**THE EVERLASTING**

**Volume 6**

**The crucible**

**Prologue**

“Welcome! To the test of your lives to the greatest moment you shall witness. Welcome to the crucible!” said something with a voice beaming with power throughout the hall

“You shall here be tested! Tried! Bled! And most shall die! But those who will make it, shall be granted their wildest desires.”

We were inside the tower that rose a few days ago. I turned to look around but I did not recognize a single person. Many had come, we were by the thousands and we all had one goal. To get in, survive, and leave with prestige, honor, and wealth. I personally needed all three of them for my agenda, and this is the fastest way although the most dangerous.

The tower was not that huge from the outside but once we passed the magical gate we were transported over a floating disc that was able to hold the thousands of people that came to test their mettle. A bottomless abyss was below the platform as for the roof it was decorated with statues of maidens and knights and filled with jewels of all kind.

Although the platform was very large the distance between its edge and the closest wall was too far. The hall was lit by some flying light orbs that managed to show the entirety of the first floor.

“It seems that this year the lot of you are rather weak…” said the same voice

“Judging by the power of most of you I say that more than two thirds will die before reaching the tenth floor. The rest will follow soon after…I would say that only ten will make it to the twenty fifth…you lot should have never crossed us…the rest of your race is far stronger than you who were imprisoned in this world…but what is done is done. Fight and survive and May the strongest live and the weak be trampled!”

Once he said those words which I could not understand the meaning behind, a gateway soon opened in the middle of the arena.

Some warriors hesitated at first but many soon entered.

I decided to enter soon but was stopped by a young man

“If I were you I would wait until everyone had entered” said the man

He was tall and had short blond hair he had a small nose and his eyes were blue. He wore a red tunic over some brown pants combined with light leather armor for protection and a small broad sword.

“And why is that?” I asked

“You may never know if this is a trap or not.”

“Stop being paranoid Strovist.” said a girl that was next to him. She was a brunette with curly short hair and darkened skin. She had a spear on her back and wore leather armor the same as the other man did.

“Well caution saves lives” said the so called Strovist

“And cowardliness will hamper your advance, my name is Liliana” said the girl while putting out her hand for a handshake.

I answered

“My name is Yuna, Yuna Korima”

“Now that the introduction are out of the way, tell us Yuna are you here by yourself?”

“Yes.”

“What a waste” said Strovist “to have a beauty like you risking her life and alone in a place like this… how about you come to this onii-san if you need help?” yet right after he said those words he was punished with an elbow to the side by Liliana

“Stop with the flirting you will creep the girl out. So how about you join us? I know you from the time you fought at the tournament you were strong very strong to be able to defeat one of the strongest at our school but if you are trying to clear the crucible alone it will be considered madness. However with both of us acting as vanguards I think we can make it all the way to the twenty fifth floor.”

So they are from Astarte. She must be thinking about the fight with that Jibi guy.

“Well I am aiming for the fiftieth floor but I don’t mind tagging along.”

Once I said those words both of them looked at me shocked and said at once

“F-Fiftieth? Are you mad? I mean common even though you are strong but aren’t you biting more than you could chew?”

“I believe in myself.”

“Leave the girl alone” said Liliana “We shall see how things will develop so let’s just get going and clear the first floor.”

Once she finished talking I noticed that few warriors remained. Most had already entered the gate and it was now our turn. We walked inside and were instantly bathed in a blinding light.

Once the light faded away we found ourselves inside a forest.

“Where shall we go now?” said Strovist

Liliana looked around a bit trying to figure out where to go and I looked up in the sky. There was a beam of light at the north of where we are now so I said

“Maybe we should begin by heading that way?”

“True that does look like the right way, alright follow me I think I can get us there as fast as I could. I was well trained at tracking back at Astarte.” Said Strovist

It took us a couple of hours until we reached a small clearing. Strangely the forest was vivid and filled with life. Birds sang and the forest was full of life. We had not met a single human or beast however.

I walked into the clearing first and saw that the light that was emitting from afar began to dim out. However.

But something was strange. Both Lilian and Strovist remained within the jungle as I turned and saw them looking at me both their lips curled up showing a creepy smile.

“Stupid Human, look how easy it is to trick you.” Once Lilian said that I understood one thing, the trial started the moment I sat foot inside the tower

A second later a huge jaw opened up from under the ground engulfing me with a single bite. **Chapter 1**

(Five month earlier)

“What the hell is happening!!?” said Vasbokh

“Calm down Vasbokh. We need to meet the overlord he had called for us again.”

“But don’t you see what just happened! All of our lord’s effort were in vain this was my fault if only had I killed that brat!! Damn it to hell!”

“No one is blaming you for the retreat Vasbokh in fact you did the right thing. Even I would have hesitated in front of a wielder of such power so let’s go we cannot make our Overlord wait any longer”

“Alright, lets”

 Once all the lords were in front of the ruler of the blighted lands he spoke

“It seems that there has been a mistake. The Ashurian still lives…” said the overlord

To this statement all the lords froze and all looked toward the woman kneeling in front of the throne.

Perzahar then spoke

“Why did you lie to us Essithia?”

“I have not told a lie my lord I would never dare lie to thee” said Essithia with fright clearly resounding within her voice.

“She did not lie…” said Lerdakh

“What do you mean? Did you not hear our Overlord? She said that the light of the Ashurian had left this world then how can you explain this contradiction!” angrily said Vasbokh

“I spoke to my deity…he said that that he had never claimed his soul…” said Lerdakh

“Such blasphemy. To speak of the ruler of death in front of our overlord I should strike you down here and now!” said Vasbokh in a threatening manner to which Lerdakh did not even register

“It was I who ordered him to do so.” Said the Overlord

“The price?” asked Perzahar.

“Grave one…”answered the Overlord. “Come forth Huodokhon.” Added the overlord to which the figure obliged.

He was a short humanoid with long sprouting horns like those of a mountain goat with one wing torn and the other in bad shape. He had a red as blood skin color and his right eye was scarred. He looked like an old man and wore chains for armor. The chains were rusted and burnt. He had rags for pants and his tail was cut. No matter what one would see he would think of the man as a slave but if they knew of the power within him they would think twice before daring to cross him after all he is too a devil lord.

“Offer your life for the Everlasting Silence to which was the price for giving us the knowledge we needed.”

“Gladly my Overlord.” Said the now kneeling Huodokhon.

Once the words were said Lerdakh moved forward and held up his scythe high up.

“Sorry old friend!” said Lerdakh

“Tis but my duty to serve my lord and if he see my death to be of need then I shall oblige without discord”

The scythe was brought down upon the devil’s head and with it the life of another devil lord had ended.

His body engulfed in flames and only the chains he was wearing remained on the floor.

The overlord then casted a spell toward the chains

Black corrosive smoke engulfed them and only ash remained that scattered soon after.

“Was there no other choice?” said Vasbokh while his voice convoyed sadness

“None. The wall was brought back before we could know from our minions if the Ashurian had truly died. However the information we gained is more crucial than we originally had thought.” Said the overlord

“The Everlasting silence took his price, he had told me that the Ashurian was not in the fallen world, he somehow ended up in the Void. So now we know that the wielder of that eye was never the one we thought him to be. This actually makes our standing even more favorable but our lord cannot open the gates again, for now that is.” Said Lerdakh

Silence permeated throughout the room until Essithia spoke

“M-my lords I never thought that he would be in that place I am sorry my lords but my ability should have detected him this is my fault if one should had been killed it should have been me…”

“No Essithia.” Said the overlord “It was in fact the rule of the Overseers. The fallen world the void and the true world cannot interfere with each other. Your ability simply could not see past this wretched prison. But be at ease this shall not be the case and we shall triumph soon enough.”

“Indeed my lord” said Perzahar “If we consider him to be in the void then that is the same as being dead. He cannot leave, not without the eye. And I think that the price was fair. If it was your life the everlasting silence would never have agreed.”

“Damn it. To sacrifice a comrade for an information is unthinkable.” Said Vasbokh

“It is indeed a grave loss but now we are certain of our victory. Vasbokh you shall take the forces of the fallen Huodokhon and add them to yours. Then go throughout the blighted lands and gather everyone under us. I will have enough strength to open the gateway in one year. Until then we need everyone under our control. Without the Ashurian we will be certain to win. We will be certain to go back to the true world. Now leave me. All of you.” Said the overlord. And to his command all complied

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“Yuna come at me like you are truly trying if this is the extent of your ability then you will die without even reaching the second floor!” said the principal.

Both Yuna and the principal were on the arena floor sparing with each other. The arena was filled to the brim once the news of the principal was sparring with a student spread. To the onlookers this might look like bullying as the principal gave no room for Yuna to counterattack. Most of her projectiles were destroyed before they could even make contact with but the slightest of gestures and the weakest of wind spells.

Yuna began to increase the potency of her spells this time summoning her ice spirit wolves while conjuring four heaven piercing javelins. The javelins floated and the wolves began to hunt down their prey. The second the principal moved the javelins were tossed at the position she was going to be at while at the same time a giant hand of ice was summoned behind her to hinder the chance of the principal moving backwards. Entrapped by the three way attack the principal looked like she would lose this round. But to everyone’s surprise the principal did not move and received all of the attacks at once.

Feeling victorious Yuna dropped down her guard waiting for the rising cloud of dust and cold ice to clear only to be surprised at the sudden appearance of the principal behind her back holding a shard of Yuna’s own ice to her neck saying

“Dead!” then she soon pushed the still shocked Yuna on the floor.

She got closer to her and held her hand to help her rise again, but the second she pulled her up, she placed the tip of the shard on her abdomen saying once again

“Dead!” then she added “Trust no one to give you a hand. Once inside the crucible you have only yourself to rely on.”

Then they continued sparring.

This time Yuna took more precautions and began her relentless attack. She began conjuring hundreds of ice shards and coated the arena in ice while at the same time charging with two more spirit wolves toward the principal who this time disappeared from Yuna’s sight and left her at a loss. Unable to determine the exact location of the principal she forced the hanged ice to rotate around her like a vortex of deadly shard. This would be a good way to block the approach of a hard to detect foe but Yuna still failed to see another upcoming attack.

Although the principal is a master at wind magic she can also use lower tier spells of other elements.

The earth under Yuna began to crack and two huge stone walls rose from her sides and instantly began to close on each other in order to crush her.

But right before they could close Yuna shouted casting a spell…

(Five months later)

“REVERSE ICE MAIDEN!!”

The jaws of the giant beast that engulfed Yuna were torn from within by large spikes made of ice. Tearing away at it like if it was made of sand. The hidden monster screeched from pain a pain too great for even it to sustain without opening out its mouth. Blood began to poor out of the hidden worm like creature’s mouth and now hit was wriggling and squirming from pain.

The two humanoids that were near the scene looked at the event in fright and decided to take more caution. The man pulled his sword and advanced cautiously toward the ice statue that was now spat out by the giant worm.

“Hunt!”

The moment Yuna said those words although still inside the maiden four ice wolves soon appeared out of thin air and began charging at the approaching man. The man swung down his sword to take out the first wolf only to have his hand clutched tight by the jaws of another one. This one pulled the now screaming man down while the rest of the pack ravaged his body. Blood began to spill out however, Yuna was not one to show mercy to a person that attempted to kill her especially at this place.

A hand was summoned behind the unsuspecting second aggressor and managed to tighten the grip on her body. The ice made hand tightened its grip further and further until bone began to crack and the woman began to squeal. And scream from the killing pressure until Yuna finally gave her the sweet relief and embrace of death.

 The hand dropped down the mangled body that now revealed its real appearance. It was that of a faceless humanoid with green skin color. It had no cloth and no gentiles making it impossible to know if it was a male or a female. The second most intriguing thing was that this creature had very long hands and was bald. It seems that they specialize in camouflage and are some sort of doppelganger that take the appearance of humans.

Yuna frowned at the disgusting figure and looked back toward the dimming light that now faded completely. She broke a sweat for a moment fearing that she could have probably failed at the first floor but was then engulfed in a blinding light.

“Congratulations on managing to kill or survive until the time was over dear contenders! You are now eligible to go to the second floor.” Said the same person whose voice boomed over the entire hall.

We were back at the same place where we began the trial but one thing was very different.

The amount of people that are at the second floor is less than even half of those who were here first.

“Hmm…I seem to have overestimated you lot. I think that if even one of you managing to reach the twenty fifth floor would be a miracle. Hahaha” mockingly said the same person.

And to this statement many men began to shout in disapproval.

“Who the hell are you? You bastard!” said one man “Show yourself and stop with the mind games I was forced to kill my own friend god damn it!”

His own friend? Did he get a different challenge? I thought to myself

And interestingly to his statement a beam of light shone upon him and a second later only ash remained.

“If any of you have an objection I think it should be wise to not say it out loud, after all you agreed yourselves to enter this place and once you are in you have no right to complain about the challenges you are given. To each his own challenge depending on their own personality. This of course applies to rare and occasional floors. I should probably explain more. This crucible is a stepping stone for any that wishes to become truly strong. If you think that the death of a friend or a close one is a grave loss in order to gain great power then this place is not for you and it is but your own fault that you entered.”

Said the same voice.

“If you wish to continue then step forward the second challenge will soon begin. And I should tell you that you only have one way to go. It is up and only up, for the cowards of you that whishes not to go on you could pick a floor that you had already cleared and live the rest of your pitiful lives in it. You only have to say that you give up. Many had done so before, and many shall do so again. Tis but the way of the world. The strong thrive and the weak cowards gets trampled.

Soon after that another gate opened. I looked around me and I saw that most of the challengers hesitated a bit. But a rare few entered without a second thought. I was one of them. I never came to this place to cower. I came to become stronger and I will do so no matter the cost. After all I lost what I held dear once. No strike that. I lost what I held dear twice…

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“Are you sure this is the right way? Couldn’t you possibly have forgotten? I mean common you are eons of years old!” I said to the towering dragon.

“Preposterous! I never forget it must be that you are doing something wrong. This should have worked a long time ago…”

Today marks the sixth month with Drakhsis-san…and I got to know a lot about this old thing. Especially things about the true world or what he calls it Lagaris. There are dozens of different races and the population of that world is astronomically great compared to the place that he calls the fallen world.

It seems that what the old man had said is true. Somehow the devils and humans were once allies ‘hard to believe huh…’ and were the only race to dare challenge the overseers actually only a handful of them did. Due to their power these few hundred challengers demanded to fight against these so called overseers. They were said to be very strong I am talking about the humans and devils here he said they had about ten overlords and hundreds of devil lords with two everlastings from the side of mankind and a few legendary classed warriors. They somehow challenged an old god of war and managed to defeat it…I don’t think that they were talking about Ashura as there are several gods of war like the dragon had said…anyway the thing was that they believed that if they could bring down a god they could bring down an overseer and oh boy they were wrong.

The challenge was accepted and only one of the overseers descended to fight. He even claimed to be the weakest of them. The challenge took place here in the fallen world before it was a prison. And the fight broke and ended in moments. Even Drakhsis and Arvion themselves came here to witness the power of the overseers and the so called challengers to be surprised how they were easily defeated but not killed. At least not all of them. The overseer had spoken and his word was an order

Drakhsis still remembers the words he spoke them once again to me

“Now that you had fallen you and your descendants shall be imprisoned here until one of your races is the only one left. None shall leave this place as this is a punishment for your world to witness.”

But the problem was that once the words were spoken the overseers cannot go back on them. The prison rose and Drakhsis and Arvion could no longer leave this place. They both turned to the overseer demanding exit and to which he opened the Void and trapped them in it. A prison within a prison saying

“You two are very strong and I fear that if you interfere with the matters of these two races you shall destroy them to leave. I cannot permit this as I had commanded them to fight each other… you shall wait. The time you will be spending there would be but a fraction of your infinite lifespan. You are not permitted to use your power to leave this place!” said the Overseer and to this the dragons complied…

Although reluctantly they knew that even if they both fought together they would never be able to defeat this overseer so they had to wait here. Yet there was a loophole in this decree like Drakhsis had said before the overseer’s word is absolute and they cannot change it. So the moment they said that they cannot leave using their power this instantly meant that if it was by the power of another then the rules could be bent.

So back to where we are now. I was still meditating in the middle of the small patch of grass inside the mountain range where is the ‘nest’ Drakhsis.

