



# 法神降临

游戏

墨乡 | 作品



*by Mo Xiang*

# Advent of the Archmage



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# **ADVENT OF THE ARCHMAGE**

– Descent of the God of Magic –

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**[ Nyoibo Studio (Qidian International) ]**

# Chapter 551

## The Moonstone and the Realm's Elite (2)

Link's Moon Stone was the size of a fist. Round and highly translucent, it looked like a pearl. In the water, it also glowed with watery silvery moonlight.

Following the game's method, Link held the Moon Stone in both palms and started adding red Dragon Power with his left hand.

Buzz. With a soft sound, the watery moonlight around the stone instantly strengthened. After a few seconds, colorless power surged out from the other side and returned to Link's body through his right hand.

Link sensed the power surging back.

It was very pure and gentle like flowing water. If he sensed closely, its nature was basically the same as Dragon Power. It had all the attributes that Dragon Power had, like fast recovery, strengthening of physical power and endurance, and more. Link tried to manipulate it and found that it was obedient. It would flow wherever his thought went without any delay or inertia.

This feeling was great.

However, there was a shortcoming to this purification. Link had added 1000 Dragon Power points into the Moon Stone, but only 800 points of the colorless power came out. The purification process used up 200 points.

Link was a bit worried that his own power would be reduced by 20% too. However, the amazing feeling of control was too tempting. He decided to just purify everything.

Thus, Link began pouring red Dragon Power into the Moon Stone for the rest of the time, colorless Dragon Power returning to Link's body. The seconds ticked by as the cycle repeated.

Gradually, the Dragon Power that flowed out of him grew fainter and fainter, becoming more transparent.

Link couldn't feel anything strange. He just felt that his control was at an unprecedented height. When the power flowed into him, he could almost hear the soft scrape as it flowed through his body. It was also because of that fine scrape that he could almost "see" the fine structure of his body.

In reality, he wasn't using his eyes but a very detailed sensory. Link could sense his body before, but it was never as clear and beautiful as today.

He "saw" every muscle, vein, and organ in him, as well as his beating heart, the white nerves, and even his brain... Wait, was that the Heart of the Dragon?

Link had modified the Heart of the Dragon before and had seen that it was a lump of dark red energy. Now, it had become a light red. It was fading even now.

He discovered he could clearly see the inner structure of the Heart of the Dragon. It was impossibly detailed. He looked closer, trying to understand the principles within, but it felt like his head would split open after a short while.

Operating his mind at this rate used up too much energy and all this energy came from his blood. Because his blood had to move at a much faster rate, many capillaries in his brain burst.

Link saw this process happen clearly.

I'm really bursting blood vessels. I guess I still can't completely understand the Heart of the Dragon. A little disappointed, Link looked away.

The red haze around the Heart of the Dragon faded. Seeing this, Link realized, I already have the purest Dragon Power, but Dragon Power isn't the purest power in the world. This red stuff is actually the impurities restricting my ability to improve.

Link also realized that under the effect of the pure power, his body was also changing. A bit of pain entered his brain, but it wasn't unbearable. He overlooked it easily and continued purifying.

Slowly, the pain disappeared, replaced by an indescribable joy. Link fell asleep with this joy.

After a while, a familiar voice sounded in his ears. "Hey, wake up."

It was Celine.

Link shot up and found himself in bed. He was still clutching the Moon Stone. "How long have I been sleeping?"

Worry was written in Celine's features, but she was relieved now that Link was awake. "You almost died in your sleep," she muttered. "It's been five days."

"Oh, that long?"

Link felt around his body. It felt empty. Bearing down, he could easily "see" inside him. His Heart of the Dragon was completely transparent now. A watery glow lit up from inside out. Like moonlight, it shone in every corner of his body, nurturing the body parts.

It was like there was a moon inside him.

He looked at the Moon Stone. It still looked the same—translucent like a moon. It glowed softly... No, it had changed. There were many fissures inside.

Shocked, Link studied it. Soon, its details popped up.

Moon Stone

Level-19 Astral Meteorite

Current Completeness: 30% (irreparable)

Link winced, feeling disappointed. This was a one-time thing. He'd planned on giving it to Celine and then Eliard and the rest. It seemed that it was only enough for Celine now.

Just as he was feeling sad, his vision flashed with a notification from the game system. Link glanced over at it.

Link Morani (Ferde Lord)

Level-11 Magician

Current Power: Realm Essence (One Realm Essence point equals 2.5 Flawless Dragon

Power points)

Power Upper Limit: 7000 points

Current Power Recovery Rate: 100 points per second

Current Power Limit Increase Rate: 100 points per day

(Note: All things in the world are the same in the end.)

It suddenly dawned on Link that the so-called Dragon Power, Natural Power, and Sunlight Power were all different versions of Firuman's Realm Essence. They just had some impurities. This led to their own attributes but also caused them to have limits.

Now, he had the purest Realm Essence. This was the power from the source.

But how could he use it?

Link pondered and suddenly thought of a basic Natural spell from the High Elves. Called Growth Spell, it helped plants grow.

Before, Link had Dragon Power so he couldn't cast this spell. He decided to try it now.

Thinking back to the spell's Mana structure, he used Realm Essence to complete it. One second, two seconds... three seconds later, Link succeeded.

Realm Essence was honestly too obedient; It completely followed his thoughts. Link could use Realm Essence to replicate Mana structures that belonged to Natural magic.

A transparent thumb-sized ball appeared in his palm. He flicked it, and it flew to the potted plant on his windowsill. A vine in the pot instantly started sprouting. A few seconds later, the vine was ten times longer, with many flowers blooming on it.

"Natural magic?" Celine exclaimed softly. She stared at Link. "You turned into an elf?"

Link shook his head and cast the dragon healing spell Essence Vitality ON Celine. Her cheeks turned pink instantly. She looked to Link with clear eyes. "I'm not sick. Why did you cast that spell?"

"How's the effect?" Link asked.

"Effect?" Celine sat on the bed and stuck her hand under the blankets to caress Link's body. "It feels great."

Link got turned on by the touching, and the magic experiment turned into something else. After all the action, Link gave Celine the Moon Stone.

"Take this. It can fully purify the demonic aura from your power," Link said.

Celine was still in his arms. She played with the Moon Stone and said, "It looks pretty. I'll try. What do I do after purifying?"

"Your power becomes very pure, but your original power doesn't disappear. You can use practically every type of spell. You can cast it as long as you know the Mana structure. You saw how I used a Natural spell, right?"

Celine understood now and was intrigued. "Oh, I see."

Lowering his voice, Link reminded, "Alright, this is a gem that only you know about, understand?"

This was a true treasure, but it wasn't very complete anymore. In that case, Celine should just use it secretly. There was no reason to attract jealousy.

Celine found it exciting. She hurriedly put away the Moon Stone and looked side to side like a bunny. Finally, she whispered in Link's ear, "I know. This is our secret."

Her actions made Link smile.

They cuddled on the bed for a while later. Finally, Link climbed out of bed and collected himself. Then he went to the enchantment room. He was going to the Beastmen's Golden Plains alone. He had to prepare some equipment.

After experiencing the perfect control of the Realm Essence, he believed that his enchantments would improve greatly.

...

While Link was focused on making an all-new set of magic equipment for himself, Ariel, Elován, and Milose were getting ready to depart from the Isle of Dawn.



Link had still underestimated the power of the World Tree. After nearly a week of treatment, Ariel's internal injuries were completely healed. Not only that, her broken legs had healed too. Though her combat was still affected, her power had increased due to this misfortune. She was now close to Level-11.

If Link knew about this, he would definitely sigh and lament about how scary geniuses of the world were.

The Isle of Dawn had also received news of the Golden Plains. Right now, the High Elf queen was giving them her last reminders.

"After arriving at the Golden Plains, remember not to reveal the Isle of Dawn no matter what the results are."

"Understood, Mother." This was Ariel.

"Yes, Your Majesty." This was Elován and Milose.

"Take this Moonlight Fruit with you. In case anything happens, activate the Moonlight spell immediately and return together. Don't make me worried, understood?"

"Yes, Mother." Ariel pocketed the Moonlight Fruit carefully.

"Then, go."

The three rising High Elf stars transformed into a puff of faint green haze and hurried eastward.

# Chapter 552

## A Sword's Symphony under a Moonlit Sky

Mage Tower, the enchantment workshop on the top floor of the main tower

Link had finished a new magical item. The whole process had taken him five days.

It seemed that he had only forged one item. It was a colorless, transparent runestone, which resembled the button of a shirt. Upon a closer look, one could see a milky-white cloud swirling in it.

It was a rare sight to see Link heave a long sigh after working on a simple magical runestone. He sat down, his body relaxing considerably. The five-day ordeal was finally over.

The enchantment workshop was huge, so he was not the only one there. Celine, Eliard, Evelina, Alloa, and Vance were also there with him. They too were hard at work working on the Ethereal Crystal. Before, they only watched from afar as Link worked, fearing that they might interrupt his thought process.

However, they were all curious as to what sort of magical equipment he was working on. When Link was done, they all came over to inspect his creation.

Everyone took a look at the crystal button that Link had placed on the enchantment workbench, but could not make out what it was supposed to be used for.

There was no magical activity within the button. The white cloud inside it resembled the blemishes one would find in normal gemstones. This was not their standard definition of a magical equipment.

No one in Scorched City would probably not bother picking it up if they saw it lying on the ground. Any ordinary passerby would simply mistake it for a heavily blemished crystal.

Eliard grew even more curious about it. Link certainly would not spend the last five days crafting useless knick-knacks. The magical principle behind its conception was

simply too profound for them to comprehend at first glance.

This suggested that Link had deepened his understanding of magic even further. Eliard bent over to carefully inspect the button on the workbench, but still could not fathom its purpose. Becoming even more curious, he asked, "Link, why isn't there any magical activity in it?"

Link was satisfied with his work. It might not seem like much, but it contained everything that he had understood about magic. The button was the highest pinnacle of magical workmanship he could reach at his current level.

Seeing everyone gazing so intently at the crystal, Link smiled at Eliard and said, "Actually, this is a seal, and it's used for enchantments. There's no power in it at the moment. It requires a set of magical equipment in order to activate its effect."

Saying this, Link took out his Dragon King's Fury sword. He unsheathed it and laid the sword out on the workbench.

Right now, the Dragon King's Fury sword was Level-13. This was the result of Link constantly nourishing the sword with his Dragon Power. As soon as it left its scabbard, the blade gave off an indescribable aura.

Under the sword's oppressive aura, the onlooking Magicians took a step back away from it. They did not dare stand too close to it.

Link stood up and picked up the crystal button from the workbench. He then inserted it into a groove in the middle of the sword's blade. The button slotted into the groove perfectly. Once inside, the sword's dragon scales began rearranging itself until the crystal merged seamlessly with the blade itself.

Then, something peculiar happened.

Once the button was on the sword, the white cloud inside it began to dissipate until none of it was left in the crystal. The crystal was now transparent. Its surface radiated a soft, watery glow.

The light was as calm as moonlight and as clear as a mountain stream. Some of the Magicians around it could not help but feel drawn to this ethereal glow. The light also seemed to have stilled their thoughts, bringing them a sense of peace and tranquility.

