

Witch 1481

Chapter 1481: Landing on the Island For Battle Begins

9:20 a.m. on the fifth day of the beginning of the battle.

Thick fog rose up around the floating island suddenly, and the originally clear skies suddenly turned dark. The visibility dropped to about dozens of meters.

It's coming!

Everyone at headquarters realized that they were passing the "Illusion Boundary" mentioned by Hackzord. Although it was already the third day since they began taking action, the true battle was ushered in at this moment!

The massive room was silent. Everyone's eyes were staring at the screen intently, their bodies standing straight and tense. Even Sylvie's Magic Eyes were unable to see through the layers of obstruction. This meant that they were faced with an unknown region up ahead. Regardless of what fate had in stall for them, they could only wait till the final moment to know.

To the higher-ups of the First Army who were accustomed to having full information and preparation, the unease they felt was something they had not experienced in a very long time.

Suddenly, a faint crow's caw sounded in everyone's ears.

Ferlin and company exchanged looks.

They were above the sea, so how could there be a crow?

But it wasn't an auditory hallucination. Soon, more sounds were added into the mix. They overlapped each other, making everyone unsure of what kind of echo it was or if they had encountered a massive flock of crows.

In minutes, the cawing blended into a whole and was indistinguishable from one other. It also became louder.

A staff member suddenly had a change in expression. "Those are the cries of sea ghosts!"

"Sea ghosts?" someone asked. "The legendary creatures?"

(B oxnovel.c om) "No, they aren't legends! I once worked at Festive Harbor. When the old seamen there talk about sea ghosts, they would describe them as crows of the sea!"

"Humph, stop making a fuss." Hackzord had his arms crossed. "This is just the lowest constructs of the Sky-sea Realm. Their only advantage is their numbers. They are most suitable for filling the battlefield. In a while, you will see what kind of enemy my race has always been battling—"

As Sky Lord was speaking, the thickness of the fog suddenly thinned. The runway on the floating island rapidly became visible to the naked eye, and following that, the sky and sea which were further into the

distance. The sky remained dark, but it looked normal at the very least. However, the scene over the sea was completely different.

Everyone who saw the scene on the screen could not help but tremble.

It was definitely an unforgettable sight.

Countless sea ghosts propped up their heads over the sea as they cawed at the floating island. It was as though dense black pores had bloomed on the sea surface. Just sweeping across it with one's eyes left one's scalp tingling. The bodies which were floating beneath the water made the seawater appear a strange black color. If a description was necessary, they appeared like a nest of tadpoles in a puddle, but filling a puddle wasn't anything to marvel about. To dye the entire sea black was truly considered rare.

And the rumored Bottomless Land appeared in front of the floating island. Its size was similar to Sleeping Island. There were no signs of lakes on it, but it appeared luxuriantly green. It didn't look anything like an isolated island in the ocean.

Soon, out of the black sea ghosts surfaced the figures of Nest Mothers. They opened the rib bones on their backs and spewed out blobs of green, sticky liquid skyward! Instantly, it appeared as though toxic rain was striking the bottom of the floating island. If the humans' vanguard was not the North Slope Mine, but a regular fleet, the outcome was obvious.

"A total of 1,524." Eleanor's voice suddenly entered everyone's mind.

"Are you referring to..." Iron Axe said in surprise.

"The number of Acid Nest Mothers." She used her usual languid voice in a reply. *"That's not more than the shells we have."*

Just as she said that, a series of salvos sounded from the bottom of the floating island!

The first to launch a counterattack was Eleanor.

A 152mm Longsong Cannon shot out a shell and, after flying nearly a thousand meters, it accurately plunged into the body of a Nest Mother. After the shell tore through the organs, it exploded, blasting the Nest Mother into two! Meanwhile, the sea ghosts around it were also implicated by the explosion. The flying shells left a dense array of splashes across the sea, but this time, it was no longer black but a ghostly blue due to the blood.

In half a month, the engineering team's greatest modification to the floating island was the addition of a series of cannons affixed to the bottom. It was equipped with a full array of weaponry, going from 20mm autocannons to the biggest Longsong Cannons. After all, the Sky-sea Realm's main advantage was in the sea. Without the need for anti-air defenses, increasing the bottom's firepower was naturally the First Army's top priority.

At that moment, the floating island was an aerial battleship, and one that was equipped with a fire control processing machine.

Under Eleanor's control, even more of the autocannon turrets joined in the shooting. Instantly, the area beneath the island turned into a land of death where iron met flesh!

The salvo and the sweeping of the machine guns created a symphony that drowned out the sea ghosts' wails.

Although Hackzord maintained his composure, his expression had unknowingly turned complicated. Clearly, he had also realized that when the legacies of various races were combined together, it would generate astonishing effects.

"Get the Aerial Knights to prepare for take off," Tilly picked up a transmitter and said.

According to the plan, the Aerial Knights were not in charge of being the decisive force in the operation. They were to be split into dozens of squadrons and circle above the Bottomless Land for prolonged periods of time. They would cut off any support and attack the enemy's main forces, so as to reduce the pressure on the ground forces. These were all missions that the Aerial Knights had to shoulder. They had to take full advantage of the Sky-sea Realm's weakest characteristic.

Moments later, biplanes filled with fuel rolled out of the hangar and got into position.

At 10:40 a.m., Eleanor steered the floating island into the island's confines. The number of monsters that had been attracted by this colossal object was uncountable. They trampled over the dismembered corpses of their own kind, swarming towards the floating island, completely unfazed that they were unable to deal any damage to the floating island.

Of course, this also had to do with Eleanor deliberately lowering their altitude to entice the enemy into attempting to climb up the island. However, with the machine guns' sweeping fire, breaking through the net of destruction was not something easily achievable.

Compared to the explosive western front, the other places appeared a lot more quiet. Clearly, the approaching floating fortress had attracted most of the enemy's attention.

"Let's begin," Anna turned her head to Hackzord and said.

The latter snapped his fingers and vanished from the headquarters.

Meanwhile, Primal Chaos, who had been convinced by Silent Disaster and had no choice but to entrench himself at the top of the bridge, released his powers. Through the augmentation of the Infinite Sigil, the magic power that allowed for sight swept across the sky above the island.

Through the screen, the headquarters in headquarters clearly saw that what appeared to be empty ground was filled with blade beasts. Their distorted outlines slowly took form, as though they were being pulled out of their hiding spots.

The next moment, Sky Lord appeared at the boundary of the Bottomless Land.

He looked up to where the sinkhole was. Even without taking out the five-colored magic stone, he could recall the beautiful sight he had seen when he first arrived.

"Fate as determined by God?"

Perhaps from the moment he witnessed the magic glow gathered here, the ending of the Battle of Divine Will had stopped marching towards eternity. This day was inevitable. But when this moment really came, he realized that the feeling of allying with humans wasn't that bad.

Hackzord sneered as he waved his hand, pulling open a massive Distortion Door!

Chapter 1482: Pincer Attack from the Air and Ground

“This is Sixth Battalion reporting, we are heading in the direction of eleven o’ clock!”

“Third Battalion has occupied the one o’ clock position!”

“We are sensing a large magic power source approaching; we have to inform the Aerial Knights to demarcate the signal and intercept it!”

“This is Lightning, roger that.”

“Tanks 19 and 20 have engaged the enemies, target, Blade beasts!”

Following the entrance of the ground troops, the command center immediately became rowdy as correspondents responsible for receiving information had to reclassify them and hand them over to the General Staff members, who would in turn send the information back to the sand table, so as to allow the strategists to make judgment.

At present, the map had the additional of dozens of red flags and square pieces that represented different units of the First Army; for example, the infantry, artillery, and armor units. From the general situation, the plan had made smooth preliminary progress, the red labels were starting to gradually spread out from the center of the Bottomless Land.

The Sky-sea Realm had obviously sensed the sudden appearance of the troops, with a majority of the monsters moving to new targets and towards the First Army. But against the encampments that quickly took form, the sporadic attacks ended as nothing but an exercise for the monsters to end their own lives.

Through the Distortion Door, the troops moved into the isolated island in an endless stream. According to the plan drawn up, the operation would quickly fast-forward to the searching phase.