Two things had changed over the passing of these two months. The first being the body of the ashen dragon or I should say former body if it as I had just finished the damn thing. I mean bones and all even the bones turned to energy and nothing was left. I am still amazed at how I managed to eat something that big. The second thing being that I was ordered to bring a determined quantity of the jewels embedded on the creatures of this world every now and later.

So now I have a small mountain of them. About a dozen tons of it.

It was easy to get earlier on as I only had to get to the nests of the damn beetles and get their horns. Then it became quite hard once most of the nests were destr-‘cleared out’.

Then I had to hunt massive quantities of monsters for their jewels to an objective only Drakhsis knew of.

I don’t think he cared about the eco system of this world since he does not require sustenance or so he said.

So the thing is, that there actually was something else that could help make a person stronger.

It is known that the human body has a Magoi circuit that handles both magical energy or mana and spiritual energy. This is actually a knowledge the dragon knew of however he said that it was actually lacking. There is another supplement that can be added to the equation to make it stand out more

Aura! Yes it seems that veteran warriors can use this thing unconsciously the fact that a person would cower and fear a strong man is a but an effect of this so called aura it makes a person show dominance and power by their mere presence alone. And Drakhsis had been explaining how it is supposed to function. The aura itself unlike the mana or spiritual energy dose not originate from the body. It is harnessed from the outside world through it. A person would suck the energies of the surrounding terrain and transform them into fuel. This fuel can serve different purposes whether reenergizing the body. Healing it or even transforming into mana or spiritual energy depending on the user’s choice and control over the matter. There is the matter of the surrounding being low on this so called energy to which one would burn their life force to use this aura…something I don’t want to try at least I hope that I don’t have to because like Drakhsis had said many had found this way to be the most powerful and fastest at providing power but also the deadliest. Life force can be reconstructed or regained once burnt to a certain degree but if it is all depleted one would ultimately die.

This knowledge was probably lost due to only a handful of people were imprisoned on the fallen world and probably a user of aura was not amongst them. Also Drakhsis had said that we are barely scratching the surface of true magic. Due to the entrapped humans not knowing the old words ‘the first to come here probably forgot to pass on the knowledge’ we are barely using the true potential of magic.

Oh yeah and I managed to learn how to speak the old tong.

“Rah si khar” I said

This made the energies around me gather to create a small hue of a barely visible ‘aura’ around me. However it disappeared almost instantly.

“Again” said Drakhsis. “That was close but you need not to lose focus, the energies of the world here are very thick making it very hard to be absorbed into your body once you succeed here you will do wonders where the energies are less complex to handle.”

Hmm it seem that now I understand the jest of it.

At first I was trying hard to visualize this so called aura, and tried to replicate it like magic where it heavily needed reliance over imagination but while I was distracted thinking of other things I managed to cast it. It seems that I need to focus on something other than what I am doing at the moment.

Right after I finished the thought a green hue of energy enveloped me. This made me instantly remember the fight I had with that girl of the Verda clan. Lori was it. She was using something similar to this but my eye was unable to process it. It seems that this is the way to go.

Right after that my body tensed up for a moment and I felt huge amount of energy in turmoil within myself. It seems that my body is actively trying to reject the new ingredient.

“Don’t let it go to waste said the dragon! Circulate it around your body and through your veins.”

I did so while it was difficult at first once I kept on releasing some of my spiritual energy and the meager amount of mana I have in my body at the moment I reached equilibrium where all three elements were present at once.

“NOW!” Said Drakhsis

“Morfii Drakh!”

The second I said the old words my skin began to harden claws began to grow, and fangs sprouted. I felt my left eye’s iris change and my vision became enhanced. My skin now turned to scales and two protruding small horns grew from my temple. My back began to throb until my shoulder blades tore at my skin making a pair of leathery wings grow. They were damn huge. The color my hair turned ashen white while my scaled skin paled lightly.

Power, tremendous amounts of power swirled within my body. I then spoke

“Is this the dragon form you are talking about?”

“Yes but you should be careful. You are using massive amounts of energy to stay in this form you still have a long way to perfect it so release it. You know the words.”

“Morfii Hshto!” I said and instantly dropped down to my knees. This was damn exhausting.

“You need to control the energies within you. It is not only sufficient enough to reach equilibrium before casting the spell you need to remain in it even while using it. The problem is that your spiritual energy and magical energy are worlds apart and maintaining a constant equilibrium to both is close to impossible at your current state. That is with the addition of the energy of the world around you. However the energy of the world is easy to handle with practice you can increase the amount you can hold within you. But for the mana. Without that eye you are still too weak. Yet there is a source to mana that is quite close to you. A very strong and dangerous one.”

“What is it?” was he speaking about the crystals?

“No, not the crystals…at least not yet. It is the Devil within you.”

Euh now that he mention it…holy shit how the hell am I still alive!

I should have been dead months ago! What the hell happened? Am I not cursed anymore? I was certain that the contract clearly stated that without the sword I will die.

“You seem to be mistaken about something. Although it is true that you have been cursed. I have been through your memories and managed to see a glimpse of the time where things changed. It was the moment you were with the Ashura that the devil lord took control over your body. Luckily for you he saw that the death curse was no longer needed as he thought he got full hold of your body and released it.”

Oh it was like that… I don’t remember it though…

(Hinted at when the devil took control over Asura’s body he did something to his wrists where the curse grew and changed form. I thought that you guys would notice it, even some guy said that it was a huge plot hole…use your heads guys x) )

“Anyway what is it with the devil now?”

“Ah it is simple. We will try and tame a devil lord. Shouldn’t be that hard though.”

Oh…

**CHAPTER 2**

“So are we going to remain here and silently accept the shitty treatment?” said Osfor.

In a cell near him Greetman grunted to the comment and was unable to talk back as he was chained and ha a mechanism that prevented him from speaking.

“Well, it seems that until the misunderstanding is cleared up we will be staying here for a while…” said Takeda.

“Guard!” shouted Osfor!

Soon after that a prison guard showed up. He was wearing a brown millenarian uniform with a small hat over his head. He had plain looks like a person that you will soon forget his face once you meet them on the street.

“What is it, traitor” said the guard.

“I could do without the traitor but tell me something how are the things out there?” responded Osfor

“Why should I tell you? Traitor. You should guess how the situation is, the country is in turmoil the king is dead and his son is nowhere to be found. Thankfully we were able to locate another relative to the royal family the situation should clear up soon.”

“A relative?” said Osfor “King Elior had only one son and before he rose to the throne he too was an only son. How did you manage to do find this said relative?”

“They said it was a bastard son of the king. For the moment one with royal blood in them is better to appease the worry of the people considering the declaration of war that you country had announced. Damn Alsians you kill our king and demand the return of the ones responsible over it…Now shut up or I will have to shut you the same way I did to that loud mouthed bastard. I was having migraines from his shouting all day long.”

To this statement Ainz grunted again under his breath.

“Ok, ok no need to be so pesky thank you for the information though.” Said Osfor.

Normally a guard would not speak to the four of them and tell them what is actually happening but six months of imprisonment had thought Osfor how to handle this person and tease information out of him from now and then.

Thankfully the ones responsible over the captivity of these four neglected one minor thing.

“Damn bastard I would be sure to kill him first the second I get out of these restraints” Said Greetman. His voice however was not hearable to the guard as he was using Osfor’s telepathy to speak to his comrades.

“You are too heated at minor things Greetman, however it is weird that they found someone like that so soon. I know for a fact that Elior loved his late wife deeply to cheat on her or to have a son from another woman. It seems that the Organization is behind this appearance of this new ‘heir’. ”

“I agree” said Takeda who was calmly reading a book inside the cell. A book to which the guard had agreed to give to him due to him being the least ‘troublesome’. Yes the least troublesome as even Midorikawa was unable to hold her cool and almost managed to rip out the tong of the same officer once he did a thing that deserved such a treatment…a tale for another time

He then added

“Where is that damn Ousay by the way…”said Osfor “He should have been here months ago something must have kept him from coming to get us I even sent him a ‘message’”

“Well your methods are weird using that familiar of yours…but anyway I just hope that he managed to read the situation and get our forces out of the Alikhian lands. If our mages that came here were to be imprisoned or worse killed we would have a very poor standing once the said war truly breaks…” said Takeda

“He is not an idiot. And even so Kansaki was with him he should know better than to let something like this escape his mind. So we only have to wait if Osfor said that he had sent him a message we will know soon enough.” Added Midorikawa who was too imprisoned near the four.

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“This is so tiring…” I complained to no one in particular.

“You need to be more flexible. Try again”

I began to try and reach equilibrium again but found it really hard to maintain. Even more so than before to the extent I thought that it was but a fluke.

After countless tries I finally managed to get the right feel to it.

“Good. Maintain that state for as much as you could, we will begin shortly after you reach your limit.” Added Drakhsis.

To be honest this dragon is very kind and tolerant. He is passionate about teaching me these things, he might have his own agenda and plan for using me to leave this place but after all he is a good person-dragon…

It took me about three minutes before I finally collapsed.

“Hmm not bad. But not good enough either. For you to try and reach out to the Devil lord without it overpowering your body and taking control again you will need to maintain that state for far longer than this. At least an entire day.”

“WHAT!” I said “An entire day! That is absurd. It’s been six months already the crucible should have already risen according to you shouldn’t I be headed there right about now? Hell, I don’t even know which way it is”

“Leave that matter for later. The crucible will remain standing for an entire year you still have time now hurry up.”

Damn this. I’ve been here in this world for almost a year now. Six months with Drakhsis and another four alone with one month travel to get from there to here. It was my seventeenth birthday last week and I only got more training for a birthday present.

I tried to reach equilibrium again and began from the start.

…

After few days –two weeks- I finally managed to maintain the state for as long as I wished. The idea behind it was simple. If I were to put it in words I can say that my Magoi circuit is divided into two main branches. With the spiritual energy in my body being more than ninety five percent of the entire Magoi circuit and only five percent was left to mana I was having enormous troubles trying to exert the excess spiritual energy to get both of them to the same frequency. Now that I no longer needed to keep that forty percent of my spiritual energy dedicated to keeping the devil at bay as he removed the curse I became much stronger but it only made reaching equilibrium even harder.

But thanks to a tip Drakhsis had mentioned earlier if I were to harness aura into my body the equation would shift. Especially if I could for example exert about sixty percent of my spiritual energy and burn it without using it and use the aura energy from the outer world to first increase and constantly replenish the amount of mana in my body and have it at the same time fill the remaining gap I would have about a third of my spiritual energy a third of mana that was created by the aura and a third of pure aura in my body. The entire thing relied heavily on controlling aura and managing it while exerting the excess spiritual energy to make everything fit. I only needed to practice on how to constantly harness it.

It was very hard at first due to what Drakhsis had said before this world’s energy is very complex and hard to transform but now I can do it with ease.

“Good.” Said Drakhsis “Now let me tell you one thing. Depending on how high the concentration of each of the different elements within your body you could take an aspect related to it. Let me further explain. Dragons are creatures of aura. So reaching equilibrium while favoring aura over spiritual energy and mana would let you stay in that form for a long time. Doing so while favoring spiritual energy will grant you the ability to use the aspect of the Ashurian god that you descend from. Lastly favoring mana over the other two would make you closer to achieving the demon from but for now try not to use the god form as it seem that your connection to him is rather…lost”

This is probably the result of him doing that jumpstart on me to force the devil out.

“So we start with devil form” I said

“Not so quickly now. First of all you should be capable of defeating him in combat to which I think you will be lacking but I will be sure to assist. Although you proved capable by defeating most of the creatures in this world a devil lord is not one to be underestimated. After all they challenged an overseer and a person that is believing themselves having a chance with them is either a fool or a very strong fool.” Said Drakhsis

“There’s been something that was bugging me lately. You said that some of those that challenged an overseer were Everlastings even more so some legendary warriors. If Ashura was in fact a god of war why didn’t he do the fight himself I mean I am his descendant shouldn’t I had lived in the true world? Shouldn’t he have more descendants? Why only me and why in the fallen world?”

“I do not know youngling. It seems that probably one of those to have challenged the Overseers must have been a decadent of Ashura and to which you are born from. But it matters not probably he can only feel his link to you and probably his entire dynasty has ended. The fact that the link between the three worlds is severed is quite depressing…”

I then asked

“What do you mean the link between the worlds?”

“Before the Great Plains as you call it, fell it was a part of the true world. Now that the overseers had decreed it to be a prison none could leave and none could enter. Only one entity besides the overseers was granted this privilege…and only he could travel between all of them even if he himself is not a god.” Said Drakhsis with a tone full of seriousness

“Who is this entity? He seem rather strong if he is able of such feat.”

“He is. He is in fact too strong. He is older than time. Even gods fear him and even we dragons shall meet him…he is an Everlasting. The Everlasting Silence…”

“Death…”I said.

“Indeed…Thathanos is his name but never mention it in the outside world. I would prefer if you don’t even think of it. He is a very fickle being with a twisted mentality…always craving for power while he himself have nothing to do with it.”

After hearing this spooky piece of information I asked trying to change the subject.

“So how are we going to…Euh…tame a devil lord?” I dumbly asked.

“Reach equilibrium.”

I did so

“Favor mana but don’t lose the equilibrium state”

I did so making mana a bit more about forty percent and thirty percent for each spiritual energy and pure aura. It was difficult and I almost slipped out of the state but managed to hold on after moments.

A blue hue surrounded me while the Magoi inside my body began to harmonies.

“Good. Now. FANALFEIS YAMI”

Once he said the words that meant untrue dark I was engulfed in an abysmal world. It was dark and nothing was perceivable.

I began to get the creeps as cold sweat began to drench my back.

I know this darkness. It was the same darkness I dreamt of those days…it is the living place of that thing that would always wake me from my sleep.

“Ashurian…”Said something with a sordid voice.

“You have the gall to show yourself in this world. You broke our contract and you still come to this place. Are you that willing to die…” said the same voice.

“What are you talking about? You were waiting for a chance no matter how small to take over my body. You even did so, and almost got me killed” I said in a loud voice feigning bravery but my voice really didn’t convoy it.

“It was due time. It was time for me to take over your body as such was our contract. But now you are much stronger. Did you come here thinking of defeating me? You know without the eye you are nothing. You managed to lose such a gift. A gift I would have been glad to have once again…”

Once again? Is he talking about the time he took over my body and used it? Or is it something else…

A creature soon showed itself in front of me. He had blood red skin color looked like a human but was almost two meters and a half tall. He had two horns protruding from his forehead and bending backward he had leathery wings similar to the ones I gained in that dragon form but were smaller in comparison. He was shirtless by the way. He had a tail that ended in a sharp tip. The thing was buffed and looked like a body builder that focused more on the chest area and neglected a few weeks of leg day. You get the picture. In his right hand he had a sword…a sword I knew very well…The Devourer…how come? Wasn’t it taken away from me when I was back at Quietus? Strange…

“So…are you ready to die Ashurian?” said the entity and I unconsciously took a step backwards

“Worry not youngling. I am with you.” Said Drakhsis. His words gave me courage. A courage that told me that I could force this devil lord into submission…the fact that he was capable of killing a few hundred mages back at quietus was still bugging me but well, you only live once…

**CHAPTER 3**

“So shall we start the coronation your majesty?” Said an old man wearing ceremonial clothes giving him the prestige and presence of a high noble, he was in fact an Arch mage. And the Prime minister over the Alikhian kingdom.

“Wait until everyone is done” said the boy.

The place was the throne room inside the palace of the capital of Alikh. Many were invited to such an event.

The high nobles of the country of Alikh came forward, normally nobles would be displeased by the appearance of this said heir but it seems that the high families were corrupt at heart from the start. They came and bowed before the young kid sitting on the throne wearing the royal outfit for the king of Alikh.

They each pledged allegiance and loyalty to the new king and showered him with gifts and tokens of gratitude. This was an act of hypocrisy as they all had one goal in mind. All the nobles wished to fortify their standing in the kingdom of Alikh and were mostly trying to gain the new King’s favor.

“Now that you are all done you may commence the crowning.” Said the boy.

“Then by the power given to me and with the god’s favor I hereby declare that Jaime Ardous son of Elior Ardous as the new king of Alikh, may he live long and may he rule well”

The moment he finished the declaration he carefully held a crown that a young boy was carrying over a red pillow.