The sensation was akin to taking a walk across a moonlit field without a care in the world.

Suddenly, Eleanor spoke, "There's something about this light. It seems to have a spell-focusing effect."

Link smiled and nodded. "Indeed. But that's trivial in comparison to its true purpose."

He then picked up the Dragon King's Fury sword, which was now adorned with the crystal button. As he infused his own power into the sword, a watery glow spread out across the intricate maze of runes on its surface. Countless rune circuits lit up on the Dragon King's Fury sword. The watery glow streaked through them until it reached the crystal button.

Shortly after, the glow began to intensify. At first, it only illuminated a corner of the workshop. But after a while, the light solidified into a ball which began steadily expanding until it engulfed the whole room. The light was not at all blinding.

After a while, the Dragon King's Fury sword began absorbing the ball of light. Clear tinkling sounds could be heard from within.

Though no one could see what was happening inside the ball of light, they could feel that the Dragon King's Fury sword was transforming. They all waited to see its final transformation with bated breath.

The whole process took at least 15 minutes.

Fifteen minutes later, the light enveloping the sword gradually began to subside. Slowly, it revealed the sword's tip. Then came its blade. In the end, the light was completely absorbed by the sword itself.

The appearance of the Dragon King's Fury sword had changed drastically.

The sword had originally been dark red. Two dragons had been sculpted on its hilt, their wings serving as the sword's guard. The blade was also covered with dragon scales, making it look primal and oppressive.

But now, the sword had suppressed its oppressive aura. It was now a silver steel sword. The only distinguishing feature on it was the colorless gemstone that Link had placed in the midsection of the blade.

At first glance, the sword now resembled the steel swords ordinary Warriors usually armed themselves with. It did not give off any magical aura. The sword simply gleamed a bit brighter than the others. A plain-looking gemstone was mounted on its blade. The sword was no more elegant than the decorative swords forged by a master blacksmith.

Ordinary folk might mistake it for a normal sword. However, any Magician would be able to tell that the sword was now even more powerful than before.

One might say that the Dragon King's Fury sword had resembled a feral creature baring its fangs and claws to intimidate its enemies into submission before its transformation. Now, this seemingly ordinary sword had retracted said fangs and claws, giving off an almost imperceptible aura. Though it did not feel as strong as before, there was an immeasurable profoundness to the sword's new aura. If one were to carefully feel it, one could sense a power capable of rending seas and uprooting mountains within the sword.

As a Legendary master herself, Evelina was able to sense this power most vividly. She stepped forward and gazed unblinkingly at Link's sword. She then asked, "What special properties does it have?"

"Properties?" Link thought for a moment, then said, "There's just too many to list out right now, I'm afraid. Let me put it simply: the sword is me right now. Whatever I can do, it can do it as well."

The rune on the sword had channeled Link's understanding of this world into it. Link had also worked his Realm Essence on the rune to its fullest extent. In other words, the rune was perfect.

Evelina was stunned. She then sighed and sighed, "Your magic has surpassed even my understanding. I can't give you a proper evaluation of your sword."

Just then, a message from the game system flashed before Link.

Player Link has successfully forged a Legendary mid-level rune and receives 200 Omni Points as his reward.

At this stage, he could exchange one Omni Point for one Realm Essence point. It was a reasonable deal.

Rune integration a success. Please rename your magical sword.

Link thought for a moment, then said, "From now on, this sword belongs to me completely. I'll name it... Ode of a Full Moon."

When he was finished, Link slowly sheathed his sword. Once the sword was back inside its scabbard, the enchantment workshop darkened considerably. The general air of tranquility in the room had also subsided.

It was as if the moon had sunk behind the mountains. Everyone began to stir from the calm, distant mood that the sword had put everyone in.

All the Magicians in the workshop heaved a wistful sigh.

There was things in this world which might not seem like much at first, but their absence was enough to leave one in a sorrowful disposition as if there was now something important missing in this world.

It seemed that Link's Ode of a Full Moon sword had such an effect on people.

Once the sword was back in its scabbard, Link received a message concerning the Ode of a Full Moon sword's true nature.

Ode of a Full Moon

Level-14 Magical Sword

Description: This is a sword fit for a king. You would be hard-pressed to tell exactly what powers this sword possesses, but one thing's for sure: all your enemies will submit to its power once it leaves its scabbard.

(Note: The sword sings high into the moonlit sky.)

"Everyone, I'll be leaving for the Golden Plains. I leave Ferde and its matters to your capable hands. Especially you three, Eliard, Vance and Alloa."

All three of them were Link's most trustworthy Magicians of the Mage Tower.

Eliard was Link's best friend and also the most innovative Magician he had ever known. Vance had lifetimes' worth of experience, while Alloa had a gift for seeking out

the absolute truth of things. Together, their strengths compensated for each other's weaknesses. That should be more than enough to see Ferde through these turbulent times.

Link then gave a Magician's salute to the three of them. As of now, he was no longer a lord but simply a scholar in pursuit of magical knowledge.

Eliard and the others were aware of Link's plan. They straightened their backs then solemnly saluted back at him.

Link nodded at Evelina and the others. His eyes finally fell on Celine, who had not spoken a word. He smiled, and Celine smiled back at him. As they looked at each other, a white light engulfed Link, and soon, he was gone from the Mage Tower.

A moment later, he appeared 10,000 feet in the air. This was his latest upgraded version of the Dimensional Jump spell. The maximum distance he could teleport across was now 10,000 feet.

In the air, Link activated Void Walk. His entire body transformed into a streak of light which hurtled through the air towards the Golden Plains.

...

Black Forest, Skeletal Fort

A secret congregation was underway in a secret room; its participants consisted of Nagas, Beastmen, demons and Dark Elves. They were all major players in the Army of Destruction.

The room was dim that no distinguishing features could be seen on the shadowy figures occupying the room.

"Parmese's tribe has broken off from the rest of his kind. The king of the Beastmen may not take kindly to this."

"He's most likely already decided to ally himself with the humans to storm the North. At this rate, the humans' forces in the South will soon grow even stronger."

"The Beastmen may appear unified, but they still employ a tribal system. If we remove the king from the equation, whatever semblance of power the Beastmen have will

disintegrate into a puff of smoke."

"Are you talking about assassinating Avatar?"

"Sounds like a great plan, but who's gonna do it?"

"Me." The speaker had a small, delicate physique, and there was a long spear behind their back.

"One will not be enough," a Naga Priest spoke.

"Count me in." A winged demon stepped forth, a pale blue sword in his hand. It was a fallen angel.

"Alright, anyone else? We need to make this work on our first try. There won't be any room for error here," said the Naga Priest.

"I want in. It's about time I avenge my fallen brethren, anyway," a low voice rumbled. A slender, muscular figure stepped out from the shadows. It was the Storm Warlord Parmese. He held two swords in his hands that were as slender as a pair of palm leaves.

"The three of you should suffice. But Avatar's strength is the stuff of legends. I fear this mission may not go smoothly, especially if the king of the Beastmen is expecting assassins being sent his way. I'll cast transformation spells on the three of you, disguise you as Beastmen..."

The Storm Warlord Parmese interjected, "It'd be best if you could disguise us as humans. Beastmen can distinguish their targets via smell. A simple disguise would not be enough to fool them. On the other hand, we may be able to easily sabotage the humans' plans if we're disguised as one of them!"

"Well said. Then we'll do as you say."



# Chapter 553

## Strange Beastmen on the Plains

### Golden Plains

The sky and earth were vast; the breeze ruffled the grass, but there were no flocks of animals.

This was a rich and fertile area, but sadly, there were too few Beastmen, and the plains were too big. Most Beastmen didn't know how to take advantage of the valuable land either, so the Beastmen had to live in such poverty.

Link came to negotiate an alliance with their king this time. They had interacted before, but as leaders, that instance could only be used to reminiscence on the past. An alliance between two races couldn't rely on past feelings; they only cared about interests.

If they wanted a successful alliance, Link had to be clear about the other's interests. Thus, he didn't go straight to Gronhon Capital where the palace was. Instead, he disguised himself as a regular merchant and traveled through every city, observing how they lived.

He was now very familiar with Beastmen and had more bargaining chips now.

Traveling alone like this for a day, Link ran into a human merchant caravan. Since they were all humans and Link was alone, he joined the group after a few words.

Link observed while traveling and also chatted with these well-traveled merchants. He gained more knowledge about the lower class of Firuman too.

As the sky was getting darker, a small creek appeared before them. The caravan leader called for everyone to set up camp there.

There were around 300 people in the caravan made up of a dozen or so groups. The biggest group was called Red Earth Firm. They sold different types of spices to the Beastmen, such as garlic, dragon grass, and herbs. They had more than 20 carts and

took up more than half of the caravan. The other groups were between five to a dozen people. There were also some more than that and individuals like Link.

With everyone together, they had strength in numbers. Thus, the caravans didn't hire mercenaries. The Red Earth Firm didn't reject outsiders either.

The grass in the plains was mostly up to a grown man's chest. The grass near the river went over a regular man's head. If there wasn't a set path there, they wouldn't be able to move past at all.

The caravan followed the path to the creek, and the merchants got off their carts. Some unsaddled the horses and brought them to drink and eat by the creek. Others started up fires to prepare dinner. The mercenaries of the Red Earth Firm went to the sides to keep watch. The caravan filled with action.

Link found a place to sit down. He couldn't reveal his spatial equipment, so he had a bag. He opened it now and took out a piece of bread. Chewing quietly, he planned out the rest of his journey.

They were still at the border of the Golden Plains. There were more than 1000 miles to Gronhon Capital. With the caravan's current speed, it would take more than one month to go through the dozens of cities.

One month was quite long, but he had to do this to truly understand the Beastmen and come up with an alliance that the king couldn't reject. Link wouldn't spend all his time on this too. For example, he was eating now, but things flashed past his eyes. It was the magic book he had with him. He could display it with the game system.

This way, people would think he was spacing out, but he was actually studying magic. Only a small amount of time was spent on observing the Beastmen.

Just as he was focused, he heard footsteps. Someone was walking over. The steps were light; it was a young girl. Link remembered her name quickly—Shallie.

As soon as that thought flashed past, he heard a bright voice say, "Brother Link, you must be thirsty. Come drink some water."

Link didn't hide his name. Actually, very few people referred to him by name after he became the lord of Ferde. He was a "master" in Norton, "Lord" in Ferde, and he was known as the "Ferde lord" in other places. Otherwise, he was Lord Morani. Those who

called him by his name were mostly all close to him.

The name "Link" was also common throughout Firuman, so he didn't have to hide it.

After hearing the voice, he looked up to see a teenage girl walk over with a bowl of hot water. It was freshly boiled water, so she walked very slowly.

She was the daughter of a small group's leader. She looked plain and had many freckles on her skin. Because of all the time outside, her skin was tanned. This made her seem energetic and lively. Her eyes were bright, her figure was lean, and her personality was bold. She wore plain leather armor and seemed to have endless energy every day, bounding around the caravan.

No matter where she went, laughter and chatter followed.

Link stood up to accept the bowl. "Thank you," he said with a smile.

Shallie's eyes brightened and curved into crescents. She sat down beside him. "Brother Link, you keep dazing off by yourself. Are you thinking about something?"