This was the part that had the most uncertainty—No one knew where the Guardian was, how he or she would appear, or whether or not the Guardian would open the path to the Realm of Mind.

“I will hand over command to you guys.” Anna turned to Iron Axe and Edith.

“Must you do this yourself?” Wendy’s expression was of worry and reluctance.

“We already agreed on this.” She did not speak aloud, yet her voice remained firm. “I am not good at leading soldiers in battle and am of no help here. Furthermore, the Guardian’s appearance might differ from person to person, if we continue staying in the air, we might miss the opportunity of meeting the Guardian.”

“Let her go, I’ll take care of her.” Nightingale had already changed into her combat clothes, not only with the pistol that Roland had gifted her, but with a semi-automatic rifle and a sword on her back.

Wendy hugged Anna. “Come back safe, Your Majesty.”

“Yes, I will,” the latter replied earnestly, then turned to Phyllis. “Are the God’s Punishment Witches ready?”

Phyllis nodded. “Everyone’s ready.”

“Very good, let us go!” Anna walked out of the command center without hesitation.

...

“This is a gift from Malt.”

“Thank you.” Danny accepted the round and loaded it into the chamber, then shot the head of a sea ghost that approached.

As a wandering unit on the battlefield, the elite sharpshooters were free to move around and choose their own battles. Just as before, he chose the most dangerous periphery region, following behind the steel war machines that pushed forward.

These regions did not have machine guns or cannons for coordinated and suppressive fires; thus, the pressure from the enemies were the highest. He had long noticed that although the tanks of the First Army were imposing, their lack of protection at the flanks and rear, especially with all the different steles that stood erected around them prevented the people inside the vehicles to notice any approaching enemies.

This sort of battlefield was specially designed for him.

“Pay attention to the big guy a hundred and fifty meters to your right.”

“Understand.”

Danny poked out from behind a stele and noticed a medium-sized blade beasts stealthily sneaking and detouring around a tank with the intent of an ambush from the back.

Although the monsters were not made out of metal, their ability to kill and flexibility were not to be underestimated, especially for the scythe-shaped blade at the front that was capable of piercing into the tank’s defense upon being filled with magic power.

He loaded a new bullet into the chamber and slowly raised the rifle up—but Danny did not aim for the target, and instead moved towards the sky. According to the war tactics manual’s description, blade beasts had their heads completely wrapped up in armor, preventing conventional bullets to be fatal to them. And before engaging in any attacks, blade beasts would always raise their guard against any potential threats around them, they were enemies that infantries were not recommended to fight alone. Thus, Danny had to wait for a better opportunity.

And that was the moment to sneak an attack on the enemy.

The blade beast did not sense Danny, who remained as still as a statue. It crept until it arrived at the optimal ambush position, spread its light wings, and suddenly pounced towards the tank!

Right at that moment, Danny squeezed the trigger.

With a loud gunshot, the bullet accurately struck its exposed forehead. The blade beast froze for a second as its entire body glided a few meters forward due to inertia before crashing heavily into the ground—but aside from its convulsions, it no longer posed any threat.

“You’re still so amazing.”

“Because you’re watching out for me.” Danny patted Malt’s head. While searching for his next target, he suddenly realized that more than ten sea ghosts were rushing over.

They came while I was focused on the blade beast...

“Qu.”

Danny pulled his partner behind him, then leaned against the stele and held his rifle up.

It was impossible to escape, but he wanted to know how many sea ghosts he could kill.

But right at this moment, an unbelievable scene occurred right before his eyes. The sea ghosts did not pounce and rip him into shreds, but instead started biting each other! The ground was instantly filled with the pungent stench of blood. When the last sea ghost fell, not a single body was left intact.

Soon after, a platoon walked over from their hiding spot—although they were dressed in First Army uniforms, they looked distinctively different.

They were Mojin’s troops that came from the south.

“Marksman?” The soldier in the lead stole a glance at his weapon and badge. “Why are you out here alone? Where’s your protection?”

“Farry—” Another soldier pulled on the former’s sleeves and spoke with what looked like an apparent embarrassment. “If you don’t mind, you can travel with us for now.”

“I’m not acting alone, but I have to thank you guys.” Danny realized that the warrior named Farry was not an ordinary person. “I hope that I can continue moving freely—”

“BOOM!”

The tank unit in front suddenly unleashed a series of salvos.

Everyone turned their heads and saw more than ten hideous Nest Mothers appearing along the horizon. They were escorted by a group of blade beasts that went against the cannons as they crawled forward. The blade beasts had exposed the underneath of their opened ribs, revealing what seemed like internal organs.

“Those are venomous Nest Mothers!” Farry frowned and waved an arm. “Quick, seek protection! Get those anti-demon rocket-propelled grenades here!”

Those were targets that ordinary weapons couldn’t handle.

The tanks started to separate and reverse in a unique order.

At this time, the screams of the Aerial Knights came from above—

A few biplanes swooped down and unleashed their bombs on the Nest Mothers, instantly transforming the land into a large flaming pillar! Under the intense explosion and blast, the raging flames corroded anything it touched and stuck onto the enemies tightly. The enemies screamed and roared, attempting to escape the sea of fire. Unfortunately, they were on land, where their mobility was slowed to the point of being comparable to worms. In a short moment, the Nest Mothers turned completely silent.

The troops burst into cheers and whistles.

Danny caught sight of one of the pilots as the planes flew at low altitudes, who had raised his thumb up, proud of what they had achieved.

Following that, the formation of the Fury of Heavens changed as the planes turned and carried out the pincer attack.

Chapter 1483: An Unexpected Encounter

...

“A large number of enemies are coming from the east again! Your Majesty Anna, how’s the situation on your side, coo?”

Upon hearing Maggie’s voice coming out from the Sigil of Listening again, Anna still felt the urgency of the situation even though Maggie had no intention to rush her.

With the passage of time, the number of troops the Sky-sea Realm pumped into the battle kept increasing. They swarmed over from every direction before crawling up Mist Island. They took the positions of the fallen and charged the First Army soldiers, completely undeterred by the corpses of their own kind laying their feet. The luxuriant grass from before no longer exist; it was replaced with a pungent scorched land filled with smoke. And in this low-lying terrain, the blue and black blood that flowed had turned into puddles.

The initial overwhelming advantage they’d had turned into a stalemate.

Faced against the violent siege from all angles, the First Army was unable to prevent losses. Even with the aerial support from Eleanor and the Aerial Knights, it was impossible for them to get every monster.

The blade beasts that had lost their ability to conceal themselves remained difficult enemies for the ordinary infantrymen, not to mention the mutated Nest Mothers which were capable of shooting acid sprays which could corrode steel and mountain-like Mountain Devourers.

The First Army were still able to preserve the front lines, repelling the Sky-sea Realm forces, but the risks and hazards were piling up at a speed visible to the naked eye. No one knew how much more of the Sky-sea Realm’s forces was hidden, and upon any potential breaks in the line, it could very well trigger a rupture. Maggie was reminding Anna that time was of the essence.

However, Anna and company were unable to find the Guardian.

“There isn’t anything in the inner region.” She sighed, but controlled her voice to make it as calm as possible. “We will be heading further in.”

“Understood, do your best, coo.”

“I think it’s time to retreat.” Hackzord suddenly spoke up. “Young lady, you and your race have performed so well that it has surprised me, being able to penetrate into enemy territory and sustaining to this point. It can be commended as a battle achievement. But persistence might not bring you reward; the only reason for the Guardian’s absence until now means that she’s no longer here.”

“Maybe it doesn’t wish to be implicated by the barrage of attacks and has sought a place to hide,” Nightingale retorted. “If we give up now, that’s the end to everything.”

“I’m warning you; although I have agreed to cooperate with you, I do not plan to die here,” Sky Lord said bluntly. “If the situation turns irredeemable, I will leave by myself. When that happens, the soldiers here will have no means of retreat. Are you sure you want to do this?” He turned and looked at Anna, who had her eyes fixated on him, but could not help but to add another line. “Of course... I will only do so as a last resort.”