Once he placed the crown over the boy's head the entire palace broke in cheers congratulating the new king.

A man wearing black then approached the throne and got closer to the new king.

“So, Jaime. How are you finding your new position?” said the buffed man wearing black

“Hah. I have yet to enjoy it but I think that it is great. Like you said I got to eat all the pies I want!”

The man in black laughed and walked away letting the young king enjoy his crowning ceremony.

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(Few hours later)

Mr. V was inside a darkened room where the holographic image of all the members of the Organization was shown.

“So how was it Mr. V” said Mr. E

“It went without a hitch. Our fears about Mujin and the true royal heir were baseless. Without them having control over the army or even the council of Alikh the coronation went without disturbance.” Joyfully said Mr. V

“You should still take caution, as long as the location of the real heir of Alikh is still unknown we will still have problems. Even if the higher-ups of the country are under our control we will still be encountered with opposition from the people.” Said Ms. C

“Worry not. The people themselves know of the attitude of the said prince. He is not fit to be a king and I can tell you that with our guidance we will make great use of the new king.” Responded Mr. E

“No matter. This is a great opportunity for our country. We can now expand our businesses and do as we please. And while we are on the matter I would like to request the building of a new facility at Alikh. The one we were using last time was destroyed by a failed experiment and an unfortunate outburst. We were close to finishing the serum that could empower ordinary mages and make them as strong as warriors. It is too bad that Migado died before the serum was completed. He was a fine mage and was the best at controlling metal.” Said one of the shaded personas.

“It is indeed unfortunate that we had lost Migado at that time. Mr. G, but fear not you will have your facility in no time. We just need to get over with the ceremonies and to make the king begin his duties. We also need to quench the upcoming turmoil and the eminent war that might break loose with Alsa being agitated the way they are now” Said Mr. V

“We don’t need a war at this crucial period we might lose more than we could gain. However handing over the captives will be a slap to the face of the people of Alikh. This is indeed grave. We need a solution and fast.” Said Mr. E

“If I may. Why not pin the charge over the escaping prince and make him come as the real killer of the King. This solution will do us wonders I believe. It will calm down the Alsian people and make the real prince look like he had attempted a usurpation of the throne, this will also further enhance the position of the kid we made as a king, by making the people give up on the prince. After all he is well known to be an irresponsible heir…” said Ms. C

“Hmm…It seems quite interesting Ms. C if this is done correctly we can be sure to fix everything up. Then so be it. Make the incident look like that and release the four. If they were given back to Alsa the war will not break.” Said Mr. E

“One thing is still bothering me. Wouldn’t the sudden appearance of the son of Elior be threatening to us? If he dares to claim that he was not the one to kill him?” said Mr. G

“Not at all, if we do this fast he will have the upper hand and we could remove the threat of the real heir once and for all. Not even the people will believe him if we say he killed the king and we provided ’evidence’. Make someone to be a ‘witness’ over the real incident and make them speak for what happened back at the palace. Showing that the four were only taken advantage of once they went to see the breach and make the heir the real killer.” Said Ms. C

“Women…It is amazing how fast your mind tends to work while scheming…” muttered Mr. V

To this statement Ms. C laughed and took it as a compliment.

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I dodged to the right from an incoming swing of the blade that would have cut me in half. The devil in front of me was relentless and gave me no chance at retaliation especially when I didn’t have a single weapon to use.

“Why don’t you lay still and let me cut you down this will save us both the trouble” said the Devil.

“Like if I would do that. Your power is mine!” I said

Yet with another swing the devil lord once again almost cut me in half.

“You are distracted youngling, your real body will lose his equilibrium before we can get to the real issue at hand.” Said Drakhsis whose voice was resounding through my mind.

“Well I am kind of in the middle of something here. Ugh...” I said while dodging another strike.

“Annoying little kid.” Said the Devil then stopped moving. He flicked his sword and it transformed into an unwholesome staff that had a red jewel at the top…I didn’t know that the devourer could do that.

“Die!” said the Devil lord and with that the jewel shone bright red and the energy released from it.

Hundreds of arrows made of a dark matter shot forward, I was unable to even dodge the incoming attack as it was ridiculously fast and had a huge range.

The arrows of dark pierced my skin and with each and every one of them striking me I felt heavier to the point I was unable to move. I dropped down to my knees.

The devil lord then slowly approached saying

“Strange…your soul should have shattered the moment the attack had hit you…”

I was unable to respond due to an overwhelming pain that was going through my body.

“YOUNGLING! Get yourself together. Reach equilibrium.” Said Drakhsis

“A-am I not in that mode already” I responded

“Your true body is in that state but your mind is still in chaos. Reach for equilibrium in the untrue world and you will be fine.” Said Drakhsis with a tone full of worry

“A-alright” I responded with spasms of pain running through my body.

But before I could do so I got kicked in the face by the devil lord which made me even more disoriented.

Right after that I received another punch to the abdomen and began to cough blood

“Get up youngling. The pain you are feeling is only inside your head. Do not let him break you, fight back.”

I am trying but he is not giving me a chance…if only I had one moment.

“If it is but a moment you want then you shall have it. After that you are on your own.”

A moment after that the devil appeared in front of me with the devourer back into its initial scimitar form and now coated with death magic. If the blade didn’t kill me the magic will…

Right before the blade was brought down I felt a surge of power…this feeling is familiar to what happened back then…this is the same thing that Ashura did to me so that the devil was destabilized.

Drakhsis soon appeared into the untrue world dwarfing the devil and with one strike of his paw sent him hundreds of meters flying.

A second after that Drakhsis disappeared.

“For now this is all I can do…you need to win this fight Youngling…it is a fight with yourself and a fight with it on the line.” Said Drakhsis with his voice fading in the background.

“Don’t worry old man I got this.” I took a meditating position and began to reach equilibrium.

At first I thought that this world was empty and had nothing in it but the moment I began harnessing the surrounding energy, Aura began to gather into my body. And quit easily at that too. The pain I was feeling soon disappeared and my mana reached its optimal quantity with the aura at a state equal to it.

I dispersed the excess spiritual energy and tried to reach equilibrium. Once I was in that state I felt a connection to my real body. The mind and body synced.

I heard the devil shouting his lungs out while charging at me.

His body was covered in a red hue and he looked enraged.

He jumped up and spun like a top swinging the now gigantic great sword that the devourer transformed to, down on the still in a meditating position me.

“Morfii Drakh!” I said.

…

(Devil point of view)

This damn Ashurian.

He thinks himself capable of controlling me. I, a being of magic and mana will never submit to one that is below me. Not to a human!

However the bastard is indeed strong. That attack should have killed him but not only did he resist the death magic within it. He even summoned a true dragon into my world! How? When did he meet one of them? I lost control the moment that damn brat managed to break the contract sending me to this abyss. I became blind to the outer world. Helpless and stranded inside this darkness…

That body of his is though...It is strange…how was he able to gain such a power? I still remember the moment I took over his body. He was weak. Feeble and exhausted. Now he is brimming with energy and power.

Now that I remember, I wonder why they called me a devil lord. Was it because I was capable of using death magic? It is true that I can use death magic but my lords said that it was my ability…and I was deemed as an anomaly due to being the only devil under a devil lord’s strength with that power…I can’t remember my past. I only remember the day I woke up in front of our Overlord.

He said that it was the moment I was born…a newborn that has to serve under him.

But I still…

My memory is hazy…I only remember the times I fought using this blade…my soul weapon…I remember the time I fought countless battles…fought thousands of enemies…fragments of my memory are still present but I cannot make the whole picture…something is missing and this kid...every time I look upon him I feel something strange billowing under my stomach…damn it DAMN IT TO HELL!

He will die today and I shall have his body. Never will be entrapped in this place never will I be used as a power source! I am here to serve my lord. I am here to bring him this boy’s body!

My overlord went to unimaginable lengths just to rally to me the order of possessing one of the Ashurians

He thought them to be a danger to our race. And due to me being the only devil strong enough to hear his decree from well beyond the walls, I was the one entrusted with this task. A task that I will not fail.

I looked at my old friend and changed its shape. I have no idea how I still have it here but it must be because it is linked to my soul. It now became a great sword.

That damn dragon sure did send me flying. But this is my world I will be sure to defeat the intruder.

I began to run toward the feint glowing light. It was the Ashurian stilling in a position like if he was meditating.

“Even if you try you will not get out of here. Not until either I allow it or I die!”

I jumped high up and spun around maximizing the potential damage output that my sword could produce and struck down.

“Morfii Drakh” said the boy

The old words? Wasn’t the overlord the only one to be able to use them… it matters not today he dies.

My sword made contact. The life of the Ashurian should now be over…However it was met with resistance.

A second after that a presence like I have never felt before washed over me. I felt my body becoming ten times heavier.

I looked in front of me, to see what the cause of this outrageous outcome was.

The boy changed.

The one eyed boy had his hair turn to the color of ash. His skin turned pale and was lettered with scales. He grew horns and a pair of wings. One of his hands was grabbing my sword and supporting the entirety of the weight I had behind it with it.

He looked at me and said

“Surprised?”

As if he was mocking me he lightly pulled the grabbed sword with his hand

And me who was still shocked couldn’t let go of the blade and was easily pulled with it.

I was then welcomed with a punch to the abdomen, that made me bend forward from the impact. But before I could even register the pain the boy let go of the grabbed sword. And sent another punch of his other hand to my welcoming face.

The punch sent me flying almost the same distance the earlier dragon did.

But he never gave me a chance to make a breath intake as he appeared once again near me grabbing my head and smashing it down.

The damage was unbelievable.

He then proceeded into punishing me in the face.

All the damage done to me in this world is but an imitation and I cannot truly die from physical attacks but it was still painful.

A human capable of dealing this amount of damage to a devil is unthinkable.

He then stopped hitting me and said

“Now how about you become a good devil and let me use your power. You see I kind of want to leave this void and without your power the damn dragon won’t let me go anywhere so how about it?”

“Go to hell!” I said

“What a strange choice of words, coming from a devil that is” he said then he continued punching me.

I had enough. I gathered some of my mana and used my body as a catalyst to cast it.

It was sent as a shockwave of death magic but it failed to do the slightest damage to him. He shrugged the attack off like if it was nothing and continued punching me.

“It seems that you won’t be that easy to ‘convince” said the boy then he stood up

He looked at the sword still on my right arm and stomped over it making me wince and release the sword.

He took it, admired it, pointed it at me and said.

“Devour!”

The sword turned to its original form and a mouth soon opened from the base of the sword. He aimed it at my right hand and the sword ‘eat’ it without a second thought.

I screamed from pain as this time the damage was on the soul level.

“Quite a nifty trick. It seems that this thing still likes me. Although it is but a copy of the real thing it acts the same way. Now how about it, help me leave this place and I will let you live. I just need your power that is all you can do whatever you like afterword hell I will even release you once we are back in the true world after all we are no longer bound by a contract and you can find yourself another host.”

This damn human…no he is no longer a human…he is a monster.

To use a devil’s soul weapon against him…this boy is defying logic! However something is bothering me...

“What do you mean by back to the true world?” I grudgingly said

“Oh you don’t know? Well it is actually a very funny story here is how it went.”

**Chapter 4**

A blue furred gorilla like monster with two heads and tails like serpents was running toward me.

Shouting and threatening he moved forward.

“Go” I said

And with that one of my ice wolves tackled the gorilla by biting on one of his legs making it fall forward while I instantly summoned an ice like spike from underground.

The spike went straight up the gorilla’s head while its other head screamed and shouted from pain.

I gave it no chance to retaliate as I conjured a heaven piercing javelin and threw it to penetrate its other head.

With this I completed the quota and finished the seventh floor.

Once I exited I saw about a few hundred warriors and mages already out and recovering. One was screaming his lungs out as his right foot was cut off but none even went to help him. After all. None would try to help another now. We all witnessed what trust could do to a person here.

“Ugh so annoying” Said the same voice and another light that was known to all showered over the no longer screaming man. Only ash remained and more dread was thrown to us. Whoever is this person he is merciless.

More tried to challenge him again and were meat with the same treatment and many abandoned the climb early on. This was but the seventh floor we had to fight through hordes of monsters. Even had to climb a mountain. We even had to run away at a particular floor from this same crazed person’s ray of death. If it was not for my small version of dragon spirit that I rode and flew away from the ray I would have died right there.

However, doubt was never in my heart. I had a goal and I will reach it.

“Alright it seems that it is about it. The rest had died and only you remain…quite pitiful I say. It seems that this time the candidates are rather unentertaining.”

Once he said that another portal was opened.

I walked toward it and noticed something I have neglected.

There is a Romanian number on the floor.

I gathered my courage and spoke.

“Is this not the same floor that we began at? It seem to be similar to it…”

“Hmm…who is this? Ah a descendant of the so called guardians. Hmm. No, although it looks similar it is not the same. Every floor is in a different dimension and a different world. Now go along I have a special challenge this time for every single one of you.” Said the same thing

This actually sent shivers down my spine

No matter I will deal with it no matter what.

I then entered.

It was raining. The place I was thrown at was near a forest. In front of me was an establishment that looked old and almost crumbling however some rooms had light in them. I tried to move but was unable to do so. It seems that I can only watch. I tried to use a spell or even create frost but was unable to do so.

So I watched.

Soon a vehicle moved near the place I was at. A man wearing a black coat exited and was soon followed by a woman…I know these people…this place…it can’t be…

Soon after the establishment exploded sending debris and rubbish everywhere.

The man conjured a wind barrier and protected the woman behind him while a little black haired girl exited the vehicle and went toward them.

A young boy was leaving the now enflamed place and began to speak. His voice however and the voice of everything was muted to me. Soon after that he casted a spell that easily destroyed the man’s barrier but the woman behind him pushed him out of the way.

She was struck with the attack and the man only took minor damage but crashed into a tree nearby.

The little girl was blown away by the weight of the attack and lost consciousness.

Rain soon stopped falling and the boy got closer to his victims.

Tears began to drop as I knew what was coming. However I still hoped that they would make it.

The woman was unmoving and the man rose. He had a gash on his side making lots of blood splurged on the floor.

He went closer to the woman but was thrown away once the same boy used his staff to control some of the debris and stones and threw them at both of them.

Unable to do anything the man waited for the end but was instantly squished away by someone.

It was him…It was Greetman. Is this an illusion? What the hell is the meaning of this? Why did this thing show me something like this?

Greetman soon placed the man on the ground who now lost consciousness. He soon looked over the boy’s side who now crumbled to his feet exuding huge amounts of energy. The man took the staff that was now on the ground and walked toward the boy. He spoke to him and placed the staff in front of him. The boy reached out to the thing and the dark atmosphere soon subsided.

He grabbed the boy by hand and looked over the man who was unconscious, he got closer to him and grabbed him throwing him over his shoulders. And walked away from the scene. Due to the position of the debris Greetman was not aware that a woman was still under them, neither did he notice that on the other side of the still inflamed building was an unconscious young girl.

He walked away with the two leaving a scene of horror. The man was still wounded but it seemed that he would live…

If this is truly what happened then papa might still be…No this is an illusion it has to be. It must be the challenge that that voice said he is the only thing that would be behind this tactless joke.

I tried to squirm out of my position but was still stuck. Will I be like this for long?

A few minutes later once the flames subsided the little girl who was now awake walked forward.

She searched all over the place and finally stumbled over the location of her deceased mother.

She cried and cried. Until the weather turned cold. She cried until the earth turned to ice. She cried until her hair turned white…

Soon afterwards I was taken back to the same room.

I looked around and saw that the number of contenders didn’t decline not by one bit.

However, most of them dropped down to their knees crying while the rest was either seething with rage or looked like a corps from shock.

A psychological test…

“Now that was rather interesting. Some of you have some intriguing pasts. No matter the next round for you is going to start soon. Go along”

Once he said that another gate opened. Another challenge will soon begin…

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“Ok that was wicked!” I said

I was out of that untrue world like Drakhsis had called it and back to the normal world….or should I say the Void.

Anyway apparently I was in the dragon from.

“RELEASE IT NOW!!!”Said Drakhsis with a tone full of worry and haste

“Release what?” I said

“The Dragon form hurry youngling your life is in danger!”

Huh? My life?