Just as Link was about to reply, he felt unfriendly eyes on him. He turned to see Shallie's father, Olan. He procured magic material and had some fame. He didn't like it when his daughter was with Link, but he clearly couldn't control his daughter.

Link gestured at the water bowl to thank Olan. Then he smiled to the girl. "Shallie, your father probably told you before that solo merchants like me are dangerous. You should stay away, right?"

Link had the Song of Tomorrow sword hanging at his waist. Of course, he hadn't unsheathed it yet, and it looked like a plain metal sword.

Shallie didn't care. "Oh, he says that but he's old. I don't care. Brother Link, you have a sword and walk through the plains alone. You're good at swordsmanship, right?"

"I'm okay," Link said, chuckling.

"Can you teach me?" Shallie finally revealed her ulterior motive. She wanted to learn martial arts.

Link burst into laughter. He figured this out at their first meeting. Her eyes brightened

whenever she saw someone with a sword. She would often look at the mercenaries of the Red Earth Firm, but they'd killed people before. She was like a scared little deer, only daring to look but not to approach them. Now that the harmless-looking Link was here, she started getting ideas.

"I don't mind, but you need your father's permission. He might not allow it."

It was just some swordsmanship techniques. Shallie had worked hard in bringing him clean water these days. When he finished speaking, he drank all the water and handed the bowl back. "Go ask your father," he said. "Remember, you can't just send the message. He must tell me personally."

Shallie gaped at him. "Huh? That's too hard. My father will never agree. Can you change to another requirement?"

Link wagged his finger at him. "No. This isn't up to discussion. Compared to swordsmanship, this is nothing."

"Fine, I'll try." Shallie walked away, both excited and depressed.

Left alone again, Link continued reading again. A few minutes later, a pained cry broke out near the creek.

Then Link saw a mercenary sprint back. His face was covered in blood, and an eyeball had fallen out of his socket. It swung before his face. Grasping his face, he screamed while running. After a few steps, he fell and rolled on the ground. Perhaps he'd given up because he couldn't get back up. His cries weakened too, and he just panted heavily on the ground.

His companions hurried over to check. A few ran to the creek with their swords too. A short while later, Link could hear the cries of fighting.

The merchants in the caravan waited anxiously. The mercenaries returned with many wounds. Link remembered that the leader was called Miro. He was a Warrior at the pinnacle of Level-4. This was great for a common soldier.

At this time, he held a strange black head in his hand.

Link looked carefully. The head was like a human... No, it was most likely a Beastman. But strangely enough, the skin was dark green. The blood dripping from it was dark

green too. The grass didn't change when the blood dropped onto it, but Link could see that the grass' vitality was disappearing rapidly.

The blood was poisonous. In fact, it was a slow-acting toxin and hard to notice. It also emanated an indescribable aura.

It felt familiar to Link. It was like... Natural poison, but at closer inspection, it felt different too. In other words, he'd never seen this type of power.

Link also noticed that the Beastman's eyes were pure black. There were no eye-whites. The rest of his skin had patches of grayish marks like scars after getting burned.

Are there Beastmen like this? Link found it strange. He'd never seen something like this in the game.

A message suddenly flashed past his vision.

Activate Mission: Strange Beastmen

Mission Content: Some strange Beastmen have appeared on the Golden Plains. They seem combative. Investigate why they appeared.

Reward: 50 Omni Points

The reward wasn't much, but it was better than nothing. Link chose to accept it.

While everyone in the caravan was observing the head, he slipped to the creek. He had to investigate these Beastmen.

# Chapter 554

## An Incurable Poison!

The Beastman's headless corpse lay beside the creek. Thick, green blood flowed out of the gash across his neck in rivulets. The rest of his body was covered with terrible scars. Link walked up close and saw that greyish-white hair was growing from the scars like some sort of filament-like fungi.

What was even more astonishing was the fact that while the body was completely deprived of a head, the rest of it was still quite alive. The twitching of its limbs from time to time suggested that it still retained some of its vitality.

As he approached the body, the sense of familiarity that Link had felt before grew even stronger, but still he could not figure out what it meant. Just then, Link heard footsteps behind him. There were other people approaching the scene. It was the mercenaries from the Red Earth Firm. They had probably been dispatched to deal with the corpse.

Link quickly took out a crystal bottle and scooped up some of the dark green blood. He then cast an Invisibility spell, a Levitation spell and a Void Walk spell in quick succession as he retreated from the scene. Without making a sound, Link's body vanished entirely into thin air.

Once rendered invisible, he walked around in the tall grass and came out from another corner, making it seem as if he had just finished answering a call of nature.

One of the mercenaries headed over to where the caravan had set up camp. He announced in a loud voice, "Gentlemen, there's been a change in plans. It may not be safe out here tonight, so the caravan leader has advised all of you to stay close to each other."

The merchants looked at each other, somewhat concerned. This did not sound good. Those who had come with their own horse carriages harnessed their horses to their wagons as they headed towards the Red Earth Firm's resting area. Those without carriages simply walked alongside their horses. Before long, all 300 people came together, forming a temporary campsite where the horses and other livestock formed an outer circle around the merchants.

Link had also followed the group to the resting area. After a few steps, a man with a greying mustache appeared beside him. It was Shallie's father, Olan.

He growled at Link, "You'd best keep your distance from my girl, punk!"

Link replied with an amused smile, "I don't think I was the one who came to her first."

Olan was at a loss for words. A few seconds later, he said, "My girl's not right for you. She's still too young, too innocent. I only have one daughter. I don't want her to get hurt."

Link smilingly asked, "Do I really look like the kind of layabout who entices young maidens with sweet words, only to hurt them in the end?"

Olan shook his head. "No, I'm not talking about your character. I'm talking about your swordsmanship. Swordsmanship is the art of murder. It's either kill or be killed for anyone who practices it."

Link then asked, "And what if she has a talent for it?"

Olan laughed bitterly. "We're all just simple folk. How much do you expect to teach her? Even if my daughter is able to make a name for herself with a sword, will she even be a match for a true master? I'd rather she not learn swordsmanship at all if it means putting her in harm's way. She won't be involved in that bloody world where all kinds of Legendary masters run rampant. She'll live out her days as an ordinary person. Sure, it may sound boring, but at least it will be a peaceful life."

This was the logic of most ordinary folk. It sounded reasonable. Link did not think he would one day hear such a thing from an ordinary merchant. He raised an eyebrow at Olan.

Olan sighed. "Young man, there are two types of heroes in this world: they're either immortal, or they live very, very short lives. The latter number in the thousands. I don't want my girl to be some sort of hero."

It was true. Heroes were notorious for their short lifespans.

Link was finally convinced by Olan. He decided not to teach Shallie much. At most, he would only give her a few pointers. He would only be setting her on a path towards self-destruction if he continued teaching Shallie.

He finally said, "You have my word. I won't teach her anything else."

"Thank you, young man." Olan gave Link a salute, which was usually indicative of a royal upbringing.

Noticing the surprised look Link shot at him, Olan explained to him, "My father was once a knight. When I was young, I always thought he was the strongest there ever was. He died in battle. They never found his body."

Olan then walked past him. Shallie followed behind her father, visibly crossed by the exchange he had with Link.

Link raised his shoulders, showing that he was left with no choice in the matter. Tears were welling up in Shallie's eyes. She stormed off with a humph.

Shortly after, the merchants were all grouped together. Under the direction of the mercenaries, a temporary campsite with adequate protection was finally set up. Within the circle formed by the horse carriages and livestock, the merchants began starting fires and laying out their blankets.

Up until now, everything had been quite peaceful.

Link found a quiet corner in the campsite. He plucked a few blades of grass and spread them out on the ground near a bonfire. He then laid out the woolen blanket he had brought with him on the pile of grass.

The sky had darkened considerably. Link lay on his blanket and closed his eyes. On the outside, it seemed as if he was beginning to sleep. In reality, he was reading his magic book.

This was part of his training regimen. He could not afford to relax at such a critical time.

After reading for half an hour, Link heard footsteps heading his way. He decided not to open his eyes. Most of his attention was still on the magic book he was reading. However, he redirected a small portion of his attention to the approaching figure.

It was one of the mercenaries hired by Red Earth Firm. From the footsteps, Link was able to identify to whom they belong. The mercenary was called Arda. He was one of the three handlers of the mercenaries as well as a Level-4 Warrior.



His footsteps finally stopped beside Link. Arda's voice came next. "Hey, I hear you're quite good with the sword."

"Just a bit." Link nodded. His eyes were still shut.

Arda asked patiently, "Did you also see the Beastman just now?"

Link nodded again.

Arda explained, "There were actually two of them just now. One of them was killed by us. However, the other managed to escape us. We suspect that they were scouts, and it's possible they may attack us tonight. As it turns out, their blood is quite poisonous. Our leader, Milo and some of our best men were poisoned by the Beastmen's blood. We need all the help we can get to guard the place tonight."

Arda probably assumed that Link had a lot of experience surviving the wilderness, considering the fact that he had just traversed the plains on his own before joining the caravans. As the mercenaries were now short on manpower, Arda naturally sought Link out for his help. Of course, Link was not the only one Arda had asked. Those who looked physically competent had also been recruited by him to keep watch tonight.

Incidentally, Link was also curious about the two mysterious Beastmen himself. He nodded at Arda and said, "Alright then, what do you have in mind for me?"

Arda did not expect Link to agree to his request so easily, since he had noticed that Link had been extremely quiet throughout their journey. Relieved by Link's answer, "It's like this. We're kinda short on people on the eastern side. If you don't mind, could you take the first shift there?"

"No problem." Link rolled up his woolen blanket and headed towards where Arda had indicated.

Along the way, he observed his surroundings. He noticed the solemn expressions on the mercenaries' faces. Through the crowd, he could see their brethren who had been poisoned.

Three of them had been poisoned. The mercenary who had been blinded in one eye already had the blood on his face cleaned up, but there was the same greenish hue on the man's face that Link had also seen on the Beastmen. His body was trembling uncontrollably while his mouth muttered unintelligible gibberish. Beside him lay the

mercenaries who had slain the Beastmen. One of them was the leader of the mercenaries, Milo.

Milo's condition seemed a lot better than the other two. His face was not as green as the other two. He could even move, but from the way he moved, Link could see that his condition was still severe. Milo might only be able to use half of his strength at the moment, but his condition would only worsen if left untreated.

If those two Beastmen were really scouts, there's a high chance we'll be ambushed tonight. I can't really do anything about that now. I'll just have to wait and see what happens, Link thought.

Right now, he needed to do some research on the poison that had flowed through the Beastmen's veins.

Link noticed that the place he was assigned was an empty space cleared out among the merchants' cargo, which shielded him from the night breeze. He was the only one standing guard there tonight. No one would be able to see what Link was up to there. It was an ideal location for him.

Link spread out his blanket on the empty space and sat on it. With one ear strained at the noises from the campsite, Link took out the bottle of blood he had collected back then and began experimenting on the poison contained within.

According to the principles of alchemy, each type of poison had a certain attribute which in turn had a corresponding neutralizing agent. Some poisons had multiple attributes, but with the proper alchemical procedure, Link should be able to identify the type of toxicity in the Beastmen's blood.

Of course, understanding the nature of the poison itself did not equate to actually finding a cure for it.