“I will not force you to stay, nor am I capable of doing so,” Anna replied. “But I hope that you understand this point, the failure in our plan would mean our dead future. It might still take the Sky-sea Realm a while before they devour the entire world, but the majority of humanity will not see that day. But to your race that have extremely long life spans, you will have to face that future—Are you sure you want to live to see that day?”

“...” Hackzord was speechless.

“We are not at the limits yet.” At this point, Silent Disaster suddenly spoke up.

“What?”

“I have fought against humans, this isn’t their limit. If we are talking about those troops there, I’m sure they can last longer.” She extended her hand to her back and drew her Blackstone sword. “Besides, I haven’t done anything yet.”

“Take note, Your Majesty Anna! There is a group of Sky-sea Realm monsters approaching from your front.” At this moment, Sylvie’s warning came from the Sigil. “I have already informed the two closest armor units, but they are still engaged in battle. Reinforcements might take a while!”

“Have them care for themselves.” Nightingale stepped forward. “Leave this to us.”

“That’s right, we do not wish to lose to the monsters under such circumstances.” The God’s Punishment Witches drew their grapeshot guns as well.

Very quickly, a unit formed up of blade beasts and Nest Mothers appeared before everyone, with two gargantuan Mountain Devourers following behind.

Silent Disaster took the lead and charged.

Under her summoning, dark clouds suddenly gathered overhead, gold streams of light flickered and gathered, ultimately forming a thunderbolt that tore through the skies and smote the area around her!

This attack turned tens of monsters into ashes.

Nightingale followed tightly behind, utilizing the evolved lines to cover a few hundred meters. She appeared behind the front row of blade beasts, and before they were even able to react, bullets flew straight into their bodies.

She did not even bother about the outcome as she turned and continued to stride forward—unsure if it was her imagination, Nightingale felt that the Mist had turned much more amicable, as it would send out outlines of lines when she needed them. In seconds, she appeared before the Nest Mother.

This had been Nightingale’s target from the beginning.

Unlike the blade beasts or lower lifeforms, Nest Mothers were able to produce offspring with ease and formed the foundation of Sky-sea Realm’s strength. The death of one was able to greatly weaken the enemy’s strength.

And it was not her first encounter with one.

Any ordinary person would instantly feel defeated and helpless upon facing such a behemoth, but not her.

Nightingale easily ‘passed through’ the ribs and flesh that formed the surface layer, followed by the intestines, heart, and lungs before arriving at the enemy’s core—the eye. Although it was different from the Nest Mother which had devoured an Eye Demon, they had similar compositions. With regards to the bodies of Nest Mothers, the large eyeball hidden within the body was equivalent to the brain of humans.

She aimed her barrel straight into the eye of the enemy and pulled the trigger!

Even before the latter could use its tentacles to drive her away, the brain blossomed with blood. The Nest Mother lost its motor functions, turning incapable of driving magic power. With the lack of magic power to support its large body, it soon collapsed.

...

Anna stood in place and clenched her fists.

She was not as calm and steady as what everyone perceived her to be. She was just an ordinary girl from a tiny border town just five years ago, so how could she possibly remain cool and collected without batting an eyelid in the face of such a monstrosity? She had countless urges to retreat, but upon thinking of the possibility of Roland’s eternal coma, she suppressed her fear and clenched her fists as she told herself to persevere.

But now, Anna discovered that the fear in her had lessened greatly.

Everyone’s fighting form gradually turned fuzzy in her eyes. She was not the only one persevering—many others stood by her, overcoming hardships and obstacles, all for the same goal.

She once again understood the meaning behind this battle of destiny.

A preordained path was a type of destiny.

Being able to rise up and resist, so to escape the shackles was also another form of destiny.

The only difference was that the latter allowed them to write their own destinies.

Right at this moment, an extremely bright light exploded in the sea tens of kilometers away to the north—it expanded quickly and instantly turned the dusky sky to a clear blue!

That was the Kun Peng that had executed its task.

The Glory of the Sun rushed out within half a month was planned to reinforce the divide against the Sky-sea Realm, its explosion meant that another large wave of enemies approached from afar, and the most critical moment was about to arrive.

But Anna did not feel any unease.

She welcomed the rumble without taking a step back.

Suddenly, a girl appeared before Anna—dressed in pure white, her hair was blown up by the wind. She blocked the brilliant rays of the explosion behind her.

“Go back, this is not where all of you should be,” the girl said gently.

Chapter 1484: Revelation

The moment she spoke, the entire world seemed to quieten down.

Anna could even hear her heart beating.

She opened her mouth, but her voice didn’t seem to emit from her throat.

“But where else can we go?”

“...” The Guardian fell silent surprisingly.

“It appears you are also aware of the answer. Apart from this place, we have nowhere else to go.” Anna pumped herself up and carefully observed the Guardian. She looked identical to a human, and she spoke in standard Kingdom Language. With her sudden appearance, it was easy to guess her origins. “I’ve heard from Joan that you are trapped here. Have you never thought of leaving?”

“Miss Joan, is it...” The Guardian revealed a gentle smile. “It appears she has really brought the question back. But unfortunately, there is no true answer to the question.”

“But there are still people attempting to seek the answer, and she’s also one of your kind.”

“One of my kind?”

“I know you belong to the Realm of Mind—and there, there’s an Oracle named Lan who attempted to change everything,” Anna quickly explained her intent for being here. “Achieving the goal requires two conditions. One of them has been fulfilled, and I’ve come here with the person who can solve the second problem. All that’s left is to open the bridge of light and send him into the Realm of Mind—”

“I’m sorry. I do not know the Oracle you are talking about.” The Guardian shook her head and interrupted her. “In addition, to open the bridge, one has to insert a complete legacy into the

bottomless platform before the Origin of Magic can be activated, allowing the bridge of light to appear. You do know a lot, but I'm unable to help you."

"Wait!" Anna's expression finally changed as she hurriedly said, "Aren't you a receiver?"

"Yes, I am, but without the legacy, I'm helpless as well." She walked to Anna's side and gently touched her hair. "Leave this place, my child. Do it while you still have the time."

The Guardian's figure started fading away like she was about to disappear into thin air.

Anna reached out her hand in a bid to grab her, but she touched nothing.

"Finally, forget whatever you have heard—if a betraying Oracle really exists." When she fully dissipated, her soft murmur sounded in Anna's ears. "The Battle of Divine Will is an attempt to seek the answer. In such a long and vast answer-seeking process, there hasn't been a conclusion, so how can it be resolved by a person or two? Besides, if he really possesses such strength, he naturally doesn't need the bridge or key."

Is this... the outcome of persisting to the end...

Anna lowered her head to look at her empty palm, unable to stop herself from being rooted to the ground in shock.

What was she to do next?

...

Nightingale felt that her actions were becoming smoother.

It was as though something was different.

She couldn't exactly put it in words as to what the difference was, but she could sense the harmony within the Mist. The distorted lines in the past might have been usable by her, but they were like an extremely dangerous blade. She had to maintain intense focus to prevent herself from being injured.

But at that moment, this black-and-white world seemed docile like a lamb. It seemed to answer to her every request, and the process gave her a fully delightful experience.

In minutes, she had destroyed three Nest Mothers, but the enemies had failed to even touch the corner of her sleeves.

In terms of her battle accomplishments, even Silent Disaster, who was considered a Transcendent, didn't even perform as well as she did.

This pleased Nightingale.

The only thing that left her uncomfortable was the sticky liquid that clung onto her. She could avoid her opponents' sharp claws and tentacles, but she was unable to isolate herself from the putrid organs. This was also the cost of going deep into the Nest Mothers to strike at their weaknesses.

If it were Anna, she would have easily burnt these disgusting things clean, right?

With this in mind, she couldn't help but look towards where Anna was standing.

But at that instant, she instantly shuddered in fear.

She saw Anna facing the north in a motionless daze, as though something had fixed her in place. A few blade beasts were about to reach her from the direction of the sinkhole, and Phyllis had already clashed with one of them. Despite anxiously shouting at Anna, the latter didn't seem to hear her at all.

What's she doing?

From that angle, she should be able to clearly see Phyllis and the approaching enemies!

Nightingale turned around abruptly and completely ignored her pursuit of the Sky-sea Realm monsters. She rushed towards Anna as quickly as she could.