“Morfii Hshto!” I said

And instantly felt my skin wriggle, the claws retracted the fangs went back to normal teeth and my vision became normal.

Once I was back in the ‘human form’ I instantly felt dizzy while my ears began to wring. I dropped down to my knees and felt the whole world’s weight on my shoulders.

“W-what the hell is going on?” I said

“What did you expect youngling? There is no such thing as immediate power without consequences. And you became strong too strong and at such a short notice you will suffer the leach back of such power. Until your body has adapted to your new power you will need to only use the Art of the aspects ever so lightly.” Said Drakhsis

“More so” he added. “You had burnt an immense amount of your vital energy that if you had stayed in that form a bit longer you would have died!”

“What do you mean I would have died? You never mentioned anything like that before why is staying in that mode so dangerous? Is that power truly that grave if so why did you teach it to me. I was filled with power too much of it that I overwhelmed the devil within! It was intoxicating better than anything I had ever felt!” I said

“No it is not the form. If it was a normal case of exhaustion your body would have simply released it. But didn’t you ever think of how you managed to gather aura inside an empty and lifeless world? Inside the untrue world that is? There was nothing there so where did you think the aura came from?” said Drakhsis

Now that you think of it? How did I manage to do so?

“It was your soul! Once inside that world you are directly linked to your soul. You used it as fuel for your power. Carful youngling igniting the soul is a great way for getting more power but if you do so with excess you will one day lose your life.”

Note taken.

“So it seems that you were unable to tame that devil.” Said Drakhsis

“Yeah. It seems he prefers death over giving me some of his power but I can’t help it. I think I will just have to go back there and try to ‘convince’ him harder.” I replied while shrugging.

“No, leave him for now. I thought that it might end up this way that is why I had you bring those crystals.” Said Drakhsis

Now looking at it I wonder why he did so. I was gathering those things like there was no tomorrow…

Drakhsis soon stood up from his lying position and walked closer to the mini mountain of purple crystals.

They were glowing ever so faintly. Yet their sheen was mesmerizing.

Drakhsis opened his maw and slowly a red flame was sent engulfing the crystals in a searing heat.

The flame was not meant to destroy the crystals but it seems he was heating them.

Once they were hot enough the sheen on them became more apparent then he somehow willed them to float all at once.

Once they did so they became a huge mass of purple crystal that slowly began to shrink into a ball.

The mass became denser while he heated it more with his flame and became more compact

Ever so slowly it shrunk until it was small enough almost ten centimeter in diameter.

I wonder how he managed to compress such a thing to this weight but he is a mighty old dragon so a trick like this should not be something that hard for him.

“Take it” he said

I hesitated at first because common that thing must be super-hot I think that it would be unwise to grab it before it cools down.

“Just take it. Worry not youngling you have a body of a dragon now. Heat is the least of your worry” he added

I grabbed it with both hands but instantly felt the weight behind it as it almost brought me down to my knees.

It seems that this thing is so compressed that it still held on to its original weight. Normally my hands would have been severed by its weight as without my spiritual buffs I have no way to even try and carry something of this magnitude. But somehow these ‘body’ improvement proved to be more helpful than I thought.

“It is heavy...” I said under my breath.

“Good” Drakhsis said “Now use some of your mana on it.”

I did so and instantly felt a connection with the purple crystal ball.

Drakhsis soon said

“I saw in your memories the time that person had given you a prism stone. These stones are similar in way to them. Now that you have dragon flesh you can open more mana veins and with my power I can do so with ease. Pour more mana” Drakhsis added

I did so, and the stone began to shine even brighter.

Its weight began to lessen while I felt tingling under my skin. A damn broke inside my body and was instantly filled with power. My body began to absorb the magic more so than I could ever believe.

“Enough!” said Drakhsis

But I couldn’t stop I took in more, and more

“I said enough Youngling your body cannot handle all that!”

However I was unable to hear him he then immediately reached his hand forward trying to separate me from the crystal ball but once his claw got closer a shockwave of purple energy shot forward pushing his hand away.

More mana was absorbed into my body until the ball began to crack and soon shattered.

Purple veins began to spread across my flesh and pulsate with power but a moment sooner I heard Drakhsis shouting something. But all I could hear were background noises. I then lost consciousness.

…

Waking up I felt my body brimming with energy. More than I ever felt before but once I looked up I saw Drakhsis looking toward me with worry clearly showing on his face…I wonder how he could make such complexions I mean he is a dragon for god sake…

“Are you alright Youngling?” said the dragon

“Yes, never felt better.” I replied

 “Good. But that was a stupid thing to do, you should have slowly in took that energy and not all at once. Anyway it was fortunate enough you are now ready for the next thing.” Said Drakhsis.

“Oh common more training? Will this ever end?”

“It shall soon do so. But you need to learn the way of dragons before you proceed to the crucible.”

“Way of the dragon! You mean breathing fire right!” I ecstatically said

“Ugh, what is it with you and breathing fire, and yes that is one of the basics. But go wash yourself first.” Said Drakhsis

“Alright.” I said

I went toward the lake to wash myself and took a look into my reflection. And boy I was shocked…

I now had purple strands of hair mixed in with my natural hair color…

I turned to look over Drakhsis who seemed to be enjoying this rather peculiar change of appearance and then he said

“Side effects of in taking too much void energy at once. Be glad you don’t have a purple crystal on your forehead. Hahaha”. He said

“Well…I can’t seem to be minding it at least now it matches with the color of my cloths.”

I then removed my cloths and dived into the lake…

**CHAPTER 5**

(Osfor POV)

“Just like that?” I said.

“Just like that…” replied the guard

It was interesting to see how we were released from captivity without getting questioned. Did Gaz-sama do something to hasten our release? I asked myself

Greetman however had other ideas. As once he was freed from his shackles he head-butted the guard rendering him unconscious…what a nasty temper…

“Let’s go” he said and so we did.

Once we were outside the facility we were surrounded with few men wearing black. Probably escorts

Ainz was seething with rage. And was at the verge of killing the so called escorts.

“We are sorry for the inconveniences caused to you, now that you have been cleared of charges you can go on your way. There is a vehicle that will be transporting you back to Alsian borders, so please follow me.” Said one of the men.

Greetman was starting to get heated up again. I think five months of captivity would do that to a person so I said

“Alright let’s go, I’ve missed my lab, and I want to take a good long hot bath once I get back to my villa.”

Midorikawa then turned around looking at me with judgmental eyes but decided to remain silent.

“Sigh, let’s just leave…” said Takeda. “Greetman, these are just lackeys they are not worth the trouble…”

“I know…but I feel like I really want some trouble at the moment…” replied Greetman and moved forward until he was face to face with the man that just spoke.

 A drop of sweat soon fell from his forehead but he still kept his composure.

“My blades…”Said Greetman

“They will be in the vehicle” calmly replied the man

That man is interesting. Although Greetman is releasing insane amounts of pressure just by that approach alone the man remained calm and unperturbed. While the others were almost pissing their pants.

“Ah! My cane! I need it too, where is it?”

“You will find all your belongings clothes and weapons back at the vehicle please follow me. We still have more things to do.”

Said the man who now turned around and began to walk away. Greetman however would probably take the man giving him his back like that as an insult so Takeda and I soon intervened.

“Well Greetman lets just get out of here, I mean really we need to speak to Gaz-sama it is really important that we figure out what truly happened and I don’t think these guys will be of help” I said

Greetman then sighed and relaxed himself decreasing the amount of pressure, but not by a lot…

We soon followed the man and got into a small carriage that was enough for the four of us. Thankfully our items were there as promised

However that didn’t mean I trust their words for it as I checked them to see if there is any scratch or some sort of spells. I mean I love my cane! And don’t want anyone playing with it…unless I agree to it of course…

We got on the carriage and moved forward. Going back to Alsa and finally done with this damn country…I should have stayed in my lab…why did I even agree to come here…

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What a strange human…to be able to contain the power of dragons, gods, and devils inside his body at once…in all my life, I had never seen something this bewildering

Everything in this world fears me…if it was not for my will to let the creatures inside the mountain live here…I would have stayed alone for eternity…My own aura and presence forces every creature to fear me and avoid even coming to this place…not even that mage was able to stand my unfocused presence.

But Asura…not only had he fought against it, he even sustained that of Arvion. And dared to attack a primordial dragon where anything or anyone would hesitate a thousand time before he could even attempt such a foolish thing.

He was even able to defeat a devil in his own world…this kid managed to learn the old words, like if they were but a common language…if he only knew of the strength and will it would take another human to utter one single word, and produce the same results he is getting, he would be shocked.

More so, he perfected the form of dragons in one attempt and managed to use aura to fuel his mana in such a short time…I was going to force him to stay here with me, I thought that if he should need to attempt the crucible it would be the next time it rose…however, with the speed he is learning things…I don’t think I can force him to stay as he had grown strong…too strong…

The fact that he unconsciously used void magic to stop me from getting to him when he was absorbing too much energy is worrying me…My claw was damaged…never in my life had I though I human would be able to damage me…to inflict a wound on a primordial dragon is not something to be taken lightly.

However, why do I feel proud…proud to have a human as a disciple, a friend? Someone to speak to…to talk with, while at the same time this person did not fear me. Ah this fills me with great joy…I hope he truly clears the crucible…if not, that he would at least survive.

“Asura.” I said “Come forth”

“On my way” He said and began to dress himself.

He got closer to me and looked toward me with eyes filled with excitement. Such a foolish young child. Too eager to learn to grow stronger. The end of our time together is drawing nearer…and the lifespan of humans is too short…

I then said.

“I have something to ask of you Youngling. Before we start your next and final task.”

“What is it Drakhsis-san” he said

“I want you to…”

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“What?! I mean clearing the crucible is hard enough…isn’t your request this time a bit too much. I mean…” I said

“I know youngling, it may sound absurd. But if you could claim it…it would mean much to me… anyway let’s get to the final thing. Enter Equilibrium” said the dragon

…well whatever when time comes I will try…not that I know how to but I will try…

I reached equilibrium almost instantly this time as my mana had increased tenfold. I even had to release a considerable amount of it just to be able to reach that state. Now I only need to absorb aura into my body instead of having to transform it continuously. This is almost similar to mana flux. But less powerful and it takes longer.

“Then what now?”

“Use the dragon aspect”

I did so

“Now fight me.” Said Drakhsis

“Huh? Come again?” I inquired only to receive a paw from Drakhsis to my entire body that pinned me into the nearest wall. By nearest I mean the mountain boulders a few hundred meters from where I initially was…

“What was that for” I said, but that was a few moments after I difficultly managed to undug myself from the rocks.

“I said fight me. If you are not willing I will be the one doing all the fighting then.” Once he said that he appeared in front of me.

I never actually got to admire how agile Drakhsis really is…after all he weigh thousands of tons and is really huge…but damn he is fast, even his strike was almost impossible to dodge.

“How could this be a part of training?” I said

After all, getting beaten around by a dragon didn’t really register for me as training…

“It is. Survival training. Survival against unsurmountable odds. NOW SURVIVE” once he said that he shot forward hundreds of fireballs that all were sent from the moment he opened his mouth.

The fireballs were tearing the ground apart and were rapidly headed toward me. Each of them was strong enough to leave an enormous hole on the ground. Getting hit by one of them will probably mean a world of pain. Something I don’t really feel like tasting at the moment

So I dodged and dodged and dodged…and then got hit. By one, a second…a third. I stopped counting when I reached thirty but I could say one thing. Drakhsis was going easy on me and Oh boy did it hurt…I don’t want to even think about what he would do if I was his enemy.

“Use your wings. They are not just for decoration.” Said Drakhsis

Now that I think of it…wings! I have damn wings!

I tried to get a feel to them but was unable to make them move.

“Will them to move don’t force them. Only think of flying think of the way you wish to move and they will obey. You have a dragon’s flesh and a dragon’s instinct. Let it guide you. It is that instinct that makes you able to know where is your prey. Who is your enemy, and who is your foe.” Said Drakhsis

I then willed the wings to take me up. And oh boy they did, I only had to think of going up and they did.

Although I was amazed by the view I almost regretted doing this…not that vertigo was a problem, but it was the fact that Drakhsis seemed even happier about shooting a flying target. The hundred earlier balls of fire that he shot now were once again casted toward me. Only this time…he used ten times the amount…

…

One month…One entire month of this. Every day I woke up! Every time, and anytime, I had to be on alert. Because if I didn’t. Drakhsis will send a fireball my way.

Even while eating I had to be on alert…

Even while sleeping…

Even while doing…other personal things…I had to stay alert. It was disturbing…

However I learned something. And boy was I proud.

It goes like this. One day while I was trying to cast some spells and discover what my limit was, I thought about something. Well I actually was obsessed with it…

I was in dragon form an in this form my body was truly strong. So I thought about doing it…

BREATHING FIRE!!!

I began slowly by channeling mana to my mouth area and tried to breathe out…nothing…

Then Drakhsis out of nowhere came and gave me an advice.

“Use your lungs. Fill them with mana and only will it to be exuded. And you shall have what you desire.”

I did so and filled my lungs with mana. And then breathed out imagining my breath turning to flame.

Well it did turn to flame…it was strong. And shot forward magnificently and majestically. Only one thing though it was purple…and was a bit too much. The fire eat away at the near trees and managed to burn them to a crisp.

“Hahaha. It is like watching a hatchling attempting his first fire breath. You can use any spell you want with that body of yours. Just will it to do what you want and you can even shoot ice breath from your mouth” said Drakhsis.

I coughed a bit due to having some smoke caught into my lungs but turned toward Drakhsis saying

“What do you mean ice breath? Shouldn’t I only be capable of fire? Don’t dragons only breathe fire?” I said

“Normal ones, yes. Every normal dragon is only able to shoot his own element through his breath. Ice for ice dragons, fire for fire dragon, light for light dragons and so on…However you ate the heart and body of a primordial dragon. A dragon that is not bound by such limits.” Proudly proclaimed Drakhsis

“Euh…but I only saw you use fire attacks…” I dumbly said

“Well…I prefer that element... But I did use a spatial spell before” said Drakhsis…probably embarrassed

“Ah I remember…the time you compressed those crystals.” I said

“Yes. Now dodge!” said Drakhsis

But I was unable to register his last statement. Resulting in my face having an intimate meeting with the nearest wall…

It was quite annoying…thirty days of this same routine…

However, I could understand why he is doing something like this. Surviving depends on instinct. And nothing could hone your instinct better than a dragon chasing you…

But I cannot run forever.

Today I will fight back.

I stood up, used the dragon aspect and confidently walked toward the now laying dragon.

He seems to like naps. Well if I lived as long as him I would probably find nothing more interesting than a good nap.

Drakhsis soon slowly open the lid of his eyes which by the way opens sideways…creepy

“Hmm” He said “Are you sure about doing this?” he added

But I know he could read my mind so I did not reply.

He then rose his head up and looked at me. Only this time the pressure he emitted was enough to shake the strongest human…but I, no longer am human.

“Hoo.” He said, Drakhsis seemed impressed “To be able to sustain the full blunt of my pressure without flinching. You became a frightening being Youngling.”

“Well. To be honest I already figured that you have been slowly increasing your pressure day by day. So this amount is tolerable. Although annoying I can still hold on.”

“Hahaha, so you figured it out. Good, now do your best.” But the moment he said that a paw was sent to crush me from above.

Normally I would have dodged it. But I am done running. I stood still and raised my hands blocking his incoming strike. I did so but with the smallest of margins. My feet sank into the ground below while my body shuddered from the weight. If I had my human body I would have become a pool of blood and gore. But no I resisted it and pushed it back. Although the weight of his strike was immense I knew that he was clearly going easy on me.

Few fireballs were sent my way but I casted a fire breathe to counter their effect.

I know I could have used other spells or even dodged but damn I became fond of this thing. I mean I AM BREATHING PURPLE FIRE! (I know you are envious!)

Drakhsis rose and began to fire away deadlier spells. This time he shot a ray of concentrated magic similar to the ones that Arvion shot before.

I dodged it and countered with another fire breath that actually did nothing to harm him.

He then swiped at me with his right hand and I once again countered only this time

“Dragon warrior’s art!! FULL BUFF”

Well it was actually just warrior’s art I only added the dragon shortcut because I was in dragon form…you know, formalities…

“Dragon Earth shattering smash!”