The reason why some forms of poison proved difficult to cure is due to the fact that they contained multiple attributes which intersected with one another in a sophisticated manner. As a result, antidotes for these types of poison were usually hard to find. There were even some that had remained incurable for a long time.

One might liken this to a mathematical formula. It might look like an innocuous arrangement of numbers and alphabets to the naked eye. Eventually, to your frustration, you realized that there was absolutely no way to solve it, despite knowing

what each of the numbers and alphabets meant.

At that moment, no one was paying any attention to him. Link began his experiments. Ten minutes later, he finally stopped.

There was no sophistication to the poison's toxicity. Its attributes were clearly laid out. All five elements, which comprised gold, wood, water, fire, and earth, intersected with each other according to a specific order. But the way it was concocted was of some interest to Link. He had gone through 20 different methods of detoxification, none of which had any effect on this particular poison.

This was the first time he had come across such a poison ever since he mastered alchemy. Link was up against a highly skilled poisoner devoid of all sympathy for his victims.

Link frowned slightly. Can it really be incurable? What kind of person would concoct such an insidious poison?

With no cure in sight, those poisoned would surely meet a slow and painful death. Link raised his head up from his hiding spot and looked at the three poisoned mercenaries pitifully.

Before, the leader of the mercenaries was still be able to move. But the poison had spread deep into his body. He now looked even weaker than before.

He seemed to have sensed that his time was up. The mercenaries tending to him now leaned down over his body as he muttered something to them. Link listened to what he said. The man was already making arrangements for his death.

There was no fear or sorrow in the mercenary leader's voice. It sounded level and impassive, as one would expect from someone who had constant brushes with death in his job.

Link grew even more sympathetic for the man's plight. What a shame to lose such an excellent mercenary. If only he was infused with Sunlight Power... With his talent, he may even make it beyond Level-8, he thought.

As he lamented on Milo's condition, there was sudden heavy breathing coming from the campsite, followed by strange groaning sounds. Link quickly located where the sounds were coming from. They had come from the mercenary who had been

grievously poisoned the most.

He was taking in huge gulps of air. There was a hissing sound from the depths of his throat. The whites of his eyes were gone, and in their place was complete darkness. White patches of the filament-like fungi began sprouting on his face.

Those were the same symptoms Link had seen on the Beastmen that had been poisoned!

# Chapter 555

## Pearls Should Be Treasured

"Ah, ah!" The poisoned mercenary convulsed and panted. He puffed out faint green vapor with every breath.

The night wind spread the vapor to all directions.

"Move, move out!" mercenary leader Miro yelled. "This vapor is poisonous!"

Link watched this with shock from afar. Such toxic poison. Not only is it incurable, but it also seems to have some spirit. It turns the victim's body into a new poison database to create new toxins. You'll die with just a bit of poison. If the people around the poisoned are ordinary, the entire camp will probably be wiped out.

These thoughts flashed past Link's mind. He used his mind to quietly cast the Spatial Folding spell.

Instantly, the space around the poisoned mercenary stretched and folded. With every fold, the poison was sucked deeper into space. Then it was broken down into harmless elements by a Spatial Rend so that the poison couldn't spread.

To the surrounding mercenaries, they only saw the poison spread through the air and then just disappear for some reason.

They obviously wouldn't think of something as complicated as Spatial Folding. They would just think that the poison had dissipated and wasn't a threat anymore.

This movement had woken up the rest in the caravan. Many people crowded around, staring in fear at the poisoned mercenary, convulsing and screaming by the campfire.

"What's wrong with him?"

"Is he going to die?"

"Why do I think that he's survived?"

"Don't you think that he's looking more and more like that Beastman?"

There were various comments, but the volume wasn't high. Still, the feeling of fear spread throughout the camp.

The campfire wavered and flickered. The night wind whistled across the plains. Occasionally, there would be the chilling howls of wolves. The entire atmosphere turned eerie.

Under this fear and confusion, the poisoned mercenary suddenly stopped shaking. Cracking, his joints snapped into place, and he slowly stood up.

By now, other than his body type, he looked completely like the Beastman. He seemingly wasn't used to his body yet. His joints twisted around, cracking loudly.

"K-kill him!" Arda, third in command of the mercenaries, yelled. "Shoot him!"

The archers had been ready for a long time. Hearing Arda's orders now, they released their arrows without hesitation.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh! The poisoned mercenary's head was shot through with six arrows. He was also forced to the ground by the momentum of the arrows.

Huff. He fell onto the ground and panted heavily. His body kept twisting unnaturally. After struggling for five or six minutes, he finally fell quiet. However, he wasn't completely dead yet. His limbs would jerk every now and then.

The merchants all held their breaths at this scene. They didn't dare breathe loudly lest their actions wake up this strange creature.

Sometime later, someone's eyes moved on to leader Miro and the second in command. At dusk, they had been the two who killed the Beastman with their own hands. They'd been hurt and poisoned. Their skin was green right now. They might turn into that strange mercenary soon.

Slowly, a second and third person turned to look. Finally, everyone was staring at the two.

The mercenary beside Miro retreated subconsciously, but leader Miro grabbed him. "It's useless, Eyre. We're dying tonight."

A Level-4 Warrior, Eyre was the second strongest in the group. It was a loss today.

Miro sighed and took out the sword at his waist. He tossed it at Arda, saying, "Arda, this group is yours now."

"Leader!" Arda grasped the sword with his hands and fell to his knees. "There's still hope before we get to the end. We need you!"

Miro had reached his current status by gaining their loyalty and affection. He was also very talented. It wasn't easy to make a name for oneself in the Golden Plains ruled by the Beastmen.

Seeing that their leader was poisoned and was willing to die, the mercenaries all fell silent. The surrounding merchants were quiet too.

The silence lasted for some seconds before someone yelled, "Stop hesitating! There's no cure."

"Kill him! The poison will act up soon, and it'll be more painful!" someone else yelled.

"He already gave up. Do it now!"

The people were all affected by fear of the unknown. They just wanted to get rid of the threat and couldn't be bothered by the feelings of the victims.

Many mercenaries grew furious. They took money to kill for others, but this time, they had to kill their leader. He'd also given up on fighting. Faced with this situation, the mercenaries all felt that their future was hopeless. They couldn't do it.

And now, these regular people were being selfish and didn't even treat them like people. Anger burned inside of many mercenaries. They wished they could turn their weapons and kill the people who were shouting.

Just as the mercenaries and merchants were at a stalemate, a girl jumped out from the shadows. "No, why should we give up?" she cried. "There must be hope!"

It was Shallie. Behind her, Olan was shocked and caught by surprise.

Shallie strode to the campfire, clenching her fists. Her face was red due to fear and nerves. She trembled too. "And you all, Leader Miro was poisoned while trying to

protect us. Now, he's like this, but instead of trying to help him, you just want him to die, so he doesn't affect you. You're all cowards! Selfish!"

The merchants lost their temper.

"Girl, what do you know?!" an unknown person yelled from the crowd.

"Shallie, shut up and get back here!" That was Olan.

"Olan, watch your daughter!"

That was the head of the Red Earth Firm. Middle-aged, slightly fat and tall, he looked authoritative. Walking out of the crowd, he gazed at the poisoned mercenary leader.

"Miro, I'm sorry. After you die, I will double your payment."

"Thank you." Miro nodded. With that, he closed his eyes, awaiting death.

Shallie was still by the campfire. Looking at Miro, she asked, "Why are you giving up? You're so powerful."

"Little girl, thank you for your good intentions, but I'm not powerful at all." Miro chuckled bitterly.

"How? Isn't it just poison?" Shallie said, not giving up. "Every poison has an antidote. Why don't we try something else—"

Before she could finish, Olan burst out from the crowd and grabbed her back.

Even as she was being pulled, Shallie struggled and cried, "There's so many of us, but no one has a solution? Miro is such a good man. He was poisoned to save us. Are you just going to watch him die?"

She was right, and many people felt uncomfortable at these words. But the truth was, everyone was helpless against this strange poison.

Nothing could be said now. Miro looked at Arda. "Do it now so I won't die so horribly."

Arda clenched his jaw, tears forming in his eyes. After a moment, he grabbed a bow from another mercenary. Knocking the arrow, he slowly pulled the bow back, aiming



it at Miro.

Link watched this entire thing from his carriage. In the crowd of ordinary folks, he saw Miro's wisdom and Shalie's bravery. It was like two stars appearing in the dark sky.

Humans may be mostly unaccomplished and filled with disgraceful people. However, one or two pearls would always be found in the sand.

Most of the time, pearls would only shine once. Then, they would be assimilated by the sand around them, or be crushed into powder by life. The people couldn't protect the pearls.

However, it was different this time because Link was there.

No antidote could get rid of the poison. Link didn't have spells for that either, but this didn't mean he was powerless. He still had the game system and 700 Omni points.

He hadn't bought spells in a long while, so he almost forgot about this feature.

Seeing that Arda was about to shoot, Link quickly started buying spell cards. His eyes flew past all the shining cards. Finally, they stopped on one surrounded by countless faint green runes.

Natural Spell: Wild Windstorm

Wild Windstorm

Legendary Natural Spell (Level depends on the spellcaster's level)

Cost: (10 to 5000) Depends on the target's physique. The stronger they are, the higher the cost.

Effect: Summon the source energy that is tainted in the target's body. Strengthen it and drive it out. This spell can eradicate the contamination done by curses and poison.

(Note: The windstorm has arrived and will grow wildly.)

This was a very powerful dispelling spell. Its theory was different from most spells of this type. Instead of targeting the poison itself, it strengthened the target's vitality until they could drive out the poison naturally.

It was because of this principle that it could be traceless. After using, the poisoned would gradually recover by himself. However, it could dispel practically all poisons and curses in Firuman!

Screech. On the other side, Arda was pulling his bow back to shoot the arrow. At that time, the sky suddenly lit up. Silver light appeared above Miro and Eyre. Like moonlight, the light shone down and poured into the two mercenaries.

Under the "moonlight," they looked divine and godly.

Soon after, the greenness of their faces faded. Their eyes that had been turning black instantly returned to normal.

Anyone could see that they were okay now.

The crowd was in an uproar. A while later, someone exclaimed, "It's a miracle! It's a blessing from the God of Light!"

"They're blessed by God!"

With that, everyone in the camp fell to their knees, awed by the sight.

At the same time, twenty pairs of black eyes watched this scene from outside the camp. They were the Strange Beastmen who'd come for a sneak attack.

Just as they were about to act, the silver moonlight appeared. Even at a small scale, Legendary power was still impressive. Link's Realm Essence was especially pure, so people would naturally be frightened by it.

Taken aback, the Beastmen turned and left without hesitation.

Link wasn't going to follow this merchant caravan anymore. He slipped away and followed the Strange Beastmen.

It's not easy to come up with this poison. I'd like to see who's making this mess.

# Chapter 556

## Things Were Becoming Complicated

The night wind blew fiercely across the plains. There were clumps of grass as tall as a person—anyone would have a hard time finding their way through the grass.

However, Link was no ordinary person. The poisoned Beastmen who had escaped had left plenty of clues in their wake for him to follow.

From their smell, auras, footprints, to stains of the dark green blood left on the grass, Link could see it all.

Half an hour later, Link finally followed their tracks to a low-lying valley.