However, a blade beast had already opened the thin wings on its back!

Darn it, I won't make it in time—

At that instant, she saw a white line clinging to the ground appear. It went from her feet all the way to Anna. It was likely a fissure in the ground, and although it was an outline that existed in the natural world, they were not shown by her abilities due to the overly complex and minute structures.

If the outline of every slab of mud or every few beads of sand would appear, it would be useless for her to act on it—even if she focused fully.

As for selectively combining a tiny fissure together and labeling it with a pure white line, this was Nightingale's first.

It looked like a bright guide, and she subconsciously reached out her hand to grab at it before pulling upwards with force!

The magic power within her instantly poured out as the Mist world responded to her will—the line rose up suddenly, splitting everything in front of her into two.

On one side stood Anna with everything remaining the same. However, on the other side, the ground had been elevated high into the sky, forming a height difference of nearly a meter.

That wasn't just a simple terrain transformation. In an instant, the blade beast which had pounced forward had been sliced apart. Its front half slid in midair while its back half continued rising. It was as though the two parts of the body weren't on the same plane!

The enemy which was uniformly split apart plummeted to the ground, landing not far from Anna. The sliced edges of their bodies were as flat as a mirror.

Meanwhile, Nightingale felt extreme fatigue overwhelm her. It made her find it difficult to even stand stably. It was a symptom of expending her magic power. Clearly, the series of changes that just happened was not a simple demonstration of her ability.

However, she was no longer considering any of those.

Anna still stood there in a daze, as though everything that was happening around her didn't involve her.

Nightingale gritted her teeth and walked to her back with an exhausted body. She grabbed her shoulders and turned her around.

What are you doing!? Everyone is fighting to fulfill your goal. Yet, you easily place yourself in danger. Are you trying to make all the efforts put in by others to be in vain? Nightingale wanted to berate her loudly when she stopped those words from coming out. She knew Anna, better than even Roland did. Anna would never give up until the final moment. There was probably only one reason why she would appear in a daze—she had already found the Guardian and received a negative response.

The tirade she was planning for instantly vanished. To shoulder such tremendous pressure without asking for anything in return required immense courage for her to stand here.

“You met the Guardian?” Nightingale asked softly.

“Yeah.” Anna nodded slowly.

As expected.

Looking at her dazed expression, she immediately felt pangs of sorrow and grief. Despite all the work everyone had put in, they had ultimately failed to reverse their preordained destinies.

She could not help but gently pull her into an embrace.

“It’s fine. It’s fine even if we fail. We will accompany you to the end.”

“Fail? Why do you say that?” Anna’s reaction exceeded her expectations.

“Uh...” Nightingale was momentarily left shocked. “Did the Guardian agree to your request?”

“No, she rejected me. Without the legacy, the Bottomless Land will not open. Even she is helpless against that.” Anna shook her head.

“Then why do you—”

“But she gave me a revelation.” Anna looked up, her insipid eyes now glowing. “Be it Oracles or the Guardian, they are unable to violate the laws set by God. But if one really has the strength to change everything, one can reach the other end of the bridge even without their help!”

Chapter 1485: "Jump"

“...” *So that’s why she was in a daze. Was she pondering over this question?* Nightingale touched her beating chest, and retracted her hand in a rather peeved manner before flicking Anna’s forehead. “Next time, please find a safe place to do the thinking, alright? So, what’s your conclusion? Please explain it in the simplest of words.”

By this point in time, Phyllis and company had rushed over. Seeing that the both of them were fine, everyone heaved a sigh of relief.

Anna was feeling a little unconfident as she held her forehead and whispered, “Jump down.”

Nightingale was taken aback. After making sure that she hadn't heard wrong, she sighed. "I take that back; it's best you explain in detail what happened from the beginning to the end."

"Yes..." She turned to look in the direction of the Bottomless Land. "In fact, it's not difficult to explain. Since the Oracles and Guardian come from the Realm of Mind, it's impossible that Lan doesn't know the rule of requiring a legacy as a key. Regardless of how much truth or fallacy is contained in her words, it's quite unlikely she would forget the most basic problem after painstakingly putting all of this in motion.

"That seems to make sense." Nightingale thought and said, "So do you think Roland himself is able to open the column of light that leads to heaven?"

"No, the column of light probably doesn't lead us to where we would like to go." Anna shook her head. "Only the victor of the Battle of Divine Will would pass through that bridge to reach the other end. Besides, we aren't victors, nor do we have other legacy shards. Similarly, Lan had never mentioned this from the beginning. Furthermore, retrieving the legacy shards of other races to end the Battle of Divine Will is in itself contradictory. If it's a critical step in actualizing the plan, wouldn't it appear too illogical?"

"Then... where shall we go?" Nightingale realized that she was unable to keep up with Anna's train of thought.

"*The truth is always what you understand.*" Anna repeated Lan's original words. "If she had predicted that God would stop her from divulging critical information, then the scenes in the astrolabe would be suspect. Now, thinking back to it, which scene left the greatest impression on you?"

"Uh... something about gravity?"

"That's right. In the second scene Roland saw, the core that forms this world should be located in the middle of the planet. Therefore, we should be heading down instead of up. The Bottomless Land appears unreachable, but don't forget—" Anna paused having said that. "*Gravity is no longer the force which is most deserving of reverence in this world.*"

"Wait!" Phyllis spent quite a while before realizing what Anna meant by "jump down."

"Are you sure? That's too risky! If it's safe to jump, there should have been people who have reached the bottom. You have also seen the murals left behind by the Radiation People. They had even built towers and staircases, but from the replay of the scenes, they quickly gave up on similar attempts. It tells us that it's not a workable solution!"

"Being able to go down and up are two completely different matters." Anna shook her head. "This is probably what the Guardian truly means by "the person who has the strength." Heading down doesn't require any keys, but if we are unable to activate the bridge of light, we might never be able to return to the ground."

"There is no limit heading down, while heading up requires the bridge that leads to heaven..."

"That's right. As to the question of how entry to the Bottomless Land is gained, I had thought of several possibilities prior to this," she continued. "And the fact is that only until I spoke with the Guardian was I able to confirm a point. Or perhaps, this is the only way to explain why Lan never mentioned of a Guardian. It's because what Roland needs to do has nothing to do with a Guardian from the very beginning!"

“So you plan on throwing Roland down the sinkhole?” Sky Lord revealed a look of surprise.

“No, I will accompany him,” Anna said categorically. “The retreat will be handed to all of you. There’s no need to stay here. Return to the floating island as quickly as possible.”

There was an instant silence. Although no one was willing to abandon Anna, everyone knew her character. Once she had decided on something, even His Majesty was unable to change it.

Seeing everyone silent, Hackzord knew the answer. He nodded and opened a teleportation door above the sinkhole. “Young lady, your performance is enough to prove the extraordinariness of a race. Even in failure, there is still glory in it.”

Anna conjured Blackfire to raise up the unconscious Roland and walked into the door.

And the next moment, Nightingale vanished from her spot.

When everyone realized what was happening, it was already too late to stop her—

The last person to walk towards the Distortion Door was Silent Disaster.

“What, you are going with them?” Hackzord said with a frown.

“I’ve said it before. When they head to the Bottomless Land, I will accompany them,” Serakkas said without turning her head as she crossed through the door, “regardless of where it is.”

...

When the light returned to silence and darkness occupied everything, Roland heard a familiar voice in his ears.

“Where people come from and where they head to has always been a profound and interesting question.”

He turned his head and saw a gray, hazy figure. A faint light was coruscating in its interior, and it was the only “beacon” in the space he was in.

“It has been discussed for ten thousand years, and each generation has a completely different answer. But regardless of the answer, it’s filled with wisdom. It will lead them towards continuous progress so as to probe the unknown.”

“But after ten thousand years, this question suddenly changed, turning meaningless. In the tens of thousands of years that followed, no one cared about where they came from or where they were going... because the answer is clear. Vanishing is the eternal point of refuge.”

It let out a sigh.

“This world wasn’t specially prepared for life.”

“From the moment it appeared six quadrillion years ago, the stars have entered a stage of decline, burning to the end to become dwarf stars or black holes. The universe would turn a swath of blacknesses.”