With the power of dragons and the body of one I infused my hand with both aura and spiritual energy and rocked a punch toward the incoming swipe.

Results.

I was sent reeling toward the mountain and managed to break a record for how deep I penetrated the wall…

However, it was not without result. Once I exited the mountain, it was easier this time…

I saw something interesting…

Drakhsis was looking at his paw. One of his claws was missing.

It was on the floor and his finger began to bleed.

I thought that he was going to be upset but he soon began to laugh. And loudly at that too.

“To think a human is capable of wounding me! No, you are a dragon now youngling! GOOD!” Drakhsis proudly claimed

“You are now ready. Ready to take on the crucible.”

**CHAPTER 6**

“Bunch of weaklings…” said the ominous voice.

Twenty first round…one month of continues climb and every time we become less and less. Every time more people die and even more give up. I count but twenty that are still here.

Once we reached the tenth floor, it was but monster fights. We fought monsters after monsters wave after wave. Many dropped from tiredness.

Food was a scarce resource here. I already went through the provisions I had with me. The principal had already mentioned that this will be a problem that I will face sometime but I didn’t think that it would be this grave…not even normal animals were present at any of the floors… At one point I was forced to eat monster flesh to sustain myself…

Nevertheless I need to keep climbing.

I was approached by many before…they all wanted one thing. To help them climb but I was not one to be tricked twice so I left them…they never made it out.

One thing is for sure. Those that are still alive on this floor have no desire for surrendering. Only four floors and they could leave. Leave with glory, wealth, and prestige. But I needed more. I needed power.

Power and respect that accompanies any that manages to clear the fiftieth floor…

“Now, it seems that you can barely handle yourselves fighting these mindless beasts. I wonder what you will do now?” said the same sadistic maniac that was killing people left and right.

Another portal soon opened and every one of us knew what to expect. More dread…

Once I entered I was showered with a blinding light. Again…

Loud cries was all I could hear and sounds of battle was all around me. I was inside a battlefield

I had no idea what was happening but I knew one thing. I was not wearing my normal clothes but a standard uniform. One of which many was wearing. It was brown dirtied and filled with mud. In front of me was a raging battle with sword and shield.

The ‘enemy’ was wearing a different outfit. They looked organized and more disciplined with blue tunics under their armor they moved as one and killed as one. Whilst our side was mercilessly being massacred. I put up my hand forward and began to chant so that I can summon ice to help me deal with the enemy…only to figure out one dreadful thing…I cannot feel mana inside me anymore. I cannot use magic…

A man wearing the enemy’s tunic soon saw the still puzzled me and charged forward with sword brought up and a clear look of disgust and hatred showing on his face.

I could only look in shock until one man out of nowhere stabbed the charging enemy by the side making him trip and slide over the mud until he stopped ‘dead’ near where I stood.

“Get yourself together soldier! Even if our commander is dead we need to fight for our lives get that man’s sword and fight back!” Shouted the man.

I looked at him and instantly understood.

A challenge without the use of magic…

(Four months earlier)

“Use it!” said Ousay

“But I can’t…I only know how to use magic…martial arts are not my fort!” I replied

“I don’t think you understand clearly, this is not a request it is an order.” He said and threw a short sword in front of me.

“Once you are there you need to expect anything. Being unable to use your magic is one of those things. So use the blade to defend yourself or I will make you regret not doing It.” said the master swordsman

I hesitantly grabbed the sword and stood forward.

“Wrong!” he said and struck it away from my hand

“Pick it up!” he said

Once I did, he got closer to me, and pointed the shaft of his sheeted katana to my side.

“Dead!”

“Are you guys really not doing this on purpose?” I said as they seemed to like the idea of ‘killing’ me at any single mistake. ‘Dead’ was the word I heard the most when I was practicing with the principal. And now it seems that Ousay became fond of this word…quite vexing

“No one is going to let you wait until you grab your sword. Age of chivalry is long since lost so get your weapon and come at me once again.” Said Ousay

And I did. And got ‘killed’ I tried again and got killed once more…every time I got killed but every time I learned something new.

I began to swap teachers from day to another.

I am thankful that Ousay decided to show up here at Alsa. It seems that he managed to escape captivity and bring back our forces before they were hindered…

He was however sadden that he didn’t manage to get the other four out from prison as it became heavily guarded…But once Gaz-sama ordered him to remain at Alsa he found out about me training with the principal and (although he won’t admit it) became rather curious about my training once he knew I was going to attempt the crucible.

“Again!” he said

So we continued…

(Four months later)

I instantly grabbed the sword of the enemy at my feet and blocked a downward slash that was coming at me from another enemy. He placed a lot of weight under that strike but he failed to follow up on it. His technique was clumsy as I easily shifted the weight of his sword by tilting my blade sideway and instantly slashing in a rising strike.

With that I managed to cut an artery on his neck and the man dropped down gurgling and drowning from his own blood.

Another one came at me but I only had to move sideways to dodge yet another mechanical attack. While retaliating with a fast stab to the unprotected area of his armor which was below the armpit as his hand was still raised once I dodged.

And another man dropped.

Although they were humans. The excitement didn’t let me pause to think of my actions…I only had to think of them as beasts. This after all could be but an illusion. The same thing that happened at the seventh floor. And if so this is only to destabilize us and make us hesitate. Hesitation is deadly…a lesson that was engraved into me by the two heavenly demons that shifted while trying to train me.

The enemy was very organized but their swordsmanship was very lacking. They worked well as a group but never did so as individuals. Ours however was a walking disaster. Dirtied and disgusting and without a leader. We were like a headless chicken.

One of the men on our side however mounted on a horseback and loudly shouted

“Rally to me!”

He screamed his lungs out and most of the unorganized individuals soon adhered to his command.

He had a tight coagulation of mismatches but they all still obeyed him, as with this new ‘leader’ they thought to have better chance at beating the well-organized enemy.

The man was wearing the same outfit as the rest of the infantry but seeing him on top of a horse gave the rest a sense of courage and gave him an air of leadership.

He had bright red hair with blue eyes and a small and thin nose. His square face and pointy chin made him look like one born in nobility. However his arm which was unadorned with any sort of armor showed that this man had trained for a hard and a long time. As the well-developed muscles bulged with power once he grabbed a spear from a nearby soldier and shot it forward.

The spear was shot with such a force that it flew far and heavy.

The target was the commander of the enemy team who thought himself to be well beyond the reach of the arrows from our ranks. Only to be shot in between the eyes by the spear that came from more than four hundred meters. A feat that only the strongest of warriors could replicate.

“CHARGE!!!” said the man and we all did.

But right before our forces would make contact.

A blinding light soon engulfed us all.

“Oh! That was quite fast…not bad you managed to kill the commander at such a short notice.” Said the same voice reverberating from everywhere.

I looked around me to see that our numbers had not decreased by much. We were still few however.

But on another look it seems that the red haired man who threw that spear is in fact one of the challengers…

“Let the next round begin!” said the same voice.

And once again the same portal opened. And once again I proceeded, I still need to climb more…

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“What is this?” I said

“A gift to you.” Said Drakhsis

“Euh…thank you but what am I to do with your claw? Claim it as a trophy?” I said

“No…here” said Drakhsis and he then grabbed, by the way he just sprouted another claw to replace the old one…

He cracked it in two and they both began to change shape.

The first became a small oval like object that had a purple red and ashen symbols on it… And the second took the shape of a sword. The shape of the devourer’s first form. A scimitar…

“Use these inside the crucible. They will help.” Said Drakhsis

“Thank you. The sword is a great gift at least now I can fight while using something other than my hands. But what is the other thing?” I said

“Place it on your face” said Drakhsis

I looked at the thing…and decided to do as he said. Fearing that this might be some sort of test I still had my guard up from any incoming attack.

I placed the thing on my face but I could only see the white of the object…I then faced the direction where I thought Drakhsis was and dumbly said

“Like this?” I said

“Yes” he said “Shinral Onama”

Once he spoke the old words for true vision the thing reformed until it became compatible with the shape of my face. Then it lightly pressed against it and my vision became clear…no clear is an understatement I was able to have a full vision.

I was struggling at first with partial vision due to my right eye being missing…but with this gift I am like new.

“This will help you see attacks aimed at you from any direction while at the same time won’t reveal your intentions to your enemies.” Said Drakhsis

“I-I can’t thank you enough Drakhsis-san…this si truly a wonderful gift.” I said

“No need youngling. You earned it. Now go. The crucible has already begun you can still make it. You will need to travel south of this mountain and for quite a long time once you see the glow of its tower you will know that you had approached. Youngling, Forget not your promise. I will wait until the day you call out to me from outside this world. Open the passage and set ‘us’ free…Now go youngling…” said Drakhsis…

And with this I have two promises to fulfil for him. The first is to set him free…while the other…

…

I headed south of the mountain. Feeling the presence of Drakhsis ever so slowly fading. And with each day of travel I began to encounter more monsters…however, they didn’t seem to ever be wanting to encounter me…

Every time and everywhere I moved, creatures would squirm away and run. I did not bother with them however. As long as they don’t attempt anything on me I won’t be needing to kill them. So I walked.

After few days I managed to encounter some old acquaintances. Yes, the south side of the mountain was the same direction where the old man’s cave was in. I met with; the damn long clawed monsters. And managed to beat the living crap out of them. But I didn’t kill any as I just didn’t feel like wanting to needlessly spill blood. The second acquaintances I met were the wolves that got me to this place.

And their leader whose name was Zhareb if I remember correctly slowly approached.

 “Asura. You grew strong and in such a short period…what are you?” said Zhareb

“It matters not. I need to get to the crucible…I need to free Drakhsis-san from this place…” I said

“The crucible? Are you certain of your ability to surpass that place?” said Zhareb.

“I don’t know but what I do know is that if I want to leave this place that is the only choice I have.” I responded.

“Then could we please ask you a selfish request?” said Zhareb

“Ask away. You helped me the time I was here and it is your right to demand whatever you want for me. I partially own you my life.” I said as truly if they didn’t show up with good intentions six months ago I would have probably never lived to this day.

“We have heard much about this world of yours from our ancestors they had spoken with the ruler of this world and he told them of what lies beyond…we want to go there…to run free under a sole moon. Under the clear blue sky…we want freedom of this prison. A prison where we fear for our own sanity if we spend much time under this accursed dark star…” said Zhareb.

Indeed they look like they could use some fresh air…

“I will see what I can do.” I said

“We are most thankful Asura.” Responded Zhareb

Then I left and continued on with my journey. Only walking no running as I didn’t see reason to waste my breath or my stamina. The crucible would remain for an entire year so why the rush.

So I walked and walked. Until I really couldn’t stand it anymore

“To hell with it.” I reached equilibrium and shouted

“Morfii Drakh!”

Then I flew toward the crucible like a burning meteor.

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“The hell is going on…” Said Gaz-sama

We were at the antechamber of Ryouka Gaz, head of the raging fire clan and lord over the Alsian country. Along with the head of the current raging water dragon clan’s head Kyouka Shimazu.

Who by the way, was an old and bald looking man that had the height of but a meter and a half, he was dressed in a blue kimono. With his clan’s emblem on his chest’s right side. He had a face full of wrinkles and a small mole atop his lips’ right side. His eyes were so small and hidden behind the overgrown eyebrows that you could barely see them. He looked old. But oh man if one would know what this man was capable of they would flee.

Along with him there was Shiki Youtaro’s father. Ryuji Youtaro. This man had just turned forty years old but still looked like a young man. His golden short hair and well-trimmed mustache and easy on the eye face of his made any who looked at him see this person as a handsome noble in which he was not far from the case he is the noble of the lightning beast clan and one of the strongest people to have ever headed the clan with the sole exception being his deceased brother Genkaki Youtaro

That man was probably the only man that could stand to Greetman and truly give him a run for his money after all they were the only ones that managed to clear the first fifty floors of the notorious crucible

“Well not that I know what were they thinking but we were released and without clarifications…” I said

“…something is going on…they even claimed that the prince was the one that killed his father, I know he is irresponsible but I would never think of him capable of doing such a thing…and that new heir, no. The new king of Alikh…they said that he was a bastard son of the king…such arrogance for Elior would never do something like that…that man loved his late wife dearly and saw none worthy of her place in his heart…he was a good king…”

“What is the status now?” I said

“After the retrieval of our forces and the rise of the barrier even more so the return of the four of you unharmed gives us no reason to continue on with the war against Alikh…but we will still be needing to take care as this might bring about some unwanted troubles…” said Ryouka Gaz with an air full of worry.

“But enough of that. I need you to go back to Albion you and the other heavenly demons. Ousay had taken a teaching position in that school once students saw that the way of the blade truly can be helpful. We also have a guest. Arianna Dorova is there…” added Ryouka Gaz.

“The iron lady…” I said

“Yes, she is here to reach a collaboration with our school. It seems she wants to change the policy of the Mächtige cling…” replied Ryouka Gaz while firmly pressing his hand on his sheeted Katana’s hilt

I wonder what she is trying to accomplish.

“I have no idea why she is here…but it seems that after the rise of the crucible the situation at Astarte became a bit too tense. With many of its renowned warriors attempting the challenge, the country is now facing a shortage of people capable of defending the country. As you know the king has no right to stop anyone form accessing the tower but if many men and young kids try out their luck in that manner this was bound to happen…I think she wants some sort of alliance but you have to go and take care of that.”

That damn thing again…I am not a coward for all I know, but one thing I do know is that no sane man should attempt something like that. The mortality rate of participation in that challenge is more than ninety nine percent…and I am in no rush to getting myself killed for the sake of becoming slightly more famous or even a bit more powerful. After all I already have all I need…

I walked away and left Ryouka-sama to handle the clan heads…it seems that they have their own agenda to accomplish, and I am in no mood to play with them…for now.

Reaching Albion after god knows how long, it takes too much time to just get from the city center to the school…they need to ease the access to school and the far away regions…

The moment I reached the school gate I face palmed myself…

“I should have used teleportation magic…”

I never was this distracted in my life but it seems that the irrational happenings are making me very nervous and are clouding my judgment.

Once I teleported in front of Kazehara’s office I saw her passionately speaking with Sraam…

I am one hundred percent sure that these two have a thing for each other.

But the moment Sraam took notice of me…he disappeared.

“God damn it!” I said “He is always like that…”

Kazehara then coughed while a ting of redness was apparent on her cheeks and formally addressed me saying

“What brings you here Osfor?”

“I don’t really care what you do with that man, but the least he can do is say hello…” I said

“W-we are doing nothing…it was just a conversation” she mumbled under her breath

“Yeah, yeah. I never seen you speak that way toward anyone but that guy…” I then added “Anyway, Gaz sama had told me that there was someone waiting for me. Where is the Iron lady?”

“Right behind you” said a womanly voice

I then loudly expressed

“Speak of the devil”

She then replied

“And the devil will answer, so you are here. I guess it has to do with the matters that I needed to discuss with Ryouka Gaz but instead he sent me one of his lackeys…quite rude I might say” said Arianna Dorova.

She was an old lady about fifty years old but she has yet to show signs of feebleness that accompanied old age. She was wearing a formal attire dressed in a dark green colored blouse with a long skirt that reached well beyond her knees. The skirt however was large for ease of movement.

She had the emblem of her school on her shirt that was the cross of two swords over a kite shield.

With the words “The sword is just”

“Oh, and it truly is. So I have an offer to make. Will you hear me out?” said the woman with an air full of confidence and pride.

“With all pleasure” I responded and led the way out of Kazehara’s office.

**CHAPTER 7**

“Challengers! The last floor before your first checkpoint! Do your best not to disappoint me.”

Once he said that the voice disappeared.

But nothing happened. No door, no gateway to another world, nothing he just said that and he was gone.

We waited, and waited…

Out of the twenty that were left from the twentieth floor only five remained.

And I was the only girl.

The red haired man was also one of them along with two other men that wore the same armor as his being made with silver scale mail and battle skirts adorned with golden inscriptions on the edges.

The red haired man had a sheathed long broad sword to his side while the other men had short swords with a small buckler attached at their backs. Their armor however unlike his still shiny and unscratched piece was in tatters. One of them was bald and had a gruff looking visage with a small gash over his left brow and few burning marks over his right hand.

The other had long and tied hair in a pony style.