The valley was filled with a faint green mist. There was a tree with a thick canopy growing on the valley. Around the tree was a large plot of land, on which stood at least 30 grass huts.

The huts surrounded the tree. There was an empty space in the middle where a bonfire burned bright. However, the fire burned with a peculiar green light, painting its surroundings in an oily green hue.

Through the green light, Link could see a lot of Beastmen either standing or squatting on the empty ground. One of the Beastmen stood out to him. His huge body was covered with white stripes of fur. His eyes also twinkled like a cat's.

The Beastmen who had escaped were now kneeling before the towering figure of this Beastman, who was holding a knobby hammer-like staff in his hand. He was waving it about as the poisoned Beastman mumbled unintelligible gibberish to him. The latter was speaking in his native tongue. His words were indistinct, and he swallowed from time and time, possibly due to the poison wreaking havoc in his body.

Hidden in a dark corner, Link listened closely to the Beastmen's words. He was barely able to understand what they were saying.

"No, there's no such thing as a miracle..." said the tall Beastman.

One of the poisoned Beastman began doing charades before the tall Beastman. He said firmly, "Chief, I saw it with my own eyes. There was a brilliant light in the sky. It shone on the humans, and the poison in their bodies was completely neutralized."

"No, this must be the work of a Magician," said the tall Beastman. Seeing that his subordinates were about to insist otherwise, he immediately dismissed them with a heavy wave of his staff. "Enough. This Magician was strong enough to dispel master's power, very strong. I need to tell master about this."

Ignoring his subordinates' further attempts to convince him that what they had seen was an act of god, the tall Beastman turned away and strode towards the largest hut in the valley.

Link, who had listened to their conversation from afar, quickly cast an Invisibility spell on himself. He then noiselessly made his way through the valley.

Poisonous air permeated the valley. Though the place was basically uninhabitable to any other living being, it did not pose a problem to Link.

He stopped his breathing completely and sealed off all the pores on his body, essentially terminating all material and energy exchanges between his body and the outside world. His body was now running only on its internal energy reserves.

Link stealthily circled the valley. After walking 50 feet around the huts, he suddenly stopped. He then stooped down and carefully picked off some mud from the ground. After digging through ten inches of mud, he finally found something. It was a piece of a white rune tablet.

The tablet was big. It had a diameter of more than 20 inches, and magical runes were etched across its surface. Link squatted and took a closer look at it.

It's a simple detection barrier, but the way these runes were etched... it must have been done by a human Magician, thought Link.

Every race had their own unique style of runecrafting. The Dark Elves' had a more insidious aspect, the High Elves emphasized intricacy, the dragons' runes were ancient and cavernous, and the humans preferred minimalism and practicality in their craft.

The runes on the tablet were etched out plainly. Ordinary Magicians might not be able to make out any distinguishing features, but a master like Link, who had already seen

much in the realm of magic, was able to identify aspects of the runes that alluded to the race of the Magician who had crafted them.

Link was confident that the rune tablet was made via the Magician's Hand spell.

"The mastermind behind all this is a human? No, there's something wrong with this picture." Link sensed that there were still certain details of this matter that contradicted with each other and that they required further deliberation.

For instance, the poisoning that had happened back then did not seem to be a human's handiwork. Any human Magician who had wanted to carry out a villainous deed would usually do so with a curse or other form of black magic. Poisons were rarely found in a human Magician's magical arsenal. Even if a human did resort to using poisons, he or she certainly would not use this kind of poison. This seemed like the kind of thing the High Elves would do.

Things were looking even more complicated. Link was in no hurry to come to any conclusions. He believed that the answer would reveal itself to him in time.

A detection barrier had been set up around the valley, probably as an attempt to keep ordinary Magicians out. However, to Link, the spell was child's play. He made a slight adjustment to his invisibility spell and strolled casually through the barrier.

The detection barrier did not react to Link's intrusion. It was as if Link did not exist at all.

Link crept noiselessly towards the biggest grass hut in the valley. Ten seconds later, he stood outside the building. There was a small window on the hut. Link walked towards the window. He then channeled Dragon Power into his ear, which amplified his hearing in an instant.

When he got close enough, Link was able to sense a magic aura coming from within the hut. It was a normal Mana aura, which was around Level-7. The aura belonged to a Level-7 human Magician. He or she was strong, but not strong enough to be able to produce such toxicity in the air. Of course, there was the possibility that the human Magician did not make the poison himself, but rather bought it from a black market. It might have been excavated from an ancient site.

Suddenly, a thought occurred to Link. Is he not afraid of the poisoned air in the valley? Does he actually have an antidote for the poison?

Just then, sounds came from inside the grass hut. The tall Beastman and the Magician were now talking.

"This poison is extremely potent. Only masters of tremendous skill could hope to neutralize it, and there aren't that many that fit that description. You said he wielded a power like moonlight? How strange." The voice seemed to belong to an older person, but he enunciated every word clearly. He must be the human Magician.

"Master, what should we do now?"

"Let's not mess with the traveling merchants for now. Gudo and the others have been poisoning the Green Stone Creek for five days. A lot of the people in Mara City downstream have already been poisoned. It's time we head over to Mara City."

"Understood."

Hearing this, Link's brows furrowed. The poison being carried by the Beastmen was certainly unique. Not only was it difficult to concoct an antidote for the poison, but it was also extremely infectious. They simply needed to poison a hundredth of a city's population to bring the whole city to its knees. If the water had already been poisoned, it was only a matter of time before the people of Mara City were transformed into these poisoned Beastmen. If these Beastmen were under the Magician's control, the Magician would bring about a mass poisoning across the Golden Plains never before seen in history.

This was a catastrophe.

Link decided to take matters into his own hands. He pressed a hand against the window. A rush of Realm Essence boiled up from his body.

Space, time, seal!

With a soft hum, Link sealed up both space and time within the grass hut completely with those three words. The hut inside had gone silent.

Link marched straight towards the hut. As he walked, he silently activated a spell that he had recently acquired, Permeate.

Permeate

## Support-type Legendary Spell

Description: Gaps exist in everything. The caster is able to phase through these gaps once the spell is activated.

(Note: Permeate through everything.)

Link had mastered the spell to such a degree that one could not even tell exactly when he had cast the spell. His body passed through the wall of the grass hut like air and into the hut's interior.

Inside the grass hut, there was an ordinary oil lamp. Under its faint flickering light, a human Magician with a mat of white hair was sitting on a chair. There was a magic book beside him. The tall Beastman from before stood before the Magician as he reported on the situation.

Space-time had been frozen by Link inside the hut. The only thing that was still able to move was the teardrop-shaped candlelight in the oil lamp that flickered in the darkness.

Link's eyes swept the inside of the hut. He then spotted a wooden shelf behind the Magician. Ten crystal bottles were arranged on it, and they contained various kinds of liquids.

Link walked towards it and began examining each bottle. The last bottle he tested contained a pale red liquid. Link soon realized that the liquid was able to neutralize the poison in the air.

"So there is an antidote after all!" exclaimed Link.

He quickly extracted a few drops of the red liquid into a crystal bottle of his own. When he was done, he put everything back where it belonged. Finally, he walked to the human Magician and gave a few taps on him. Realm Essence flowed out from Link and onto the Magician's skin, forming a well-hidden curse on it.

With this curse in place, Link was able to tell where the Magician was at any given point in time. He could even end the Magician with just a thought if he felt like it.

When he was finished, Link exited the hut and whispered, "Release!"

Space and time inside the hut returned back to their original states. None of its occupants realized what had just happened. They resumed their discussions on Mara City.

Link continued eavesdropping on their discussions outside the hut. He was now aware of all the arrangements they had made across Mara City. Without alerting anyone to his presence, he quietly departed from the hut.

He could feel that there was much more to this than what met the eye. The real mastermind was still out there somewhere. But Link had already gotten what he had come for: the antidote's recipe. There was no real rush to smoke the mastermind out right now.

Who exactly was pulling the strings behind all this? The thought lingered still in Link's head.

When Link left the poisoned valley, a mission message appeared across his vision.

Mission: Strange Beastmen completed.

Player has received 50 Omni Points.

New mission triggered: Mara City

Description: Stop the poisoning of Mara City.

Mission Reward: 100 Omni Points.

The reward offered was low as before. The mission did not seem to present a challenge to Link, so he accepted it. After thinking for a bit, he decided to head back to where the caravans were.

Mara City was just 40 miles away, and the caravans were heading there as well. He decided to enter the city as a merchant himself.



# Chapter 557

## Plague of Mara City

Golden Plains, night

“Someone figured out the poison.”

There was a small thatched cottage in the thick grass. Inside, Ariel, Elován, and Milose sat facing each other. They had been meditating as Magicians usually did, and the cottage had been quiet. Ariel suddenly broke the silence.

Elován and Milose didn't open their eyes, but their expressions changed. “Can you sense who it is?”

“I'm not sure. It's a strange power, very clean and seemingly a bit gentle... No, it's reserved. This is a subtle power. I feel that if it is used at full force, it can be terrifying.”

“Do you know where it is?” Elován asked.

“Near Mara City.”

“Your Highness, should we go check?” Milose asked.

Ariel was silent for a bit. Then she said, “Let's go see. Bileauquin is not a simple poison. I have to see who solved it... But try not to get into conflict with him. We can't reveal our identity.”

Whoever could figure out Bileauquin must be at the Legendary level. A fight at that level could destroy the entire area. By then, it would be impossible to stay hidden.

“Understood, Your Highness.” Elován and Milose nodded at the same time.

As soon as they spoke, faint green light shone around the three sitting on the ground. An instant later, they'd turned into a green haze and shot out of the cottage like lightning.

...

On the other side of the plains, a large line of Beastmen knights with Kero Beasts, unique to the plains, were making their way to Mara City.

The Kero Beast at the head was huge and had a unique color. Rather than the regular grayish-white, it was pure black. A Beastman in fine leather armor sat on its back.

Using the Beastmen's craftsmanship standards, this leather armor was extremely luxurious. The Beastman was strong, and the black obsidian broadsword on his back was half a man's height. It was crudely made and had many nicks on the blade. However, it couldn't affect the murderous aura coming out of the sword.

If a regular person saw this, their eyes would be in pain. They wouldn't even be able to stare at it directly.

But compared to the Beastman's own aura, the sword was nothing.

His pure black hair, long and dense, was tied carelessly and hung down his back. When there was wind, his hair would billow like burning black flames. He was very muscular and at least seven feet tall. Muscles bulged on his bare arms, rippling like water whenever he moved. He was very impressive.

Different from the other crude and barbaric Warriors, he sat upright on the Kero Beast. His eyes were closed as if he were resting, and no matter how bumpy the road was, he didn't move. His presence was like a looming mountain that one couldn't see the tip of.

This was the new king of the Beastmen: Glorious Warlord Avatar.

Technically, it appeared that he ruled over all tribes of the plains. The fighters of each tribe had submitted to him, recognizing him as the only king. However, the thousands-of-years-old Beastmen tradition was too resilient. Each Beastman was only loyal to their own tribe, and there was no king in their hearts. This would take years to change.

To strengthen his rule, King Avatar established a touring convoy, in addition to the Gronhon Capital. He traveled the cities to show his authority and power.

His next destination was Mara City.