“Under the guidance of gravity, dwarf stars might reignite from collisions to become new stars again, but that is merely their final brilliance, just like a rare oasis in a desert.”

“A powerful civilization occupies a lit oasis, while other civilizations rely on the aging dwarf stars to survive, until the large sliver of energy is drained dry. This would also be the scene after two octillion years.

“Gravity will become the only ruler of the world. The dead stars will continuously be absorbed into black holes and the immense amount of radiation will allow them to produce the most blinding light, even brighter than the stars. But that would be the only possible source of energy at that time.”

The gray figure’s voice gradually turned heavy.

“Even further into the future, at ten decillion years, the dwarf stars would evaporate, and the universe would no longer have any material planets or matter. Energy would be uniformly spread across every corner of the universe, and every spot in the universe would be dead. Darkness, coldness, and emptiness would be its everything. Yet, compared to the age of the universe, it would be equivalent to a newborn.

“In what follows, the universe will go through even longer adolescence, adulthood, and its advanced years. But that period of time would be meaningless because there is no life involved in it. Our existence is but an extremely brief instant, a manifestation of an anomaly, the outcome of a correction the universe needs.”

The light within its body gradually darkened and weakened.

“... We won’t be able to go anywhere.”

Chapter 1486: Project Door

“But you do not wish to head towards such an end.”

Suddenly, another voice sounded, and two blobs of golden light appeared simultaneously—they looked like eyes.

“Life... has a common flaw. The more ahead it is, the more they believe themselves to be extraordinary.” The faint glow inside the gray figure stopped coruscating and turned stable. “People stop asking about where they are heading in the future, but what needs to be done to go someplace—it’s no longer a question filled with a myriad of possibilities, but a goal.

“Binding this world together is gravity. Civilization can continue only with it, but it also becomes the most fundamental law of the universe, limiting other possibilities from happening. After dwarf stars evaporate, smaller black holes will be swallowed by bigger black holes. The latter’s size will be on the order of galaxy clusters. They would be evenly spread across every corner of the universe. Under gravity’s influence, they would form an equilibrium. Do you know what it looks like?

“A bunch of tiny balls pressing down on a table cloth,” the gray figure answered its own question.*

*“They will restrain each other, and be of no use towards the universe’s accelerating expansion, until it evaporates by itself into nothingness. And when that happens, entropy would reach a peak, and the universe would turn silent and stable. There would not be any change, and to it, that instant will be when it reaches adulthood. But that isn’t the outcome we wish to see.**

“That’s right. Our existence is nothing to the universe, like a drop in the ocean. Even without life, the universe remains the universe. Or it can be said that our existence itself is a fluke. But since we have appeared, we are destined not to stay silent. Regardless of how soft we are, we have to produce a shout that belongs to us!”

They gray figure lit up again.

“Just like how we escape gravity, to leap from the ground to the skies, this time, we will escape our cages once again, to head to brand new territories.”

“And your method is to use gravity.” The voice of the eyes was extremely staid, without any perturbations from hearing what the other had said.

“That’s right. Gravity will make depress space, and this is the only chance. When the balls on the table cloth are gathered at one point, and not allowed to naturally distribute themselves, gravity will definitely bring about a different kind of change—it will conflict with entropy via an artificial form of order, which is also a unique mark of life!

“When this bit of gravity becomes stronger, the distortion of the surrounding space will gradually increase, just like how the tiny balls pressing down on the table cloth are—but it will not increase without end. Once it exceeds a certain threshold, either the balls will become a new singularity and explode, or... an opening will be torn through the universe.”

When this was said, Roland felt like he was hearing a heavy thud of a drum. That was the sound of the universe being drummed. Extreme distorted space when penetrated would result in a violent springback, and the immense force that resulted was sufficient to create a gravitational wave that would shake the world.

“This opening will be a new lease of life. It will be connected to a region beyond the universe. No one knows what’s there, but at least, the dead, silent equilibrium would no longer exist. Energy would also continue flowing for extended periods of time.

“That... is the path we choose.

“And today—

“Is the day when life will take that brand new stride!”

Once the gray figure finished speaking, light suddenly beamed out of its body, illuminating the entire space, revealing stars, galaxies, and nebulae. The darkness instantly turned into a rich, colorful, and brilliant scene.

Then, Roland saw an even more incredible scene.

Amid this countless starry space were rows of armadas—their shapes and sizes were all different. Some were even bigger than the stars. These artificial objects were arranged in a matrix, nearly reaching to the ends of his vision.

As he took in this magnificent scene, he felt an indescribable sense of shock.

Without needing more words to describe them, these armadas that were neatly lined up were a form of order by themselves—a representation of entropy decrease. Only lifeforms could violate the universe's fundamentals, to challenge the world with bodies of Red Mist.

Or it should be said that to live was a defiance of the heavens!

"176,425 civilizations came to a unanimous agreement, to complete this historically unprecedented program. We will move more than a trillion galaxies, gathering ten-thousandth of the universe's matter together to create an artificial gravity fissure. Upon success, the world will proceed towards a complete change. And this program is known as the Project Door!"

"This plan exists risks," *warned the eyes.

"On the one hand, there is risk, and on the other hand, there is an eternal silence of hopelessness. With such choices, is there a need to consider?" *The gray figure's light was gentle and firm. *"I've said that life always thinks of itself as extraordinary. But this alone isn't enough to complete Project Door. It needs someone who can oversee the entire situation to move around resources and allocate tasks. And this will remain the same even after billions of years. I need your help to achieve this goal."*

"Of course." The eyes blinked. *"That is the purpose for my existence."*

...

The fall fell extremely long.

It was so long that Anna even began to doubt her judgment.

The sky above had already vanished. Even if she ignited sparks of fire at her fingertips, she was still unable to see beyond the endless darkness.

The Bottomless Land's depth had exceeded her imagination.

She even believed that she was traveling right through the core of the earth.

The tremendous speed made her hear nothing but the sound of wind.

If she had made a wrong guess, she would probably be reduced to a pancake the instant she hit the ground.

The only good thing about this was that there was no pain throughout the process. Everything would be over before she could even react.

With this in mind, Anna could not help but hug Roland even tighter.

After an unknown period of time, she suddenly felt the flow of air brushing against her cheeks weaken.

This change instantly jolted her!

After a few more minutes, the "abyss" below transmitted a faint light. But soon, she determined that she wasn't mistaken. The light was becoming brighter as the distance narrowed.

And it was at this moment that she felt like she had fallen into a thick layer of the atmosphere. Her plummeting speed began reducing to the point of causing her to feel dizzy.

And when Anna's feet landed, her speed returned to the instant when she had just made the jump. She nearly didn't experience much of an impact.

"Tap." She heard a light sound behind her.

Anna turned towards the sound in surprise, only to discover it was Nightingale. "Why did you—"

"This time, I'm not hesitating or lagging behind." Nightingale patted her trousers and stood up. She said openly, "And how could I feel at ease letting you do it all alone?"

"Thud!" A third landing sound was heard. It was none other than Silent Disaster.

"Uh..." Nightingale immediately stood in front of Anna.

Anna was a lot more calm. "Don't worry. She's here for Nightmare Lord."

"I'm only abiding to our agreement," Serakkas said before she started looking around. "It looks like you got it right."

"Yes, this is the true body of the Realm of Mind." Anna nodded.

They were not standing on rock or mud, but a metallic surface. It looked extremely smooth and shiny, and it also emitted a very clean luster. It was solid and also translucent, looking nothing like an object of this world.

Chapter 1487: The Omniscient Custodian

Nightingale stooped down and used her fingers to touch the ground. Upon raising her hand, the two discovered that her fingertips were as clean as before without a speck of dust.

This was clearly not normal.

Provided that the repeated cycles of the Battle of Divine Will had never stopped, the Radiation People would not be the only victors to have attempted to explore the Bottomless Land. Be it a slip, a fall or an intentional drop, there should have been traces or evidence to such instances, much less mentioning natural falling rocks and sand.

For the place to remain sparkling clean throughout the years and months made it inevitable for people to think that there was someone responsible for cleaning the bottom of the sinkhole daily.