The three men sat alone in a side of the round platform, while another man who could barely stand remained alone. That man had a dark sin and wore the uniform of Astorian mages. A black and golden set of hardened leather armor over his robe for minimal protection.

He had black hair an almost triangular face with and at his side laid a broken staff. The man was in deep thought and soon after he began using a small healing spell.

I thankfully knew of such a spell but still remained cautious. But the other three soon stood up and readied their weapons.

“What are you trying to do old man” said the bald man.

“I-it is just a healing spell…” said the mage

The other three then soon sheathed back their weapons but still remained on guard.

“It is true…it is a healing spell.” I said

The man looked at me with unbelieving eyes and almost as if thankful began to heal some of his wounds

The other three soon looked between each other and advanced toward the man

The mage then froze and tried to reach to his staff but as if he had remembered that his weapon was now broken he panicked even more.

“Don’t worry old man.” said the red headed man

“We only want you to heal one of our own. He is gravely wounded…” said the red headed man.

The man in question took off the chest piece of his armor showing a badly treated wound. Across the chest and deep enough to make his entire undershirt turn from white to a crimson red.

His wound is mortal, I wonder how he managed to stay standing. With healing spell of that caliber there is no way for that man to be saved

“I-I can help.” Said the mage…

Could he possibly have a stronger healing spell? For all I know healing is the hardest thing to learn as one would need to have deep knowledge over the body…

“Thank you” said the red haired man.

The mage then approached and began channeling a similar spell. But something was wrong

The magic text that he began writing was wrong. No, if what I think he is trying to do then he is…

“What are you doing?” I said

All the men then turned

“I-I am healing him young lady what is the problem?”

“Healing comes from both light and water. You began the magic text by the earth spell what are you trying to do?” I said and approached menacingly.

“I-it is a special type of healing.” He said

And instantly the red headed man grabbed the mage by the throat and easily pulled him up.

“Speak old man what did you do!”

“Emit Force” said the mage and a shockwave of air blew away all three men.

The mage was practically on the edge of the arena while the bald man was dangerously close to it, the second the shockwave had hit him he was blown away into the dark abyss of the tower.

The red haired man who managed to get blown at the safer side of the arena roared in anger for the death of his friend. While the other man who was wounded began to throw up and cough out blood.

I got closer to the wounded man and began channeling a real healing spell but it was too late.

The red haired man was on guard because I tried to approach his friend but once I said the word

“Poison!”

He became even more furious

And charged at the mage.

The mage began shooting arrays of spells one after another not even caring for his rapidly decreasing mana or the surrounding he wanted to slow down the red haired man.

This one however managed to evade all spells until he began to slow down and dropped to his knees all by himself.

He then began to cough out blood.

“Huhahahaha without the antidote you are all dead.” Once he said that I understood one thing.

The spell he used is a type of contagious and highly potent poison. And it seems that that man had probably already drank the antidote and planned this for some time…

“You are all idiots, didn’t you get it? It was the last challenge to kill everyone until but one remain. No trust! And you will all die and I shall proceed forward. I will gain all I need once I am out I will have all of which I desire, power influence and prestige as one of the survivors of this tower! Worry not I will tell tales of your defeat to everyone so that they knew of how valiantly you all had fought. HAHAHAHAHAH”

The man began to laugh like if he was possessed.

I too began to cough but because I was far from the spell the thing didn’t bother me much. For now

The wounded man became immobile but was still conscious as you could see him move his chest up and down, the mage however, was clearly out of mana and suffering from magic poisoning as veins in his hands began to show the signs.

The mage then approached the almost dead man and took his short sword. He probably even thought of it as heavy by the way he grunted carrying it.

“Die” said the mage

And then he barbarically began to stab the man who by now was long since dead.

The red haired man began to shout profanities at him and threatening to tear him apart but his actions were rather meaningless as he too was immobile.

I began to lose feeling in my limbs but didn’t want the state to affect me further so I began chanting a spell.

“Oh don’t worry you won’t die, at least not for now. I will first have my way with that girl over there once she is completely immobile and would let you for last. Captain Commander of the royal guard of Astora.” Said the mage

“Y-you know of me…” said the red haired man.

“Yes, it was thanks to you that my brother had died. You don’t remember me do you? Three years ago you broke into our laboratory back at Sivilia. You killed my brother in the process and arrested the rest of my comrades. I only managed to escape because I was out on a special errand…but you, you mercilessly killed every one of them even the ones caught. Not even trial was given to them! You deserve to die and a slow death is what you will have!” said the mad man with clear wrath spewing from his mouth.

“You crazed bastard!” roared the red haired man. “You were attempting to overthrow the king! You were committing high treason the most merciful thing was killing you all! I should have looked harder for every single one of you! Never should I have satisfied myself with just the ones inside that building”

Angrily said the red haired man who now was suffering from a coughing fit.

“And that was your mistake! And for it you shall die today, now where is that bitch!” said the man and turned toward me

But he was surprised to find nothing but fog and frost.

I already used a spell to cover the entire half side of the arena with none see through fog.

“Heaven piercing javelins!”

Four javelins flew toward the man and a frightening speed making the frost bend from the air piercing effect throwing him way back into the rim of the arena.

I slowly began to walk out of the fog that I used to cover my spell.

The man who was now shocked from the unexpected turn of event began to gurgle and tried to stand back up only to receive another Javelin that pierced through his heart sending him down the bottomless chasm.

The red haired man seeming now content turned and laid back on his back.

“I am sorry” I said “I didn’t think it through I should not have caused him to fall there…he could have had the antidote with him.”

The man coughed and said

“I-it’s alright…” weakly said the man and began to wait his eminent death.

The poison was acting rather fast and the cough fits began to increase…he doesn’t have much time.

“Challengers!” said the same voice scaring the living soul out of me.

“You have passed the final test of the first twenty first floors. Trust none and you will forever be safe, but is a life worth living if one lives it alone?”

And with that the number of the platform changed and this time two doorways opened. One leading to the exit as it was showing the outside world and the Quietus grand square.

While the other was probably for the next floor.

 “So will you leave and be satisfied with your current achievement or will you further challenge yourself and dare go for the next round!”

“I wish to exit” said the still laying red haired man “But I don’t think I will make it out alive…”

A golden box then appeared in the middle of the arena.

“Oh, we are not so cruel to let you die that you had cleared the first rounds. Inside that box is a potion that will cure you of your alignments, you only have to get it…but taking a look at you I think that that would be a very chorus ordeal. Hahaha!” laughed the voice.

The man then grunted. And began to slowly close his eyes

“I want to proceed!” I said

“Hoo. A true decadent of the guardians…very well then proceed forward.”

I walked toward the gate then looked at my right.

…

I walked back and placed my hands on the box

It was filled with jewels gold and many items that would probably be worth a lot…but to a dying man nothing of this is of value.

There was a red vial however. And for him at this point this might be the most expensive of treasures.

I grabbed the vial and walked back toward the lying man.

He looked pale and so close to death but he still fought on.

I opened the vial and poured it inside his mouth.

The man hardly swallowed. Slowly his body began to regain his natural color.

The man opened his eyes and looked back.

“Why?” he said “You don’t even know me, nor do you owe me anything. Why help me when you could just leave. Aren’t you fearing that I might end up killing you? Did you not think that this might be another challenge?”

“I don’t know. But I no longer want to regret things I have done…” I said

“What is your name milady?” said the man.

“Yuna, Yuna Korima…” I replied

“I am Captain Commander Aaron Seethe. And I shall forever be in your dept.”

I then left the man to recover and entered the gate to the next floor.

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One month of god damn travel time. And flying too! I thought it would take less than this no I even thought I could have been lost if not for the strong light pillar that appeared from afar and penetrated through the sky on the fifteenth day of travel. Ah I got to know one more thing too. It seems I can’t stay in the dragon aspect form for long. I never got to test my limit but now I know.

One day. Only one day in that mode in minimal energy consumption or to say just normal ‘flight, is enough to empty my energy reserve and rendering me unable to enter equilibrium for an entire day. Something I had to suffer through the hard way as I panicked for an entire day and night thinking that I can no longer reach equilibrium.

Thankfully on the wake of the next of that day I felt the energies of the world once again. And began to absorb them into me.

Now the main reason of why I took so long was because I flew for one day and walked for another.

I met a few more creatures but like always they didn’t feel like wanting to meet me…

Most creatures just run away once they get a feel for me. It seems that my body or just the dragon part has ‘absorbed’ the aura that Drakhsis was releasing and now is constantly mimicking it. I had to think through a way against this. If I kept this for long I might end up scaring my lunch away for a long time.

But conveniently…once I will the presence to subside. It disappears completely.

I had to test it however so I caught a passing by imoogi. Yes a lot of them were flying almost by the thousands. They loved to fly in flocks but they always avoided me like the plague.

But once I caught one of them I forced it down. I had to break one of his wings as they were big like serpents almost a hundred meter in lengths and about ten meters in diameter. With black scales and a serpent looking body with two to four wings on the sides.

Once I broke the little snake’s wing it dropped down like a rock.

Then I began experimenting.

The imoogi would wriggle and rebel trying to bite my head off if I had my presence in a ‘sealed’ state. Once I release it though, it would shrivel and try to shrink itself and would clearly look petrified…

I did this for quite a while and was amused by the sudden turns of the Imoogi’s mood. It was like turning on and off the light…but you soon get tired of it and I had to walk away.

I kept on walking and flying until, like I said before the thirtieth day of travel.

Once I reached my destination it was there.

Inside an open plateau of meadow and small hills the tower was rising and the top of this tower was going so high in the sky that it disappeared from view.

The earth around it was undug and crumbling while the building looked like a majestic spiral construction. It was adorned with gold and sky blue ornaments with knight’s dragons and maidens made of stone and iron were graphed into its walls. It had pillars the size of buildings supporting it and was gigantic. But it had no windows. Everything was carved in stone.

I had to stroll around it as it seems that the door was on the other side but I couldn’t find it…

I got closer to the building and before I touched its walls I remembered something that Drakhsis had asked of me.

(Flash back)

“I have something to ask of you Youngling. Before we start your next and final task.” Said Drakhsis

“What is it Drakhsis-san” I replied

“I want you to do something that most will think of as being foolish.” He said

“Well I am already attempting the final floor of the crucible what thing could be more foolish than this? I hope it got nothing to do with painting the sun black it was just a joke…” I said

“No, even more foolish than that.”

I gulped…

“I want you to claim the title of an Everlasting…”

“Say what now?” I responded

“You heard me. I want you to claim that title as it is yours and only you that could obtain it. The first trial of Everlastinghood is to clear the crucible. It is created by the Overseers to test the mettle of you humanoids. As you are not born with power your only way to claim true power is to reach that state. And only by then will one truly become strong and only then where one will have nothing to fear.”

“But why should I? Clearing the crucible is hard enough of a task and although I want power…too much power was never my aim. I want power really, but just enough so that no one will dare harm me or one of mine. So once I clear the crucible will there be anything strong enough to take away from me what I hold dear?” I said

“True, but there is something you need to know. You promised to leave the fallen world and seek out the true world have you not done so youngling?!”

“I did “I answered

“Then not only will you need the power to slay all your enemies to fulfill the decree of the overseers and in which you will be needing unsurmountable amounts of it and indomitable will to destroy an entire race. You will also need power to protect those you care for, once you are in the true world. There, there are beings that are strong enough to set kingdoms and empires ablaze in but one night. If you truly seek strength to protect those whom you care for, to make people fear and respect you, then you shall need the title.”

Drakhsis stopped for a moment then said

“Only they among sentient beasts are respected and feared. And once you are one of them you shall have your protégés respected as well. Now is the time to vow again. Are you truly willing to clear the crucible and reach the true world?”

Without hesitation I answered

“I am.”

For if Drakhsis had said that there are things that strong, then I will need more power…

Although I honestly doubt myself capable of such a feat…I will have to figure out how truly strong I am once I am inside that crucible…

(End of flashback)

Once I touched the walls.

“Are you here to challenge the Crucible?” said a voice that was both deep and ancient…

“Yes.” I answered

And instantly a doorway was opened

It was bright white and probably was some sort of portal.

“Proceed” said the same voice.

And so I did.

Once I entered I was in the middle of a great hall.

A circular platform was my standing with a great chasm below it while light orbs flew all over the place to light the hall. The roof was adorned with the same looking statues on the outside and the walls were too far beyond the open chasm.

I looked to the side and saw two more portals with the exception of the one that I just came from that instantly disappeared.

One of the portals was see-through and it showed a square where few people were gathered at…

It’s been long since I last saw a human so I slowly approached.

“Challenger!” said the voice “You come from a world beyond. And you have no right to reach for the fallen world.”

I answered

“I know. However won’t I be eligible once I reach the final floor?”

“HAHAHAHAHAHA! Human you think yourself capable of such feat! I know not of why you were in the void and frankly I care not. You look strong. But do you think you are strong enough?” said the same voice

The voice was resounding all over the place

But once I looked forward and even under the mask I was able to see a shape. This of course was because I was already in equilibrium and ready to change form at any given notice, however, I still reduced my presence to the bare minimum.

I also learned a nifty trick I can ‘Dragnify’ any part of my body without entering into the full dragon form, so I did so to my left eye and it changed to that of a dragon’s with its vision. That was the reason for me being able to see this being although he was ‘invisible’.

It was humanoid but looked like a bunch of golden and dark blue armor stuck together with a shredded deep red cape, his helmet was only showing the blue sheen of his eyes, while everything else was darkened. He had no legs and was almost hovering while on his right arm was a great war-hammer that was adorned with gold and steel.

“Well why don’t you get down here and find out I mean trying to sound all ominous and threatening does not match well with your appearance. Oh great Overseer!”

**Chapter 8**

“So what do you think Osfor?” said Dorova

We were both inside my laboratory within Albion. Dorova took a seat and began explaining the ‘merge’ she wants to do with our school.

 “So once again let me get this straight, you are offering Godsteel, only your country has a mine that can extract it…even more you will ‘lend us’ your strongest students , so that they would help the students of Albion to understand better the ways of the blade and to spare with them…for just one thousand Alsian mage?”

“Yes”

“I can’t seem to understand quite frankly should you not be discussing matters like these with Kansaki? He is much more efficient in all that regards negotiations…I can’t seem to understand why you would provide us with such a thing while only receiving help that I probably think is less valued than your offer…” I said

“This is the wish of the queen…so I will ask for the last time do you agree?”

“I do agree but we will need to finalize things by speaking to Gaz-sama. I can’t seem to think that he would refuse the steel of legends the only material that can disrupt magic and cancel it.”

“Very well” she said “Now that the matter is over I want you to do me a personal favor”

“What might that be?” I said

“I want you to oversee these children of mine. They are the pride of our school and I consider them like my children. I cannot trust anyone here but you, if Greetman was here I would have asked him of this.”

“Why not ask Osfor? He too was your student once?”

“No. Osfor is a great swordsman. He however will never take a disciple of mine to his tutelage, he would rather find one and raise him himself. Greetman however is much more flexible…the irony…” she said

“Good, I will see to it then, so where are your students?” I asked

“They should be here by now.”

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“So this is the famous Albion” Said Jibi.

“It looks beautiful…too beautiful for my tastes…”said Rika.

“…” Lori however kept silent.

The three Astartian stars were now at the gates of the arena. While in front of them stood the five strongest of Albion.

“I can feel the hostility all the way from over there…” said Jibi

“Well that is expected considering we had beaten the living soul out of them” mocked Rika.

“Not all of them…”Mumbled Lori

“How long are you going to sulk about that…it’s been months let it go…” said Jibi

Lori however didn’t even respond probably not even registering what Jibi just said.

“Welcome to Albion, the greatest magic school in all the great plains” said a red haired girl giving a small bow also known by the name Vessma. Vessma Stronghold.

“So it is you…” said Rika

“Yes it is I” replied Vessma with a small vein popping on her forehead.

“What can we do for you? I am sure that you accommodations have been arranged for” coldly stated the red head

“We were just taking a stroll inside the school…it seems that this arena is well equipped…How about a rematch? I can see that you really couldn’t let go of that humiliating defeat you suffered that time” Said Rika with an air full of taunt

“We are here to welcome you, it would be rude to end up hurting you while you just got here, and we can’t have that now can we?” said the red head

“Oh I think you are just scared of ending up with the same outcome of last time.”

