exude the aura of true dragons.

"That's Vanderlin Pendragon? That's not how he looks like..." a junior martial warrior mentioned with doubt before softly muttering, "But why do I feel like this kind of face and aura perfectly matches his name?"

"Perhaps this is Sir Pendragon's true appearance..." a senior martial warrior's eyes lit up before he loudly exclaimed, "Yes, that must be it! This is how Sir Pendragon should look! Truly a dragon among men!"

In these precarious, dark times, everyone's hearts were suddenly ignited with hope and anticipation.

Their living legend versus the Demigod-rank vampires – Who would win?