"Hey, Wendy, can you hear me?" Nightingale took out the Sigil of Listening and spoke into it, but received no response. "It doesn't work... It seems like we have exceeded the communicating distance."

"Even if we were close, it might not work." Serakkas spoke concisely. "If God doesn't want anyone to leave this place with secrets, it shouldn't be difficult for him to summon a barrier of some sort."

"Right..." She shrugged. "What do we do next?"

Anna stared at the belt of light on the ground for a long time, then spoke up. "Do you guys think that these 'lights' are leading us somewhere?"

They flickered in a regular pattern like ripples that resonated from their feet and disappeared into the darkness—aside from where they stood, the entire place remained unmoved, as though the entire place was in deep sleep.

Silent Disaster tried walking in another direction that resulted in the light following her, but it remained to flow towards its initial location.

“Yes it does.”

“God is inviting us... Interesting.” Nightingale held the rifle in hand. “We have to meet him then.”

The three followed the light and advanced slowly into the quiet cave. Approximately ten minutes later, a bright entrance appeared before them.

Compared to the darkness from before that prevented them from even seeing their fingers, the light and visibility undoubtedly made them relax—no one liked walking in complete darkness, to be unaware of the surroundings, and what lay ahead. Although they were underground, the light enabled them to view their surroundings.

“Is this truly the Realm of Mind...” Nightingale could not help but ask.

“Why do you say that?” Anna turned and asked.

“Because it is related to the consciousness.” She scratched her head. “Whether it’s called the Realm of Mind or Origin of Magic, it sounds like something intangible and illusory. But this place...”

“Feels like it was created.” Silent Disaster suddenly spoke up.

Be it the walls or the ground, the long passageway was completely unlike that of an ethereal illusion. They were solid and level with clear edges and protrusions which were pleasing to the eyes. At the same time, the translucent metals were able to release light voluntarily. Regardless of whether they were activated by footsteps or them applying pressure with their hands, the lights were extremely responsive. Furthermore, the lights lit up faster the stronger the pressure, with occasional unfamiliar symbols that would appear. It was unlike the imposing and solemn vibes as expected of a Divine Domain.

“Maybe the Realm of Mind was created.” Anna’s reply startled the two. “Just like you and me... or should I say, like a civilization.”

Nightingale swallowed her saliva. “Isn’t the other party... God?”

“The two aren’t contradictory.” Anna shook her head. “I’ve heard Roland mention it before, the reason why Lan had called it God was because it was the easiest explanation we could understand. Just like how we are Gods to ants—”

She shuddered. “This is truly a loathsome explanation.”

“Yes,” Silent Disaster agreed unexpectedly. “But I can understand.”

Nightingale was about to say something when she discovered they had reached the end of the passageway.

“Did we... get lost?”

But she suddenly heard a faint hissing sound. A beam of light quickly swept past the three of them and duplicated an image of the trio on the wall at the end of the path.

This change scared them all, even Anna.

Before the three could make a response, the wall suddenly turned into countless hexagons that disappeared in succession, revealing a large, ring-shaped space to them.

The edge of the space was encircled by some form of orbit, while the middle was separated by a transparent 'glass.' Inside the glass, they were able to see an astonishing large spheroid revolving beneath. This spheroid didn't seem material, but instead a body composed of electric and fluid! Countless bolts of lightning shuttled back and forth the walls, every beam far more piercing than the thunderclaps in the sky. Even though they were only separated by a layer of glass, the space was in complete silence, as though the intense and violent events occurring inside was unrelated to the outside world.

The three their breaths, anyone able to witness such a scene would be undoubtedly shocked—no one would possibly think that such a majestic construct existed and was hidden beneath an isolated island.

But what surprised them even more was a tube-shaped figure which was floating up the wall towards Anna, and opened what resembled a 'cover.'

No matter how slow they were to react, the three understood the figure's intent.

Silent Disaster and Nightingale looked at Anna and waited for her decision. The latter stared at Roland for a long time, before releasing her hands. Under the pull of her Blackfire, the sleeping Roland was gradually placed into the tube. Once the hatch was closed, the tube floated back to the wall and embedded itself back in its original position, as though it had disappeared into the wall.

"Is that considered... a success?" Nightingale muttered.

"I don't know," Anna replied softly. "But at least we have finished our goal. The only thing we can do now is wait."

...

The dark sky gradually faded away, replaced by white light that enveloped his vision.

Inside the boundless whiteness, a flight of stairs 'appeared' beneath Roland's feet—this time without any snowflakes or familiar ceiling. His gaze landed upon the other end of the path, only to see that the stairs was connected to a flat land with nothing in sight.

I see...

He sort of understood why Lan would say that once the path of Erosion appeared, he would naturally sense it.

The difference between the two worlds was so huge that only a blind man would not be able to see the difference.

According to Lan's logic, this place was most probably the Divine Domain—but he was unsure whether or not the astrolabe given by Epsilon was the reason for the Dream World's final expansion or that the expedition had accomplished their goal in reality that allowed him to arrive at this place.

But it was pointless to think about such things at this point in time.

Roland opened his stride towards the stairs.

It was a short distance and soon enough, he arrived on the piece of flat land. Right in the middle of the open space was a uniquely-shaped throne, with a figure donning a mask seated upright. The scene was especially spartan, unlike what he had imagined the "Divine Domain" to be.

Roland previously thought that God would have created an extremely glorious and dignified palace to display his strength as an opening gambit. Who would have thought that God would be so simple, leaving Roland momentarily unsure about the tone to use for a greeting.

"You're... God?"

In the end, he chose the simplest method to begin the conversation.

If he was mistaken and the person before him was an Oracle or a guide, it would not be too awkward for him.

"You can call me that, Child," the other party replied immediately. "But i prefer another term—the Omniscient Custodian."

Chapter 1488: Origins

Custodian? Roland pricked up his brows and said, "A guardian to ensure that every civilization will walk towards destruction?"

"I knew you would ask that... but that is a solution that cannot be helped." The entity stood up from the throne and dragged its right hand lightly. Following that, a sphere of light appeared in its hands before peeling away, layer by layer, to reveal the complicated structure within. This continued until Roland recognized what it was.

Although he had anticipated it, only when he saw the scene before him did his heart skip a beat.

Floating in the entity's hand was the world they were from.

He saw the Land of Dawn, the Fertile Plains, as well as the Kingdom of Graycastle. Beyond this continent, there were the Blackstone region and the Sky-sea Realm. But those weren't important. What was important was that the entire world was enveloped in a honeycombed shell, just like the barrier that isolated a planet from the outside.

And beneath the continent and oceans hid an extremely complicated core. It wasn't like a planet's core which formed a spherical shape due to the pressure placed on it. Instead, it was an irregular geometric body. The protruded Sky-sea Realm was located on the boundary of a geometric solid, and Roland could

even see that the Swirling Sea's bottom was connected to the Sky-sea Realm. The path resembled a Klein bottle.

Without a doubt, this world appeared so unharmonized solely because it wasn't naturally formed.

The artificial planet he saw in the second scene was just like the present real world.

The clouds and celestial bodies observed by people were simply projections formed by the barrier.

And in the real space beyond that, all Roland saw was dead silence.

"You were the 'pair of eyes.'" Instantly, he suddenly understood the answers to many questions.

God sighed slightly. "I'm not sure of what information you have collected, but that doesn't matter. Time is a measure that can be as long and short as required. I will satisfy your curiosity... before destroying you."

"As expected of what a Custodian will say—it's like a student not needing to go to classes, or a pharmaceutical company not needing to produce drugs," Roland said sarcastically as he spread his hands. Regardless, he was now representing humanity, or perhaps all living beings in reality. Even if the entity across him was God, he could not cower in fear. "What I wish to ask is why is there a Battle of Divine Will? What do you plan to achieve?"

"I thought you would ask from the trivial questions. Fine." It retracted the sphere of light in its hand and waved one hand. Countless 'screens' soon appeared behind it, and in the spartan space, they formed a stunning wall.

Roland discovered that the contents depicted by the screen were... all sorts of living beings.