Vessma who now began to seethe with rage approached forward but was stopped by Zeles who was next to her.

“The arena is closed for the moment if you want to duel we will do it later. For now you should continue on with your tour to the school I can even guide you through it.”

“No need, we will find our way.” Replied Rika.

“Very well then.” Said Zeles

And the party of three walked away guided by the short little girl.

“I really wanted to have another bout with her…it seems I will have to wait” said Rika under her breath

“You are always looking for trouble…”Said Jibi in a scolding tone

“I can’t help it, I just wanted to push her buttons…” said Rika “Hey Lori you have been awfully quiet what is the matter?”

Lori however kept silent

“Read the mood…”Said Jibi and the proceeded forward.

They however were met with two more kids wearing the uniform of Albion

These two were Shiki and Kaori

“Oh if it isn’t the lightening kid” said Jibi.

“Oh, I remember you.” Said Shiki with a smile that was so bright Rika had to cover her face from the shine of his teeth.

“What can I do for you Jibi-san?” politely asked Shiki.

“Oh nothing much actually, ah by the way. Where is the whit haired girl? I can’t seem to find her”

“Oh…She is not here.” Said Shiki in a worrying tone.

“Hmm when will she be here? I have been dying to meet her you know, she was the only one to give me a hard time back at the Grand tournament and I would really love to meet her again.”

“Well, so do I…She is at Quietus” replied Shiki

“Hmm, at quietus? Doing what? I hope it won’t take long…”

“She is at the Crucible…” said Shiki

…

For one moment all three students were stupefied and as if not hearing correctly Jibi asked again

“What? What do you mean the crucible? Are you sure you are not just playing games with me man?”

“No” said Shiki “She really is at the crucible…”

Jibi then took a step backwards as if not believing he said

“That is madness! Why would you let her go to such a place!” angrily said Jibi

“…there was nothing I could do.”

Lori however, said

“I hope she never makes it out alive. After all, she is the reason behind his death…”

“Take that back!” Roared Shiki whose smile just transformed into a menacing gaze. “She had nothing to do with his passing. She only acted on instinct. He was possessed and she did the right thing” his words were filled with rage, except for the last statement.

“I am no fool. I have seen people turn, and while he had turned he somehow came back, I have seen it. He even protected her. And for that he was rewarded with betrayal…I have seen the replays of that day over and over again…so spare me your empty words, words you don’t even believe them to be true…”

Said Lori who for the first time showed any sort of emotion. An emotion that was transcribed to utter and true wrath.

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What the hell is this!

What in bloody hell is this?

I was inside the twenty seventh floor and I am seriously considering giving up. How did it come to this? Never in my life had I thought I will be this frightened.

Monsters of all kind roamed the place. I was inside a volcanic area. My magic is utterly useless not even a sword can help…

Great lizards, wyverns and majestic serpents. There was nothing I could do. The gateway is a few hundred meters away but I cannot move to reach it. As if I move but one step, I will die.

I know it. The moment I was thrown in this place. These creatures began to search for me. And as if the one responsible over this place is jesting, he placed me in the safest place but the most lethal nevertheless.

The air is dry and scorching thus my inability to use ice. If I stand still I will be roasted alive. The creatures cannot see me but they are passing next to me, and every time one of them passes I shudder at the thought of it sensing me…

They are all king classed sacred beasts. Even if I was in another place but this I think that one of them is barely manageable…however all of them at once is nothing short of a suicide. And more over with this type of place…I am bound to die

I know that if I run toward the exit I will die before I could even reach halfway…

What am I supposed to do in this type of situation?

Then I remembered…

(Flash back)

The day before I was leaving I was stopped by the principal.

She handed me an item

I looked at it and saw that it was a small ring

“What is this?” I said

“It is the prize that Asura had won when he defeated the Ashe wyvern. Take it, it might help you there” said the principal

I took a look at the ring. It was made of silver and gold with inscriptions and unreadable runes all over it.

“This was said to be the final prize to a very old dungeon in the Astorian kingdom. It is a ring that enables its wearer a brief time of invisibility, use it if you see think your life is in danger.” She said

I took it and began to walk away.

However just before I could leave the school gates I looked once again and saw them. All of them, friends and teachers all waiting outside for me encouraging me and shouting.

I need to do this. Not only for me. For them as well…

(End of flash back)

I searched through my pocket and found it. It was glowing as if it was calling out to me to wear it.

I did and instantly felt it tugging at my man.

It began to absorb the mana inside my body with great speed.

This was probably the cost of its usage.

I then instantly began to run. I ran and ran only to notice that some of the creatures began to feel something was wrong. The sounds of me running were beginning to wake them from their mindless search and they began to focus more on the direction of which the sound of me running came from

More of the creatures took action although some began to screech and hiss.

Some even began to fight just because they bumped with each other while they were mindlessly looking for me.

One of the wyverns hurled a fireball that struck few meters behind me sending me rolling but I didn’t stop. Although I was probably injured I still stood back up and began to run once again.

My mana was almost fully exhausted and I barely passed the halfway point.

Another serpent was in my way, this one began to hiss and his scales began to vibrate menacingly. While he had no way to detect me he was still blocking me so I jumped over him which made it hiss even louder then I jumped forward right before the serpent would bite away at the place I was at a second before. I rolled forward and began to run.

Almost a hundred meters before I reach the gateway I understood that I will never make it without removing the ring as if I kept it on it will kill me by sucking my mana dry.

I then did the most stupid and reasonable thing, I took it off and kept running, this however brought the notice of every creature my way.

I kept on running fighting the exhaustion, but I took a moment to look back. What I saw was the scariest thing in my life. The creatures began to poor down from everywhere filling the entire path while few wyverns hurled more fireballs my way.

 Twenty meters. Is only what is left but I will die before I will reach.

So I jumped and used almost every ounce of my energy to create a wind barrier.

The fireballs that came toward me made contact with it and exploded in an amazing manner sending me with the force of impact through the gate and into the twenty eight floor.

Feeling safe I laid on my back for a long time…

“You made it. Not bad, you are lucky to have such an item. I thought that your life was lost the moment you were thrown in a volcanic area. Rest well the doorway to the next challenge is open, if you think yourself capable of continuing you can go on, I have something to take care of.” Said the voice

I waited for my mana to refill and bit on a piece of meat that I was saving…my last one.

Then I began to heal myself ever so slowly. After all I needed to be in top shape for the next floor. I just hope that it is not in a hot area…

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“You dare challenge me even after you know of my identity human?” said the Overseer.

I instantly replied

“Nah! After all, the weakest of you managed to defeat two everlastings and a whole army of devils and legendary knights. I think I will pass on challenging you…for now”

“Hoo, so you know…interesting, now that I am taking a look at you…What are you? A descendant of a god, a human self a dragon’s body, and a strange demonic entity within you…I lived long and never had I seen such chaos in a single body, yet this chaos is not ravaging you, no it is strengthening you…”

“Who knows?” I said

“Then are you ready to climb?” the overseer said

“It is why I had come” I said

Bur right after I finished that statement a person came from outside the gate that was showing the quietus square.

He looked like a young man wearing clothes for mages with the emblem of Astora. The boy was a bit tall while slim and had dark blue hair color. He had big eyes with an amicable looking face.

“Oh I finally got here…” the boy said “I hope I was not late, oh hey man do you have an idea about this place” said the boy

“None, but I think I got the jest of it however…”I said

“What do you mean the boy then said?”

“I then answered. Well this place is supposed to offer challenge to the participants and after clearing the supposed challenge or chore in a given floor we will get access to the next area. I think we are supposed to go through that door” I pointed toward the gate in the middle of the hall “and the challenge should begin”

“Oh, so it is like that.” The boy said “Then what are we waiting for? My name is Nelly. What is yours? Friend” said the boy while he placed his hand forward for a handshake.

I looked at the boy and instantly grabbed my sword and with a vertical strike I split him in half.

“My name is asura.” I said to the now morphing dead corps.

“And things like this won’t be enough to trick me.” I said “You will have to do better than this Overseer-san.”

“Hoo, interesting, very interesting. I should have known! You were able to see my form so why would you not see the real form of one of the doppelgangers. Very good, very good indeed.”

Once he said that, the platform which I was on began to change. The number in the middle of it switched, and the gateway to the Quietus square disappeared.

“Challenger! Proceed.” Said the Overseer.

“Oh I will” I said and walked into the portal and into the next floor.

**CHAPTER 9**

“Hmm that was interesting…”

I said as I walked out of the seventh floor’s gate and into the eighth.

“So was that supposed to make me feel sad or something?” I said

“You seem unimpressed?” said the Overseer

“Well to be honest I already made peace with those things…and bringing back the past serves nothing to shake my will” I replied while shrugging.

“Very well” said the voice “Then you are to proceed to the next floor? Right?”

“Yes.” I said

Well honestly speaking I did feel a bit annoyed that he brought up the incident of my childhood.

But like I said I already made peace with that.

I walked into the next gate while a blinding light washed over me to find myself at a place where nothing but grass and an open field where it stretches to far beyond what my eye could see. And I can see far…

There was a light beam a few kilometers away from where I stood.

And when I looked behind me…there was a ray of ultimate death and destruction that was eating at the ground and headed directly toward me…

“Well…Morfii Drakh!”

I changed to the dragon aspect and flew like a bullet toward the pillar. Reaching it I found out that it was a gateway toward the crucible. I released the form and entered

“Hoo, you cleared it faster than any have…hmm, the art of the aspects I see…good, are you ready for the next floor challenger?” said the overseer

“Like I said before, I am always ready.” I answered surprised that he had knowledge over the art but he is an Overseer and this should be within his knowledge.

“You are strong challenger. These tests might not be enough…but I cannot change them just for you. However the top is still far. And if you think that your power is enough to clear it…you might be surprised” he said

“I know. I was told that the crucible tests the best and worst of a person. If it is just fights then I am more than able to handle myself…except if there is a primordial dragon at the last floor then I won’t be so certain of my victory” I snorted at my last statement.

“Oh, no worry not. The crucible is indeed cruel but not that cruel it won’t be challenging if I throw you into the jaws of a primordial being. However, it seems that you know of them, you, having the body of a dragon could only mean one thing. At least one of them had passed away…”

“Yes. One of them did. So next challenge please”

“As you wish.” He said and another doorway opened.

I was in a swamp, it was night time and it was stinky.

I expanded my senses and noticed a few monsters here and there most were hiding under the murky ponds. I released my presence and they all squirmed away with the exception of a few that remained unmoving. Either they are strong enough to sustain the weight of my presence or they are too scared to try and move.

I walked through the murky lands and straight toward the portal.

I began to feel hunger, but I don’t think that these guys will taste any good. I don’t know what they are anyway I can only sense their shapes, and most of them were deep under the water. So I gave up on trying to eat any of them.

I kept on walking for a long period until I left unchallenged and unperturbed…quite anticlimactic considering that this was supposed to be hard…

“Challenger…with your current strength, none of the first floors will prove to be challenging…do you wish me to get you directly to higher floors?”

“Isn’t this a bit biased? I mean everyone is supposed to clear the floors one by one, or do you just want to get rid of me by throwing me into something that should be impossible…” I said

“No, you can continue at your leisure if you wish. But I think that with your current strength you will only begin to feel true challenge at the final rounds of the crucible…Monsters and the like fear you. Only the humans that are stuck at higher floors will be foolish enough to test themselves against you…”

I then said

“So, hypothetically speaking, at what floor will I find true challenge?”

“If I calculate it correctly with your body and ‘maximum potential’…None! However the crucible does not challenge a person solely based on their power…you will find harder challenges the higher you go so what say you? Do you want me to get you to a floor that will test your mettle or do you still wish to continue forward without disturbance?”

Hmm…I wonder what he meant with maximum potential…and am I truly strong enough to clear it…it seems far-fetched considering that Even Drakhsis feared my inability to complete it…and I probably don’t want to miss something on the floors here that might probably help me later on…

“No! I will continue forward.” I said

“Very well, proceed challenger” said the voice and another portal opened.

I walked in and found it to be in a mountainous area that was filled with monsters.

And at the top of one of the mountains was the same pillar.

I released my presence and began to climb…

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It was night. With only the moon shining upon the valley that I was currently in.

The stones of this valley were darkened, with the occasional howling of some beasts I took shelter inside a small opening of one of the walls.

I used my mana to force the wall to close only leaving a small crack to let the air pass through. And slept for the night.

I was unable to find my way through the valley. The pillar of light was shining far from where I stood but if I tried to use one of my spirits to try and climb to the top then go directly toward the light I was certain that I will meet one of the monsters above.

So I waited for day to come.

Once it was morning I summoned four wolves and sent them to look for the safest and surer path.

Three had died only few minutes of me sending them while one still kept on running.

He however was destroyed few moments after that.

“So vexing…” I said to myself.

I moved toward the path where the wolf that survived the longest did and rested there once again.

I have been doing this for days. Only moving at a slow and steady pace once at a time. If I could avoid the monsters then it is good…but I am finding that food becomes scarcer…

As if my whishes were granted I saw a small goat like creature looking at me from above. I began to channel a heaven piercing javelin because I don’t want my lunch to escape

But as if it was there just to tease me a huge lion like beast jumped at it. Crushing it with his paws.

The lion had a horn on its head and had purple fur with a white mane.

It began to tear at the now dead goat and munch on it.

My Javelin was already conjured but I knew that if I missed I will die.

I threw the javelin at the lion’s hide only to have it shatter the moment it made contact.

This only served to give away my position and make the beast more furious…the drool and blood on his mouth only served to make me feel stupider at the decision I had made.

The lion roared and jumped toward me.

I dashed to the side while he crashed on the position I was at, making even the earth below him crack under the pressure and his weight.

The lion now looking down on me was huge. Almost three meters tall.

It began to growl and approach menacingly then it lunged.

I casted a small ice wall that was shattered in an instant and received the blow of the beast to my side… I think my right hand is now broken.

The attack sent me reeling until I crashed into a wall.

The beast then approached thinking that it had killed me and began to sniff at me.

It rolled me over and I winced from pain once he placed its palm on me.

It opened its mouth and I instantly placed my left hand inside its gaping mouth and shot an ice shard.

The beast began to screech from pain and retreated backwards trying to cough out the shard.

As I still had connection to it I willed it to shatter. And once it did. The lion stopped moving and dropped to the floor.

I stood up and began to walk toward it. Not feeling too sure I conjured another javelin and pierced his eye with it. Just to make sure it truly did die.

I began healing my right hand and slowly although painfully the bone began to recover.

Thankfully I was too excited and my heart was pumping so fast I didn’t get knocked out or shocked from the pain.

At least now I have something to eat…

\*\*\*

Floor twenty two cleared…nothing really it was just a bunch of monsters although I got to fight in a war…it was too bad it ended so abruptly, I shouldn’t have killed the commander that fast…but the most interesting thing was that there were a few persons on this floor.

They all looked…defeated

Laying on the ground waiting for salvation…

“Huh” said one of them men. “We have a tough guy here guys look” and he pointed at me.

“Huhahahaha! Kid” he said. “If you think that wearing a mask and those fancy clothes is going to make you look scarier then you are mistaken. Where are your companions? I hope that it was not just you that made it here…we need to help each other If you want to survive” said the man who by the way was wearing nothing but tattered cloths and had a broken sword by his side.

The man was average. Not too tall and not too short just average he had an untrimmed hair and even more his face was filed with scares.

I ignored the man and proceeded forward toward the next gate.

The man feeling ignored almost popped a vein in his forehead and grabbed me by the shoulder.

“I said, we need to help each other…and looking at you it seems that you have a fancy sword. You see mine is broken so how about you ‘help’ me with your blade and I could consider this matter resolved.” Threateningly said the man

I turned to look at him and slowly reached out to his hand. I pressed on it so hard that first he winced from pain then I crushed it. Making him scream and screech from pain.

“You bastard!” cried the man while holding his now useless hand and backing away

And once he did that, the rest of them stood up. They looked like the type that want to vent their frustration at not being able to clear the crucible on the new guy.

I took a look at them all and released my presence. I want to see what effect it will have on humans.

And boy was I impressed

The men all froze. None even dared to move a muscle and the one in front of me began to wet himself

Seems rather effective…

I then continued forward. But right before I could reach the gate I looked up at the flying figure and said.