Three in the afternoon, a scout reported, “Your Majesty, there are 30 more miles to Mara City, but it doesn’t seem very stable.”

Avatar wasn’t surprised. He’d run into such things often along the way. Even now, he wasn’t firmly seated on the throne. Many people weren’t willing to surrender to him.

He didn’t fear challenges.

“Explain.” He didn’t even open his eyes.

“Your Majesty, many people are fleeing the city. They say there’s an epidemic...”

“Epidemic?” Shocked, Avatar’s eyes flew open. His eyes were slightly bloody—a change after he entered the Legendary level.

If a strong opponent had appeared in the city, he wouldn’t be scared. He was confident he could fell the opponent with his sword. But this time, the opponent was an invisible disease. He had to be scared.

“Isn’t Grand Shaman Alador there?” Avatar asked. “Is he helpless too?”

“Grand Shaman Alador was assassinated five days ago.”

Avatar was shocked again. This smelled fishy, but the Beastmen lived in the Golden Plains and rarely had conflicts with other races. Who would try to harm them?

Could it be Parmese? Avatar shook his head as soon as he thought of that. He was familiar with Parmese. The man only disagreed with Avatar, but he wouldn’t sacrifice regular Beastmen or kill a Grand Shaman.

Humans? Avatar shook his head again. Humans liked dark magic. The Norton Kingdom in the North was fighting with the Destructive Army while the Syndicate was busy with making an alliance. They also had to be careful of the Isle of Dawn. They had no time to make more enemies.

The Destructive Army? Avatar still shook his head at this. As far as he knew, the Destructive Army and humans were mostly equal. They were far in the North and were busy with the humans. Why would they fight the Beastmen now?

He thought for a while but couldn’t figure out who his enemy was. He could only move

past this now. "What kind of plague is it?" he asked.

The scout looked fearful. "I saw some victims. Their skin turned green and became weak. The disease doesn't spread quickly, but there's no cure. Even the Shaman's divine spells don't work. They can only wait for death."

"Even the divine spells don't work?" Avatar furrowed his brows. Suddenly, he flinched. He thought of something terrible. "Are there many people fleeing?"

"Yes. They spread throughout the plains after leaving Mara City."

Hearing this, Avatar shook. "So cruel!" he uttered.

There was no cure for the plague. They could only wait for death after falling sick. Even worse, these people would only weaken and still have the ability to move for a long time. Many of those who were fleeing were probably sick already. They would bring the plague throughout the entire plains. By then, the entire Golden Plains would be infected.

Avatar didn't dare imagine the consequences.

After a few seconds, Avatar was about to speak to the scout when he realized there was something wrong. He studied the scout and then looked to the Warriors behind him. He quickly realized that there really was something wrong. His face was slightly green... He was infected!

"You are infected. Leave now!" he ordered.

Stunned, the scout checked himself. Face paling, he stumbled back, eyes filled with despair. He prostrated himself on the ground and looked up at Avatar. "Your Majesty, please help me," he begged. "Don't let me die without honor!"

Avatar was only a Warrior. He was helpless against a plague. Faced with the scout's pleads, he felt uncomfortable. After a long while, he said, "Stay here alone. Don't give up until the end!"

With that, he jumped off from his Kero Beast. Turning, he said to his Warriors, "Set up camp here. I'm going to Mara City."

An army couldn't deal with a plague. If these soldiers went with him, they would just

get infected.

The soldiers were all shocked when they heard this. "Your Majesty," someone said, walking forward. "Mara has already become a city of plagues."

"That is why I must go alone. The plague can't hurt me. I will go find those shamans. They're the first to come into contact with the plague. Even if they don't have a solution, they can show me the way."

With that, he turned to the infected scout. "Soldier, don't give up. I'll think of something."

Tears filling his eyes, the scout fell to his knees and choked out, "Your Majesty!"

Avatar took a deep breath; his power started operating. He crossed hundreds of feet with one step as he raced towards Mara City.

As he ran, he thought angrily, The spreader of the plague is evil. They want to destroy my race. If I find them, I'll make them suffer all the torture in the world.

The furious Avatar didn't know that three figures were following behind him. It was the Storm Warlord Parmese who had come south.

"That's Avatar?" a small Naga asked. It was Katyusha with the Spear of Victory.

"It's him." The Storm Warlord grasped his lance as if facing a great enemy.

"He doesn't seem that powerful." That came from the Fallen Angel. His weapons were two finely made shurikens. He twirled them as he spoke. The graceful movements went well with his handsome and angelic face.

The Storm Warlord didn't like him. Cursing him inwardly, he warned out loud, "Don't underestimate him. He's the strongest Warrior of our race. You'll never know how powerful he is until you fight him."

"Even the strongest Warrior can't escape from the Spear of Victory." Katyusha smiled.

Parmese stopped talking. He'd experienced how terrifying the Spear of Victory was. To him, it was undefeatable.

“Anyway, be careful... Where are we going to attack?”

“Mara City.”

“Mara City? There are too many people there.” Parmese was a bit hesitant. Whether they were Magicians or Warriors, Legendary figures always shook the world when they fought. Every ordinary person around them would die.

Katyusha heard his hesitation. “What, you can’t bear it? They’re all Avatar’s people.”

“But...” She was right, and Parmese had left the Golden Plains. However, he never thought to return and massacre the innocent.

The Fallen Angel chuckled coldly. “See, mortals will always be mortals, even if they have extraordinary power.”

“Fine, I’ll do it!” Parmese waved his hand. He would go all out. He looked like a human now, so everything he did would be the humans’ fault.

# Chapter 558

## Glorious Warlord Avatar

The caravans slowly made their way across the plains. There was a slight upward slope, so they could see the Mara City from where they were.

The merchants jolted in their carriages along their journey. Their faces wore weary but elated smiles.

They had finally reached the outskirts of Mara City. They should be safe for now. Since last night, the merchants had been on their guards, worried that the poisoned Beastmen might ambush them again. They were finally able to loosen up a bit at the sight of Mara City in the distance.

“Brother Link, why haven’t you said a word?” Shallie squeezed over to Link’s side. She seemed to have put behind her what happened last night.

Link ignored the girl. He stared straight ahead at Mara City and said, “Look, aren’t those Beastmen?” Why are there so many of them leaving the city?”

The others had also noticed this peculiar spectacle. “Yes, how strange.”

Once outside Mara City, most of the Beastmen stampeded towards the Golden Plains. They all seemed to be in a rush to put the city behind as soon as possible as if something terrifying had scared them out of their wits.

Suddenly, someone shouted, “Look at that Beastman’s face!”

The merchants were able to see from their caravans that the Beastman’s skin was whiter than the rest, and there was a hint of green on his face. This was one of the symptoms that mercenary leader Milo had exhibited when he was poisoned.

The only difference was that the green on Milo’s face was steadily receding. After basking under the glow of the mysterious moonlight and resting for a night, Milo had recovered considerably. He was now able to walk about like before. On the other hand, the Beastmen were stumbling in their steps. It was obvious the poison was spreading

deep inside their bodies.

Everyone took another look at the other Beastmen and saw that most of their faces were now becoming greener. There were even some who were sprouting white patches of fur on their bodies.

“Why are they all poisoned?”

“This is horrifying. Are we still going to Mara City?”

“Do you guys think that it’s an epidemic?” one of them stammered. They could see that it was utter chaos in the city from where they were. There was no semblance of order in it. What kind of poison was capable of turning an entire city upside down?

This did not seem like a simple case of poisoning, but rather an epidemic.

An epidemic could spread and infect an entire population if one was not careful enough. There had been three instances in recorded human history where a plague had reduced the population of a city to zero. Each time, the death count had numbered in the millions. To generations of humans, an epidemic was this faceless, relentless enemy capable of slaughtering millions with no sympathy for its victims.

“Milo, what should we do?” The chief of the Red Earth Firm looked at Milo. After what had happened last night, everyone in the caravans now held the mercenary leader in high esteem, believing him to be blessed by the gods themselves.

This was the first time Milo had encountered such a phenomenon. However, regardless of whether it was an epidemic or something else, he could tell that this was out of their depth. Their best course of action was to keep themselves far away from the city for now.

“I don’t think we should go to Mara City right now. We probably should go round the city... No, there doesn’t seem to be any way to go round it. Look at the Beastmen running off in all directions. No one’s even trying to quarantine them in the city. This plague, or whatever it is, will spread across the Golden Plains. Chief, I fear you won’t be able to do any business here.”

“Are you serious?” The chief swallowed. He thought for a moment before making his decision. Given the choice between profit or life, the chief decided to choose life.



“Let’s go back. We’ll go back to Norton Kingdom,” he shouted.

“Chief, we’ve not even sold a single thing. If we go back now...” someone beside him spoke out. If they were to turn back now, the Red Earth Firm would go bankrupt. Every one of them would be sent home with debt that they would probably not be able to pay off for the rest of their lives.

“Chief, maybe if we go around Mara City...”

“Enough, it’s just a little debt. Debt will not kill you as fast as what awaits you in Mara City! Now let’s go!” The chief did not budge from his decision.

Milo said, “Let’s go back. These spices won’t go bad that soon. You’ll still be able to make some money by selling them back in Norton Kingdom.”

Some of the merchants still seemed to have reservations about this, but the chief’s word was law. In the end, the people of Red Earth Firm began turning back towards Norton Kingdom.

However, only half of the caravans belonged to Red Earth Firm. The rest were independent merchants. After thinking it through, some of them followed Red Earth Firm back on the road, while the rest decided to leave the party and head towards Mara City.

The merchant Olan hesitated for a few minutes. Finally, he chose to turn back. He was still in good shape to take his chances with the epidemic, but that would mean risking her daughter’s safety. He decided that it was best to bring her back safely to Norton Kingdom.

Suddenly, someone shouted. “Do you see that? Someone’s flying!”

Everyone turned around and saw that a black figure was racing through the sky towards Mara City. The figure was actually running rather than flying through the air. Each step propelled the figure across a few hundred feet, which made it seem as if he was really flying.

“How is he able to run so fast?” The figure had already traveled across a few thousand feet. One would have thought that it had teleported across that distance in the blink of an eye. The merchants would not have been able to catch up with its speed if they had not been observing the figure from a far enough distance.

Milo saw it, and the expression on his face changed instantly. “Not good, that’s definitely a master. We’d better hurry. Something big’s about to go down!”

At that moment, no one hesitated. Everyone began turning their horse carriages around and hurriedly headed back towards Norton Kingdom.

In the chaos, a girl’s voice rang out. “Where’s brother Link?”

No one answered her. Everyone was busy running for their lives. Her voice was immediately drowned out in the din.

The carriages’ wheels began clattering across the ground as the merchants desperately tried to put some distance between them and Mara City. In another corner, Link, who had cast an Invisibility spell on himself, walked in the opposite direction towards Mara City, unnoticed by anyone else.

Link was now able to exhibit perfect control of his Realm Essence. He had completely retracted his aura. With the aid of an Invisibility spell, he had blended perfectly into his surroundings.

He recognized the figure which had raced across the sky. It was the newly promoted Beastman King, Avatar. Link did not expect that he would come all the way here, but Link had also sensed other auras beside Avatar’s.