"Project Gateway was a success. Its results were almost identical to the calculated outcome. With the help of many civilizations, this universe's gravity was pulled apart eventually, producing an extremely tiny rift," God said slowly. "But Project Gateway was also a failure. The energy which surged in from another territory destroyed most of the sentient lifeforms, including the creator of Project Gateway."

Was that the final scene of the third act...

Roland recalled the extreme grief, as though he was connected to all the civilizations which had participated in the plan.

"That's right. This energy is what you call magic power."

"It's not light, nor does it have temperature. It's neither made up of particles or waves. To be simple, it comes from a space that has completely different laws from the universe we come from. Physics and math become meaningless in the face of such energy. In almost an instant, it influenced and changed the entire world."

"What's... on the other side of the rift?" Roland couldn't help but ask.

"An accurate description isn't available because no one has passed through that distorted membrane, but according to an analysis, there are basically two possibilities. One of them being a universe that includes our universe. This is the easiest theory to understand." Having said that, the entity's voice

turned ethereal and hollow. "A new singularity can be born within the universe to produce an explosion to form a new universe, and thus, creating a set of completely independent laws and physical constants. Therefore, even if our world stems from a universe beyond the membrane, it doesn't mean that life or matter can easily proceed without obstruction.

"The second possibility is that our world is in the empty gap within the multiverse. You can think of it as a pot of thick soup, and we are just rising bubbles with their appearance, inflation, fusion, and bursting happening... Of course, reality is a lot more complicated, but that has already exceeded the limits of your comprehension."

"Fine... let's turn back to magic power." Roland curled his lips and said, "You previously mentioned that you would destroy a large majority of life, but you were the one who created the normality of the real world. Isn't that a contradiction?"

If humans were said to be the chosen ones of the universe, it would have been too incredulous.

"Magic power possesses a very unique set of laws. One of them is that it would change via will. Meanwhile, it will also change the mind of the possessor."

Roland was suddenly surprised. "What?"

"The first batch who had their lives change were the participants of Project Gateway. Their forms were warped and reconstructed, and after ten million years of evolution, they finally became a special crystalline body, which is the magic stones you use," God said calmly. "As I'm not considered a lifeform, I was lucky to survive, but similarly, I suffered tremendous damage which took me tens of thousands of years to recover from. And from that moment forth, gravity was no longer the force which is most deserving of reverence."

Upon hearing this answer, Roland was momentarily unsure how to continue.

However, Roland wasn't surprised by the notion that the Custodian wasn't that of a lifeform. Project Gateway was a humongous program that spanned over trillions of galaxies, with more than 170,000 civilizations participating in it. To ultimately take the correct path over such long periods of time, the coordinator definitely could not be a particular lifeform or race.

The entity had appeared because of the project.

"After that, the Cradle was created. It uses magic power to construct a world; however, the amount of energy suffers a particular limit. From an incomplete data bank, I chose life and began to foster them, allowing these creatures to live again under new rules. As competition can increase a race's development speed, the Cradle will deliberately choose lifeforms who lived in similar environments to foster. But the calculations soon discovered that this process would take an inestimable amount of time. With limited resources, it limits free growth. As such, the choice of involving external forces became inevitable.

"... Legacy shards," Roland said in a deep voice.

"That's only a part of it." The entity nodded. "As for what I ultimately want, it's not that complicated. The creator of Project Gateway, which is the civilization that created me, doesn't only want the universe to 'live on.' It had never had the intention of stopping progress, even so at the moment of destruction.

Opening the rift was only the first step. Its true goal is to see that territory which no one has ever stepped in.”

“It handed me this mission, and my final duty is to create a civilization that can adapt to the laws of the two worlds.” The entity paused for a moment. “And this competition and its development is what you call the Battle of Divine Will.”

Chapter 1489: Once Again, Battle of Souls

This time, Roland fell silent for a very long period of time.

He looked at the thousands of screens behind the entity. The living beings active inside no doubt represented the countless cycles of the past. With the Battle of Divine Will continuing up to now, it implied that no creature was able to independently live beyond the barrier.

This world wasn’t deliberately named Cradle either, despite it having corpses and remains buried in it.

“... Then what is the Realm of Mind?” Roland asked after a long period of time.

“It’s critical to maintain evolution, which is the core of the Cradle.” God did not seem to have any intention of hiding things from him. “Magic power can be driven by will, but it isn’t as simple as having it turn into whatever you will it to be. After countless evolutions, it gradually could be used by life and turned into an energy under this world’s laws. This also proves that the Creator’s theory is accurate with just a little deviation in the method involved.”

A little deviation... Roland fell silent. Perhaps no one could imagine that simply based on thought, an action that couldn’t be seen or touched, could reduce entropy in reality. This was perhaps the most fascinating part about magic power.

“Usage of magic power still can’t be devoid of usage method and calculations; however, it is incompatible with mathematics and other natural laws which we are already aware of. If it wasn’t because I had been changed by magic power, I wouldn’t even be able to comprehend the laws.”

It stretched out its finger and waved it. The screens behind it coalesced into one—countless beams of light shot up into the sky, and after reflection from the barrier, gathered within the Bottomless Land. “After a tremendous period of time, the Cradle discovered that even with the Battle of Divine Will, lifeforms need to experience an extremely long period of growth and comprehension, even if they were born in an environment with magic power. In order to speed up this process, the Realm of Mind replaces a portion of the conversion work. This speeds up their ability to use magic power and this magic power will then change their bodies.”

“So those light beams which are called ‘keys’ are actually pipes to transmit data?” Roland asked.

“Calling them pipes isn’t accurate, because they are magic power materialized as information. The Realm of Mind would complete a calculation based on the user’s pleas and expectations before transmitting the outcome back. This allows lifeforms to possess the ability to control large amounts of magic power in an extremely short period of time, so as to shorten the time needed for their growth.”

“So you know of every change in the Cradle—” Roland said in a deep voice.

“That’s right. This is a necessary measure to ensure that the system will operate as per normal.”

So that’s how it is... Some of his previous questions received an answer. For instance, why certain witches had light beams which were obviously thicker than other witches, even if the former’s abilities didn’t seem that powerful. This was because it had nothing to do with the power produced, but the complexity of the process.

Meanwhile, things like Andrea’s sure-hit and Momo’s ability to see lifespan were abilities that stemmed from some prediction of the future. They were all established on the pretext of a massive information web, and that the Cradle could control everything in the world. As long as the processing abilities were powerful enough, all indeterminable factors such as Chaos effects could be resolved within the barrier.

When the conditions of the exterior world were deterministic, the outcome became naturally obvious.

To be able to reach such achievements technologically, he was convinced that this was a civilization that tried to play God.

“In that case... the Dream World is already interfering with your plan?”

“That’s right. Not only does it occupy lots of resources and influences the stability of the core—as you should have already noticed. The magic users in the world are decreasing. This is all a symptom of the Realm of Mind being overtaxed. In order to prevent the Cradle’s structure from collapsing, I have to return everything to its original state.” With that said, God’s tone turned a little sorrowful. “Child, see what you have done. All the evolution information that has happened to this day will all return to its original point.”

This blame is really... a little too much for anyone to shoulder.

Roland curled his lips. “I don’t understand. If you can create the Cradle, I believe you can control the entire Realm of Mind as well. Why not let the Dream World be destroyed from the beginning?”

“That’s because the evolution of life comprises of infinite possibilities. It’s even more so under the influence of magic power.” God had apparently guessed that he would ask such a question. “I allocated a portion of the resources for the Realm of Mind to other civilizations, mainly a form of acquiesce to allow them to study the power of cores. Artificial interference and correction might end up missing that sliver of evolution possibility. But to ensure a multifaceted outcome, any external interference will be restricted, unless it has already threatened the entire project and the Cradle itself.”

So it’s not that God can’t do it, but it has already bound itself by the most basic rules...

“I believe expressing my apologies at this moment would already be too late?”

It shook its head. “From the moment you arrived here, it was already too late.”

“But I do not believe that the resistance of life as shackles on themselves is a mistake.” Roland wiped away his teasing expression and stared straight at God. “Even if I were given a choice to redo it, I’ll still do the same.”

“I can understand because you believe yourselves as extraordinary. Sentient lifeforms develop logic, but seldom do they abide by logic. This might be the reason why magic power would resonate with you.”