“How come there are people here?” I said

“They are losers that didn’t want to continue the climb. This is normal. Many would fall and prefer to stay on the safe zones but they will all go through that gate now or later. None can survive the hunger…”

“Hmm…I have nothing to do here. Next challenge please!” I said

“Proceed.” He said

And the gateway shone even more welcoming me.

Utter and complete shock was apparent on the faces of the men left behind. I don’t know why though was it due to my presence that scared them? Or was it something else?

I walked into the gate and into another floor.

I spent about one day in this crucible and I am already at the twenty third floor.

It seems that I would have spent much longer if I had to fight my way through all of those monsters but they were too busy trying not to do so…

Ughh this is boring…

I walked into a cave area. It was dark but not for me. As I was in equilibrium I changed my left eye into that of a dragon and kept moving forward.

Nothing too dangerous just few over grown rats and bat caves. But nothing too challenging…I am seriously thinking about accepting the overseer’s offer to go directly to higher floor…but I don’t want to miss anything of importance…

Anyway I kept on walking feeling the air flow into the cave lead me straight into the exit.

“…”

The overseer seemed to be quiet this time.

The gate opened and I walked into it…

I have been doing this for a long time nothing too impressive nothing too serious just mindless walking into different places…when will the challenge truly begins…

Once I was at the twenty fourth floor I met three people. They were fighting.

Two of them were swordsmen while the other was clearly a sword mage. How I knew it was easy

The sword mage had his weapon that was a long sword by the way ignited with flame.

The other two had normal knight armor with no emblems on them just full metal plates and nothing too showy. They had kite shields and broad swords with helmets covering their faces. The other man was wearing hardened leather and fur over him he looked like someone that spent a lot of time in the wild. He looked old a probably in his late forties but still he had a handsome face with green hair and emerald eyes, and was clearly not interested in the fight. He was just parrying the attack of the two offenders with minimum movements.

“Next floor I said” but was not answered… something is not right.

The sword mage then took notice of me and instantly made a series of movement that cut the Achilles-heel of the first soldier making him drop and instantly cut away at the other man’s sword holding hand.

They were both done for. But the man didn’t finish them off, he left them there and got closer to me.

“Young man.” said the sword mage.

I looked at him and said

“What is it?”

“You are strong. Very strong I can see it…what are you doing in this place someone of your strength should not risk their life into a place like this…”

“I can say the same to you.” I said “A Verda-tribe member should not be here. I thought you are all dead”

“What do you mean dead?” he said with an inquisition look

 “You should know this yourself old man. The Verda clan almost went extinct sixteen years ago. They were all met with an unfortunate incident…”

“No! Roared the man you must be lying!” he said

“I am not. And I have no reason to do so.” I said

The man dropped to his knee

“It can’t be…My family…” he said “My tribe…all dead…” he began to cry

“They were the only reason I remained sane inside this damn place…for thirty years I struggled for the crucible to open once again so that I could leave…”

I then asked

“What do you mean? Old man”

“I was young…and foolish. I tried to beat the crucible to bring glory to our clan…but I gave up and the crucible closed down… I was stuck inside for thirty years…”

“Hmm…so you got another chance. Good, there is one girl however that managed to survive. If you want to meet her you will be needing to finish the climb. Only one floor remains, old man” I said to him as I felt true sadness coming from within him

“One of my tribe still lives?!” he said like all the hope in the world was thrown back into him.

“Yes, and she is strong. She is back at Astarte. She is attending the Mächtige cling”

“Thank you young man. For that you had brought me joy with these few words.” Said the old man and rose back up.

“But do you have an idea of what is the next challenge?” I asked

“Yes I do.” He said and then turned away. He went toward the two fallen men and gave them sweet merciful release.

“Challengers. You had cleared the first part of the crucible.” Said the overseer. “Do you wish to proceed? Or leave content with your achievement?” These words however were directed only to the old man.

Ah so it was like that…only two could leave. Hmm…

The gateway to Quietus opened and another one opened for the next floor.

The old man then looked at me and said

“I wish to leave”

A golden box appeared in the middle of the platform and the overseer said

“Claim your reward. And be gone!” said the overseer with a bit of contempt.

The old man grabbed the box without even opening it and looked at me saying

“Are you not coming young man?”

“No, I still have a long way before I leave.” I said almost hoping that the Overseer would let me exit but fully knowing that he will not.

“Why do you want to risk your life?! The exit is right over here”. Said the old man.

“I have my reasons…good luck old man” I said and turned away.

“What is your name young man!” he said

I didn’t feel like answering so I ignored the man and walked through the gate to the next floor.

**CHAPTER 10**

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I finally managed to leave the canyon…barely escaping with my life as another lion like beast was chasing me…

Now the thirty third round.

I rested a bit.

“Challenger!” Said the voice “You seem rather exhausted. Do you wish to give up?”

“No!” I said

“Good. Then proceed forward.”

I did so and found myself this time inside another cave…this one however was glacier. The Ice was everywhere I almost felt relaxed.

I then began to move forward. I was feeling rather well…

Nothing seemed out of the ordinary even the cold was harmless to me so I continued going forward.

I then reached a clearing that gave me the feeling that I will encounter something…

There was a roar after I got to the middle of it and two big yetis emerged from underground…they had the same look of the yeti I fought that day in the dungeon of the fairy forest.

Well it seems that today I will get to have my rematch…

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I was inside a volcanic area…it was hot, yet felt really good. It was like if heat invigorated me. I think this has to do with my body.

There were however numerous monsters here and it seems that they didn’t take notice of me yet. even though I was in the middle of them.

The monsters however were all reptilians even some red wyverns

The exit to this floor was directly in front of me, about a few hundred meters.

I took the first step and every monster near me suddenly turned…

It seems that I was inside a safe zone

I was going to release my presence to get them to squirm away but then my stomach began to growl. I mean I was seriously hungry…

I liked my lips and decided against releasing it.

The first monster to approach was a huge black snake that slithered its way toward me opening its mouth and attempting to swallow me whole.

I only had to wait the moment it was trying to chomp at me to place both my hands on the top and bottom side of its jaws.

The snake began to wriggle and tried to lift me up but I had my feet firmly attached to the ground and didn’t let it have its way with me.

After it struggled long enough I snapped its mouth over killing it instantly.

Another wyvern decided that he wants me next for his menu but my blade that found its way into this beasts’ neck didn’t agree.

Another wyvern then attacked and I stunned it by releasing my presence for just a second then struck my blade in a rising vertical cut.

His head was split in two whilst it was still attached to its body.

Blood poured out of the beast’s flesh and showered me with it.

The blood soon afterwards began to sizzle and my cloths cleaned itself of it.

I rewarded every beast that tried to attack me with death.

Until most of those present felt that attacking me was nothing short of a suicide and they all began to flee once I released my presence. I looked back at the bodies I had left and toward the gate.

I then removed my mask and tore a piece of the wyvern’s flesh…it was easily done as it was not as hard as Arvion’s.

I then began to munch on it. It was…not that delicious…but that didn’t stop me from eating.

I eat to my heart’s content while trying the flesh of every different beast.

It seems that the taste is different based on the strength of each and every one of the consumed beasts…

It took me a few hours before I could finish but I still felt unsatisfied.

Thankfully I didn’t get bloated from the enormous amounts of flesh. As once I bit on the reptile’s flesh it transforms into some sort of liquid and disappears the moment it enters my stomach while at the same time invigorating me more.

I placed back my mask and then left.

“Challenger! You took your time. Was it that difficult?” said the Overseer while I knew that he was watching me…

“No, I was just feeling a bit hungry. So next challenge?”

“Very well. Proceed.” Said the Overseer.

I then walked into the next challenge.

Nothing again bunch of monsters here and there. Few mazes. And just normal walking

There was however a weird floor. It was I think the thirty second…

It was a valley of some sort. I looked up and saw a pillar of light and instead of walking I decided to fly and go toward it directly.

I used the dragon aspect and flew high above. I then headed directly toward the light. I noticed a few monsters here and there some wolves and even purple big cats.

Few hundred meters before I reached the gate my eye wandered down and saw a dead body of one of the cats. I didn’t bother looking for what had killed it and just kept going straight toward the exit.

I entered and walked inside the gate and prepared to get into the next challenge.

“I hope you enjoy what you will meet next Challenger.” Said the overseer.

“What…more monsters that will squirm away the moment I get in…sorry I think that is a bit too boring for the moment…” I said

“Proceed” he said.

And so I did.

I entered the next area that was nothing but ice. Some sort of glacial cave. I began to walk as there was only one way and it was forward.

Then I smelled the scent of blood.

The moment I did so I released my presence just to scare away whatever was that awaited me.

And then I continued walking.

Until I saw something I was not expecting to see…

Quite frankly remembering the Overseer’s word I think I was a bit surprised.

I unsheathed my sword and walked forward. I was feeling a bit vengeful at the moment…

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I barely managed to kill the second yeti when I felt this inexplicable terror. Utter and complete despair.

My whole body froze as if the angel of death was taking hold of me.

It was the first time in my life that I felt this amount of terror…what the hell is going on…how could something be this petrifying not even master Greetman gave off this feeling…what sort of monster would produce this amount of presence and weight. My whole body was crumbling begging me to flee.

My instinct were rampaging within me. I tried to flee but couldn’t move a muscle. I tried to use the ice around me to cover myself and hide but I couldn’t even gather energy. I was not exhausted but my mind was unclear, unfocused, I was helpless…

Then the presence suddenly disappeared. I dropped to my knees and my hands were still shaking from fright. I took deep breaths and stood back up. I had to keep going…

A second before I began to walk I heard footsteps behind me. I turned and saw it.

It was a man. He had a mask on his face and a drawn sword. It looked like a scimitar but it was not made of metal but of some white substance.

His mask was decorated with weird signs, they were colored purple red and pale gray. His hair was black with some purple strands but his attire was rather intoxicating.

A black and dark purple tunic and pants with shoes to match the outfit looked perfectly fitting and matched well with his hair color.

The man was walking toward me. I took my caution and began chanting.

This is probably some sort of challenge I need to clear.

I began summoning ice and said

“Who are you? And what do you want.”

The man remained silent.

“I said, who are you? State your purpose!” I said with a louder and more threatening tone.

The man still kept silent.

“This is the last warning” I said “What do you want!” and began channeling more energy around me. So much that all the flying shards began to vibrate. The coldness of the place was helping me maintain the spells without much effort.

The man just kept on walking closing the distance more and more.

I willed a shard to strike next to his feet but he was unfazed.

“I am sorry. But you leave me no choice” I said then willed all the shards to attack him.

The man stopped and began swatting away the shards. His sword moved so fast and didn’t even let a single shard pass.

After the flurry of attack ended the man continued moving forward.

I conjured a heaven piercing Javelin and threw it at him but he just held his hand forward and crushed it.

The man kept moving forward.

Fear began to creep down my heart as I knew that if I didn’t do anything I will be done for.

There was only one thing left to do.

I turned back and began to run.

I ran and ran. Not caring for whatever beast might be in front of me I just kept running.

Until I reached a dead end.

I have to think of something… there is no portal in this place. No way out. What the hell am I supposed to do? Do I need to kill that thing? I can’t no, that is impossible… what should I do…

Then I heard the same dreadful footsteps.

If I don’t do anything I am done for.

I have to use it…the only way for me to survive this is if I cast the strongest of my spells…but I fear that I might collapse the cave under me…ah I should conjure that.

“I queen of ice summon thee, grant me thy strength and power to defeat my foes…allow thy roar to echo in the realm of the living and let my enemies tremble from fear!”

A gigantic Mahojin appeared on the ground below. And he began to be summoned.

It was my last resort. The last time I casted this spell I failed miserably at controlling the power needed and conjured but a fraction of its original might. This time however I have more experience and I am much more powerful.

The ice began to form the limbs and parts of a dragon. A dragon made of ice.

The chilling air around the cave became colder and the being I called upon from the spirit world came to my aid. The only thing I think will be enough to scare away that monster.

Once the man entered the room. The dragon was fully conjured. They both looked at each other and I was certain of my victory.

The man then began to speak. In a language I have never heard and his voice was deep and fearsome.

My dragon then spoke back…it was the first time I had seen such a thing…how come a man is able to speak to spirits…I thought only I could do so.

The dragon of ice then lowered his head a bit almost like if it was bowing and began to crack. It shattered and turned to dust. And so did my hope…today is the day I die.

I dropped to my knees and awaited my end. The man then walked toward me. His sword sheathed this time. He won’t be needing it. Not with his strength…

A portal soon opened behind me. It was the gateway to the next floor. But I had no strength in me to even try and go through it.

The man stopped in front of me. Looked at me then looked forward. He then ignored me and walked away. Walked into the portal.

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‘Stupid! Stupid, Stupid!’ I said to myself.

What the hell is wrong with me! I was just trying to scare her for a moment but damn I got smitten the moment I saw her face...and couldn’t do anything…Dumb Asura Very, Very dumb!!

She however still attacked me…well I can’t help it if I was approached by a mute and masked man with his damn sword sheathed I would have done the same…

I was just trying to speak to her then she began to run…Why the hell am I even thinking of this?! She stabbed you man, get your shit together!!!

However her magic seemed to have improved by a bit… that dragon though. Thankfully it agreed to going away if I didn’t attack her…it seems to have known that I had the body of one of his kin but what the hell is she doing in the crucible in the first place?

Ugh…I should just keep going…nothing to do here…nothing to do.

Then I heard her walk out of the portal.

She was panting from exhaustion and then looked at me and bowed instantly saying

“I am sorry for attacking you!”

I turned forward and gave her no reply.

The next gate opened and the overseer seemed a bit quiet…I wonder why…

“I only did so because I was thinking that it was some sort of challenge…I am sorry…” she said

I walked forward and before I entered the gate, I stopped. I turned around and looked at her

She was in tatters…miserable clothes torn hair unkempt and dirtied…but still…still she looked beautiful…why is she here…a place that is only fit for monsters…if you think of it she is a part monster too…a very beautiful monster… sigh…

I signaled her to come. I didn’t want my identity to be known so that is why I didn’t speak and at the same time I didn’t want her to die.

“You want me to come with you?” she said.

I nodded

“I am sorry but…” she said “I cannot…”

She is not trusting me…Well you can’t help it given the mask and all…

I then began to write in midair. It was the same principal of magic text writing only the letters I am using this time were supposed to be read as a message.

I wrote. ‘I can help.’

She looked at me and hesitated a bit.

She was probably considering her odds

She then sighed and said

“Well. If you wanted to kill me you would have done so back there…I actually don’t think myself capable of reaching the fiftieth floor alone…I would probably die so I might as well try my luck.”

So she is going for the fiftieth floor. Well it matters not I have more floors to climb anyway…

Hang on a second, DUDE WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU THINKING!!! How in the hell is your god damn mind working!! You were stabbed by this girl remember? Why the hell are you helping her?!!

Oh god I feel like an idiot…

“So thank you very much, I am in your care. Mr.?”

She wants to know my name

I then wrote.

‘Arvion’

“Arvion-san… My name is Yuna. Yuna-Korima”

Then she bowed.

I then turned around and entered the gate. Cursing my stupidity at being unable to find a better name

Why the hell have I chose the name of a god damn primordial dragon?

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“My Overlord.” Said Vasbokh

He was now back into the dark palace of the Overlord. He was the only one present of the Devil lords only he and his Overlord.

“My Overlord, I had finished my task. I rallied all under your lordship’s lands and made them come to us. To help us in taking over the great plains” Said the kneeling Vasbokh

“Quite impressive, Vasbokh. However I still need more time to recover. It takes enormous amounts of energy to break down that gate.” Said the overlord.

“My forces will await until the day you wish us to invade. We will patiently await your order.”

“Very well. Now leave me. You have done a great job and you shall be handsomely rewarded once we go back to Lagaris.” said the overlord

“My only reward is your satisfaction your lordship.” politely said Vasbokh and left.

The overlord then as if talking to himself.

“The day of deliverance is near. The day when we reclaim what was once ours. The day when we are finally free…”

*To be continued…*

***“When the gentle ones are hurt, they promise revenge. But once the opportunity presents itself, their conscious screams at them “Mercy”…”***