After receiving his Realm Essence, not only was Link able to refine the control of his own power, but he had also become even more sensitive to the auras of others in comparison to other Legendary masters.

One might liken Link’s current senses to a puddle of clear water. A drop of ink would make more of a difference in it than a puddle of muddy water.

He could feel a total of six different Legendary auras up ahead. He even recognized four of them, with whom Link had come into contact before.

“Katyusha, Ariel, Elovan, Milose, a demon, a Beastman, and the Beastman King Avatar. That’s seven Legendary masters. There’s gonna be quite a party in Mara City.”

Link did not feel confident about facing all of them head-on. One slight misstep would mean certain death and the decimation of his very soul.

I'll need to keep myself well hidden. Watching the seven of them fight it out from the sidelines seemed like an excellent idea.

He wanted to know why these many Legendary master had come together in the Beastmen's city.

Avatar had reached the outer wall of the city. He stood on the wall and saw that different areas of the city had descended into different degrees of chaos.

There were sounds of crying and roaring all over the city. Avatar saw these strange things running amok in certain parts of the city. Their bodies were green, and covered in white blemishes. Green pus flowed out from them as well. They were rampaging throughout the city, biting and clawing wildly at anyone they saw.

Avatar frowned at this spectacle of madness. Without further delay, he leaped off from the wall and headed towards Mara City's ancestral altar.

The altar was where the shamans lived. He needed to find a way to stop the epidemic. Otherwise, Mara City and the entire Golden Plains would soon turn into an uninhabitable wasteland.

On his way, Avatar saw countless atrocities being committed by the people in the city. He had seen a father, who was on the brink of death, suddenly sitting upright and biting into his daughter's neck beside him. There was a mother who had swallowed her infant child whole. Even the soldiers were not immune to the madness. They had slaughtered everyone in their paths as green pus flowed profusely from their pores.

Order had completely collapsed in Mara City. The city itself had become a literal hell on earth.

Avatar began to grow anxious. Anger burned even more fiercely in him as he saw more atrocities being committed along the way. The bloodlust in his eyes intensified.

Whoever the culprit was, he would find them and then tear them to shreds. Avatar would then cook their remains and gobble them all up. This way, they would be digested slowly in his stomach and excreted from his body like the filth they were.

Ten seconds later, he reached the ancestral altar, but what he saw there caused him to lose all hope.

In the altar, an old shaman covered in white spots was feasting on the meat of a younger shaman. The latter was also infected, but he still retained his senses. The young shaman was trying to break free from his aggressor, but it was useless. The other shamans had collapsed on the ground, their faces a sickly green like the rest of the infected.

The ancestral altar was done for.

“How can this be? How can this be?” muttered Avatar despairingly outside the altar.

Just then, a female voice came from behind him. “Oh, how unfortunate, Avatar, that such a tragedy has happened to your city!”

It was Katyusha.

Avatar turned around without warning and pulled out his obsidian sword from his back in a fluid motion.

“Is this your doing?” Avatar glared at Katyusha, his eyes now flashing dangerously. A target that he could channel all his anger and bloodlust into had finally appeared before him.

Battle aura flowed off him in waves. Parts of the ancestral altar began to crumble under the weight of such power.

Katyusha did not expect such a decisive reaction from Avatar. She could not help but take a step back from the sudden rush of power from Avatar’s body.

“Die!”

Without giving Katyusha time to react, Avatar leaped mightily forward. He then swung his sword, directing all his power and bloodlust with the ferocity of a thunderstorm at the Naga.

Katyusha was shocked. Her opponent had moved too swiftly. She could not use her Spear of Victory’s Thorn of Fate in time.

Though the Spear of Victory was a formidable weapon, its wielder was no match for the Beastman King’s lightning speed.

In the face of such an attack, she felt as if she was out in the middle of a stormy sea and a huge wave would break her pitiful raft into pieces at any time.

She had no idea just how terrifying the Beastman King really was.

# Chapter 559

## Cicada, Praying Mantis, Oriole

Clang!

Avatar's murderous intent burst out. In a hurry, Katyusha could only raise her spear to block the attack. She was forced backwards, each step burying into the stone tiles. Countless cracks appeared under her feet, spreading out like a spider web.

A shockwave visible to the naked eye rushed out in all directions. The ground shook, the air trembled, and all houses within 1000 feet toppled as if they were made out of jigsaw pieces.

After the attack, a small nick opened up on Avatar's obsidian broadsword. The material of his Beastman Epic blade couldn't be compared to Katyusha's Spear of Victory.

But so what?

Katyusha retreated, and Avatar followed like a shadow. He huffed out a breath. A fast air current rushed out of his throat in a guttural roar.

"Blade of Glory, go!"

Wild power surged into the obsidian broadsword, making it shine with blinding fiery light. Under the red light, the blade doubled in size. It was close to ten feet long and two feet wide. Outside the actual blade, there was a shadow made up of condensed Wild Power.

He brought it down on Katyusha; the power grew more aggressive. His attack was right when Katyusha still hadn't regained her balance.

The air cracked like thunder as the sword came down. Bolts of bloody lightning appeared around the sword. It was so powerful it could almost cleave the heavens!

Facing this type of attack directly, Katyusha just felt tumbling waves charging at her.

There wasn't even time to breathe. She could only passively block this fatal attack.

This can't continue. She was very clear.

She had to use this attack to distance herself from the opponent. As long as she was further away and had time to adjust, she could cast the Thorn of Fate and kill this Beastman warlord.

Clang! Katyusha blocked the attack again.

But this didn't feel right. The opponent had used an instantaneous rend. When she caught it, she felt electric numbness go from her palm to her arm and then to the rest of her body. She almost went slack.

It was fortunate she could stand her ground, let alone use the momentum to retreat.

"Human Warrior, I don't know why you're doing this or how many people you have, but you will all die here today!"

Avatar gritted his teeth. His actions didn't slow down at all, and he didn't give Katyusha any chance to recover. Taking advantage of when she was powerless, he roared again.

"Die!"

His sword cut upward. The blade was as fast as lightning. If Katyusha was hit by this, she would be hacked into two. Even if she had nine lives, she would be dead.

Avatar had only used three attacks in all his battles. He would kill with three moves!

Even though Katyusha had the Spear of Victory, something close to being a divine spell, once she made a mistake, she wouldn't find another chance to attack—even though she only needed one-tenth of a second.

Avatar defeated all the brave Beastmen by himself and canceled the tribal system. This all depended on his amazing combat techniques.

In Firuman, he could definitely rank in the top three for combat. No human could compare to him. Kanorse couldn't do it; the High Elves definitely couldn't. He could only find an equal opponent in the dragons or demons.

However, Avatar's might didn't just come from combat. He also had a spirit that helped him break free from all restraining tradition and change the world.

Perfect combat techniques, a majestic spirit, and surging murderous intent—the three combined to make Katyusha unable to fight back.

Just as Katyusha was about to be halved, a slender figure streaked out from the corner. This person had a lancet in both hands. One went for Avatar's neck; the other, to his heart.

At the same time, a young man with darker skin, handsome features, and six dark wings charged from another direction. This person had a spinning shuriken in each hand. He put his hands together and the shurikens combined into a blade going for Avatar's obsidian sword.

This six-winged fallen angel was extremely fast, almost teleporting. He had charged a second later but was even faster than the Storm Warlord Parmese who was known for his speed. He blocked Avatar's broadsword at the last instant.

Clang! There was the explosion of metal going through stone. Avatar's sword didn't stop or continue. It spun midway and blocked Parmese's attack.

During the block, Avatar's thoughts whirred. An almost subconscious thought flashed past his mind. No, there are three of them, and they're all at the Legendary level. My only advantage is that they aren't working together now. If I don't end this now, I'll die.

With this thought, Avatar started moving. There was no hesitation or pause during this entire process.

These were battle instincts—the terrifying talent of the Beastmen!

During battle, Beastmen always had an almost beastly gut instinct. They could always make the correct decision at the critical moment.

In the history of Firuman, Beastmen always ranked high in the records of single challenges. There was the record of a Level-8 Beastman warlord killing and dying with five Dragon Warriors of the same level.

Beastmen were natural Warriors.



The next instant, Avatar activated his fatal trick. He used the reverberations from when his obsidian broadsword clashed against the opponent's weapon and retracted a bit. During this, his sword suddenly blurred.

The obsidian sword seemed to become illusory as if formed by thousands of shadows. At the same time, the glow around it consolidated. The wild bloody-red power seemed to solidify. It was blinding.

Parmese was the most familiar with Avatar's power. Seeing all the sword shadows, he was terrified. "Retreat, he's putting his all in!"

The fallen angel didn't mind. "What's there to be scared of... oh, so powerful!"

At the same time, Avatar activated his fatal trick. Wild Power rushed into the sword, and he hacked forward with all his might.

Instantly, sword shadows filled the air within a 15 feet range. Every shadow was bloody red, and the blades dazzled. They seemed to be illusory but contained extreme power.

This was Avatar's strongest battle skill: Wild Battle

Wild Battle

Level-11 Master Battle Skill

Effect: The user consolidates all power and murderous intent to explode abruptly. Everything within 15 feet will be pulverized!

(Note: The anger of a warlord!)

Shtick, shtick, shtick. Dazzling sword shadows shrouded everything. Within them, Katyusha, the fallen angel, and the Storm Warlord Parmese all suffered the horrible attack.

It had come too quickly and too densely. With nowhere to hide, they could only block with all their might.

Katyusha had just been saved by her companions and wanted to activate the Thorn of Fate. But then she sank into such a desperate situation. She couldn't do anything other

than using everything to retreat.

The fallen angel suffered the densest attacks. He spun his shurikens like crazy so that it created a seamless blockade before him. Even so, countless sword shadows still got past them and hit him.

Parmese was terrified. All will to fight was gone. He'd already retreated beforehand, but this was useless. He was still within range of the attack. Though he put in all his might to block, he was still cut by a sword on his left leg.

Poof, poof, poof. It was the sound of flesh cutting open, accompanied by the metallic smell of blood. The sounds lasted for half a second. Then three bloody figures flew out in different directions.

The three Legendary figures were all hit at least once by Avatar's attack of full force. They flew out, covered in injuries.

The most badly hurt was the fallen angel. One of his arms had been hacked off, and blood gushed out of his chest. He stumbled back unsteadily and fell. He convulsed on the ground, blood pooling around him.

No matter how powerful the fallen angel's vitality was, the Legendary power rushing into him was destructive. The fact that he was alive right now was proof of his strong vitality.

As for Katyusha, she was covered in blood. Though she stayed standing, her body shook uncontrollably, barely unable to hold onto the Spear of Victory.

The least injured was Parmese, but he wasn't well off either. Everywhere was fine except for his left leg. More than half of his leg was missing. The remaining parts were hanging by shreds. The speed that he was proud of was gone now.

However, Avatar wasn't well off either. Though he wasn't hurt, this battle technique had used up all his power. Leaning on his sword, he half-knelt on the ground, panting heavily.

He didn't look at Katyusha or the fallen angel. Instead, he stared at Parmese.

"I didn't think this would happen. It was okay for you to take the humans north. It was okay to side with the Dark Elves in the Black Forest. But I didn't think that you would

come back to massacre our helpless brethren and with such a lowly method of a plague! Parmese, you are the biggest disgrace to our race!”