“It’s best if there’s less mutual understanding. Speaking of which, this place is fundamentally a part of the Realm of Mind, am I right?” Roland spread his hands and secretly focused. Then, he conjured a short sword in his palm. “It doesn’t seem like I’m wrong. Entering the Divine Domain isn’t crucial, after all this is your territory. Reckless intrusion will lead to a simple annihilation. Only by using Erosion to change the laws can your existence be threatened.”

“So you always had such an idea from the very beginning?” God pointed its finger at Roland. “Whatever. Although I’m unable to agree with such acts, I can give you the requisite amount of respect. Apart from letting you know everything, I can even give you a chance to resist, so as to let you know the gap between us.”

As it finished speaking, Roland suddenly felt something being stuffed into his head. The excruciating pain from the swelling made him shout out intolerably!

Countless words and formulas flashed by his eyes like an illusory light show.

Grand unification theory, superstring theory, multidimension law, theory of everything...

The knowledge that had troubled humanity for extended periods of time presented itself in front of him. Not only that, he realized that he could completely understand the content, just like a brand new door was opening up to him.

“The Realm of Mind had a record of an abnormal fight. Calling it the Battle of Souls is quite apt for the present situation.” God slowly floated up. “At this moment, your brain is being connected to the Cradle’s knowledge vault. Knowledge accumulated for tens of millions of years are free for you to acquire. Of course, if you wish to give up, that’s fine. The world’s remodeling will not bring you any pain. Everything is but an instant—”

“What are you saying?” Roland did not hesitate to cut God off. “Since you have bestowed me with such a chance, how can I miss it?”

He raised his hand and swung it, causing the platform and stairs to shatter. The pure white background began crumbling, revealing the black universe with its twinkling lights.

Armadas appeared out of thin air as they arranged themselves neatly behind him, forming a vast matrix—it was the scene which he had seen from Epsilon’s memories.

All sorts of weapon systems were aimed at God under Roland’s will. At the moment the thought for attack arose, a blinding beam of light instantly lit up the entire starry space!

Chapter 1490: Fighting God

...

The vast universe became the battlefield of this skirmish of minds.

Countless stars exploded, releasing white fiery glows that resembled that of a newborn star, spewing out material that extended for hundreds of light years, like the inchoate scribbles of a child.

The armadas very quickly turned to ashes under God's strikes, and the weapons that appeared next only grew in force.

Back when he was fighting Zero, the most common method used was to establish a defense before delivering a barrage of attacks. Now, it wasn't too different. However, the explosives had gone from gunpowder to something else.

For example, matter-antimatter annihilation.

When masses at the level of galaxies were converted into energy, even the universe would tremble. The dull drumming sound that resonated the universe was filled with light and heat, as they spread outwards at the speed of light.

In this intense battle, carbon lifeforms were weaker than paper. Roland first created a reinforced body for himself before later changing into a pure body of energy. He engaged in battle by creating items with his mind based on his extraordinary Cradle-connected mind.

Unlike the previous Battle of Souls, he didn't need to think hard to the point of mental enervation. The knowledge vault had countless means for him to employ. His rapidly whirring thoughts made him feel an indescribable sense of joy that even in death, he would be vaporized by energy blasts instantly and not experience any pain.

In the beginning, the battle was on equal ground, but once magic power entered the mix, Roland entered a state of passiveness.

And there was no way to recover from this position of weakness.

This was the first time he acutely sensed the potency of magic power.

Be it witches or demons, the methods they used were to convert the existing energy of the universe. But in the hands of the Custodian, it could completely shirk away the bindings of the rules. Most means and their effects could no longer be made up with greater equivalents.

Almost a thousand deaths made Roland's mind begin to dull. If not for the Cradle's help, he probably wouldn't have lasted this long.

When he was revived again, he no longer had the strength to prop up his body.

The background around him returned to the pure white world from before.

Roland staggered before slumping to the ground. It was only then did he realize that his back was cold with sweat.

"With this, there shouldn't be any regrets for you, right?" the other party quietly asked. Clearly, such a battle had not burdened it in any way. In the territory of the mind, it was indeed no different from God.

"How can it be possible..." Roland took two deep breaths. "Do you think that I came here to be beaten up by you to vent your anger?"

"Your methods stem from ignorance and arrogance. That is one of the inherent traits of life. Besides, with the situation having developed this far, the venting of anger doesn't help a thing." It paused. "But

you still wish to continue a battle like the one we just had? In the face of an absolute gap, perseverance is meaningless. I originally thought that you would be smarter—”

“Are you referring to the Battle of Souls? No... I never believed that victory can be decided so easily.” Roland slowly stood up by imbuing his strength into his wobbly legs. “What happened just now was to experience the feeling of who calls the fleet... To be honest, it felt pretty good...”

“Enough!” God’s voice sounded perturbed for the very first time. “Millions of years of progress destroyed at once; yet, you treat it as an unimportant game?”

“I didn’t say so.” Roland forced a smile. “However, before the final moment comes, I wish to ask you a question—why... do you do this?”

“Provide assistance to Cradle? I’ve mentioned it before. Life possesses the power of choice, and every creature born in the Cradle is my child. I respect your choices and will—”

“No, I’m not asking that.” Roland shook his head. “I’m asking you, why did you make those... Lans?”

God suddenly fell silent.

Moments later, it took off its mask and revealed the face hidden beneath.

It was Lan’s face.

“Have you met her?” It stared at Roland for a moment before speaking. “So that’s the reason. However, you are mistaken on something. This body is only an image to convenience my interaction with humans. You did meet me, but I’m not her.”

That Epsilon really wasn’t wrong.

Roland curled the corner of his lips.

Just as the astrolabe bloomed and white light engulfed his entire vision, she had said her final words. Even though he had failed to read her lips clearly, Epsilon’s words had imprinted it on his consciousness.

That was the answer to his second question.

“I sensed God Almighty’s aura from the betraying Oracle, and I wish to ask it. Is that the outcome it wants?”

In the beginning, Roland was unable to put the dots together with the information, but now, he fully understand what God truly was.

“Indeed, you are not her, but only when the two of you fuse together would you be a complete Omniscient Custodian,” Roland enunciated his words slowly.

It’s not only Lan... Pure magic monsters, Oracles, as well as the Bottomless Land’s Guardian might have been a part of it.

Therefore, Epsilon had mentioned that as long as God wasn’t destroyed, she would exist forever.

What is the Omniscient Custodian?

Calling it a system, a machine, a program, Gaia, or a comprehensive data sentient being wasn't important. The original reason for its creation was to supervise Project Gateway, as well as to aid the Creator in fulfilling the real goal after the "door" was opened.

But in the long period of time where hope couldn't be found, it began experiencing divergences.

This divergences could have been one or two passing thoughts in the beginning, but with the passage of time, the thoughts fused into a self-cognitive being.

They were born within the Custodian, and there wasn't only one. Lan was just one of them.

They were sick of the endless nurturing and observation. They didn't wish to be bound to the dead universe. Of course, there might have been more contrasting differences, such as resources.

As long as there was a body in reality, there was definitely expenditure. In the flourishing era of the civilization, the Custodian naturally didn't need to worry about protecting them. But now, with all sentient lifeform in the universe dead, everything came under the aegis of the Custodian. Yet, the Cradle needed to take a large portion of the resources, and with time, it would exceed a certain critical point, making the possibility of the entire system entering an irreversible state of collapse.

In Lan's words, *"regardless of the outcome, anything is better than being imprisoned here forever. At least, the future is filled with infinite possibilities."*

"They will quickly vanish with the restructuring, along with you." God's tone remained calm.

Roland wasn't surprised when faced with this reaction. Without a doubt, if the betraying Oracles could resist the main Custodian, there was no need for them to seek him.

Perhaps what it controlled was the basic rule of the Cradle.

"But Lan's appearance isn't an anomaly. In millions of years, perhaps a similar scene will happen again."

"Then, everything will return to its original state. I have to complete my agreement with the Creator. This is an iron law which has no room for change," it said, unmoved. "Now, I will begin the world's restructuring—"

"Is that so?" Roland chuckled. "That wouldn't be a wise thing to do, because... you have already completed the agreement."