Legendary fighters didn't look at their appearances. Parmese looked like a human now, and regular people wouldn't be able to tell. However, Avatar instantly knew who he was after attacking.

Parmese instantly refuted Avatar. “I didn't do the plague! I just came to kill you!”

“Ha, so what? You'll kill me and let the plague spread through the Golden Plains to kill our entire race. Your soul will be abandoned by our ancestors. It's such a pity that I can't kill you with my own hands.”

He'd lost all his power while Parmese only lost one leg. His power wasn't damaged at all and could easily kill Avatar.

Parmese didn't want to be responsible for this. He didn't care what regular Beastmen thought; he didn't even care what Avatar thought. However, he couldn't ignore the countless ancestors.

In Beastmen tradition, ancestors were very important. Respect for the ancestors was ingrained in their souls.

“No, I didn't do the plague. I couldn't do something like that!” he exclaimed, either to Avatar or the countless ancestors.

“Kill the demon and Naga to prove to the ancestors!” Avatar roared.

Parmese froze. His eyes moved to Katyusha. The fallen angel was disabled and would need at least three months to recover. The only one present who could fight back was Katyusha.

He instinctively gripped his lance.

“Parmese,” Katyusha said hurriedly. “Your people are still in the Black Forest. Your wife and children are there too. Don't forget!”

With that, Parmese's grip loosened again. He didn't dare meet Avatar's eyes, but he didn't speak either. Lowering his head, he ripped his shirt off and tied up the remnants of his leg. Then he hobbled towards the fallen angel.

He picked the badly hurt demon up and went to Katyusha.

“Let’s go.”

“Why won’t you kill him?” Katyusha asked angrily. The Beastman king was too terrifying. If they didn’t kill him now, she wouldn’t be able to kill him again, even if she had the Spear of Victory.

Parmese shook his head. “Now is not the time. Only he can stop the plague in the Golden Plains. He can’t die!”

“What does this have to do with you?” Katyusha was so pissed she could slap this guy right now.

“Shut up!” Parmese didn’t want to speak further. He took out a tonic and poured it down the fallen angel’s throat. Then he carried him away.

Katyusha stared at the Beastman king kneeling on the ground. She wanted to stab him to death, but she was badly hurt and wasn’t confident. She could only follow Parmese away.

Avatar let out a sigh. Pushing against his broadsword, he rose slowly.

He was still alive; he could still find the cure to the plague. Yes, he had to find the cure. Since he couldn’t find it here, he would go to the Dragon Valley and ask the Red Dragon Queen for help.

Yes, the dragons would have the solution. As long as they were willing to help, he would pay them anything.

With that in mind, he prepared to set off. He’d recovered some of his power now. It might not be enough to fight, but he could travel.

But two steps later, his heart leaped. Without thinking, he jumped to the side.

Whoosh. A black vine as thick as his arm snuck out of the ground, piercing towards his heart like a poisonous needle. Avatar dodged it, but the thorn changed direction too, not leaving his chest.

Helpless, Avatar blocked it with his obsidian broadsword.

Clang! The broadsword was easily forced away by the black vine. Avatar was too weak now. He wasn't the vine's match.

After that attack, the vine returned. Avatar groaned inwardly. He dodged at the last moment but still couldn't avoid it entirely. With a poof, it passed through his arm. Extreme pain besieged his mind. He couldn't help but grunt.

Immediately after, he felt poison spread from the wound. He was familiar with the poison, and he knew this vine. It was from the High Elves!

In that moment, something flashed past his mind. No wonder Parmese refused to admit that he's responsible for the plague. The actual masterminds are the High Elves!

As soon as he thought this, his vision dimmed, and he felt dizzy.

In the last moment, he saw a white light flash around him. He knew this was from a portal spell, but he found it strange. Is someone saving me? Are the High Elves capturing me?

With that, he fainted.

# Chapter 560

## The Beastmen's Combat Form

"No, no, no!"

Dazed, Avatar found himself in the middle of Mara City. He was surrounded by crazed Beastmen whose bodies were dripping with green pus and covered with scars that had sprouted white hair.

They tore towards him, green mist issuing out of their mouths as they roared. They looked even more savage than the wild beasts of the plains.

Avatar was forced to cut down his own people with his obsidian sword, but their number was overwhelming. They were threatening to tear him apart and eat him alive.

"Why are there so many of them? Is Mara City doomed? And what about the grass plains?"

In a panic, Avatar began cleaving his way through the ravening mass of Beastmen towards the city gates.

To his horror, he realized that his strength was rapidly depleting as he cut down many of his fellow Beastmen. He had used up all of his strength when he finally got to the city wall.

His arms were now sore, and his legs felt like lead. It was like wading through a mire. But there did not seem to be any end to the swarm of infected Beastmen. The streets teemed with them like ants swarming out from their nest. The Beastmen surged towards him, ready to sink their fangs into his flesh.

With what was left of his strength, Avatar leaped up onto the city wall. He was ready to leap down and flee for his life. However, as he got onto the wall, what he saw plunged him into despair.

The same infected Beastmen had spread far across the grass plains. There was no end to them.

“Is this real? Are the Golden Plains done for? Is there no hope for my people?”

“Hahaha!”

Avatar heard shrill laughter from behind him. He turned around and saw that in a shadowy corner of a street stood a couple of slender figures with long, pointed ears.

It was the High Elves.

Sensing his gaze, one of the High Elves spoke with a sharp voice, “Hahaha, you’re all going to be extinct quite soon, Beastmen!”

“Avatar, you’ll die as well. Your people will feast on your corpse until not a single bone is left.”

The crazed Beastmen dashed towards Avatar, who was now too fatigued to put up a fight. In an instant, he was submerged in the torrent of infected bodies. Amid the chaos, he could only flail his arms about, but it was useless. He roared in pain as one of the Beastmen bit into his neck.

“Argh!!!”

He sat up. He immediately realized that something was wrong. There were no Beastmen or High Elves anywhere around him. Only a warm fire crackled happily near where he sat. A metal pot was hung from a metal stand above the fire, and there was a figure sitting near the fire. The figure seemed human. He was holding a skewer of a dead rabbit that was cooking above the fire. At that moment, the delicious aroma of cooked meat filled the air.

The place was dark. A full moon shone down from the night sky. There were thick clumps of reeds around them. A night breeze was blowing, but thanks to the fire, Avatar did not feel the least bit cold. There was something soft beneath him. Avatar looked down and saw that a thick bearskin had been laid out beneath him on a pile of reeds. A thick woolen blanket covered his body; it appeared to be woven by human hands.

Avatar tried to get up, but as he moved, there was a piercing pain in his arm. His entire body was also extremely weak. Everything seemed like a dream to him.

He felt his neck and was relieved to find that there was no wound on it.

While he was still trying to process his surroundings, he noticed that the human figure was approaching him. In his emaciated state, Avatar could not see what he looked like, especially when the figure had his back to the fire. Avatar could only see the cooked rabbit in his hand. The aroma of food now wafted close to him. Suddenly, the Beastman's stomach growled. He was starving.

"Here." The person handed the cooked rabbit over to him.

Without thinking twice, Avatar took it and began stuffing himself with the rabbit. It was delicious. The rabbit's skin was crisp, its flesh tender. There was also a hint of spice added to it. Avatar had never tasted anything like it.

Within ten minutes, he managed to devour the entire 20-pound rabbit. All that was left were the rabbit's thigh bones. He had swallowed down its smaller bones together with its flesh. Still, Avatar was not completely full.

Once food had entered his stomach, Avatar felt a surge of energy and strength return. He turned to the figure and asked, "Who are you? Why did you save me?"

The man's aura was powerful, perhaps even more powerful than Avatar's. But it was gentler, almost inoffensive. Avatar had never felt such power before.

The man chuckled. He took a few steps and let the glow of the fire illuminate his face.

"Master Link, is that you? Why are you here? How long have I been sleeping?" Avatar was so surprised by Link's presence that he could not help but fire multiple questions in quick succession at him.

Link did not attempt to hide the truth from the Beastman. "You've been asleep for half a day. As for me, I've come to the Golden Plains to discuss the matter of the Army of Destruction. As you probably know, the Storm Warlord has joined the Army of Destruction, so I thought maybe I could solicit your aid in the matter. Who would have thought that such a thing would happen to Mara City before I could even meet you?"

Avatar was not averse to helping Link. He was on good terms with him after all. In the last few years, the Beastmen and Ferde had done a lot of business with each other. Avatar's people had imported all kinds of magical weapons from Ferde. Said weapons had played no small role in Avatar's unification of the Beastman tribes.

Hearing Link mention Mara City, Avatar quickly asked, "Master, how much do you



know about what's happening in Mara City?"

"A lot. I've been doing some investigations. When I saw the High Elves attacking you, I finally understood what was happening." Link knew that Avatar was going to ask him about Mara City. He was also prepared to leverage this to form an alliance with Avatar.

Avatar's face was grave. "I want to know."

Link nodded, ready to share what he had learned. "Before saying anything, I should remind you that I'd only just arrived near Mara City a few days ago. Everything I'm about to tell you is merely what I've deduced from my observations, and there may be some discrepancies between my deductions and the actual truth. In other words, you don't need to believe everything I say."

Avatar nodded, somehow even more confident that what Link had to say would be true.

Link began telling him what he had learned. Only one insignificant human Dark Magician had a hand in this, which would not be enough to incur Avatar's wrath towards the whole human race. Link then told Avatar about the High Elves and the Army of Destruction, the real culprits behind everything. He did so in detail to stoke the fires of Avatar's hatred towards both sides.

Of course, Link chose his words objectively. He did not let his emotions sway the way he spoke.

Though Avatar was never in the habit of showing his feelings, when Link was finished, he could not help but punch at the ground in frustration. He said through gritted teeth, "How cruel can those High Elves be!"

Katyusha, the fallen angel, and Stormlord Parmese of the Army of Destruction had targeted Avatar. After all, he was a Warrior, and he had never backed out from a fight. Even if he lost that fight, Avatar could only blame himself for not making adequate preparations and letting the enemy take advantage of his weak points.

But the High Elves had targeted the ordinary folk of the city with such an insidious method that threatened the Beastmen's very existence. At that moment, Avatar wanted nothing more than to tear those three High Elves to shreds.

Just then, a sweet aroma drifted from the broth in the pot that was still cooking above

the fire. Link activated the Magician's Hand and poured the broth into two silver bowls. One floated towards Avatar, the other towards himself.

Link took a gulp from it. The taste was rich and thick. Once inside his stomach, a feeling of warmth and fullness spread over his body. He let out a sigh and said to Avatar, "Don't think too much about it. Your body's still weak. Let your hatred and thirst for vengeance simmer in you. Your recuperation is top priority right now. Try some of the snake soup that I made with cobra meat. I learned how to cook it from another master. It's perfect for restoring you to your full strength, especially when you've only just had your body cleansed of all that poison."

Avatar nodded and drank some of it from his bowl. His eyes lit up. Despite how hot the soup still was, he drank all of it in huge gulps, including the snake bones that had been left to stew in it. In the blink of an eye, he had even gobbled up all the snake meat in the soup.

Link shook his head as he watched the Beastman swallow everything down. All the trouble he had gone through to make the snake soup had gone down the drain just like that.

When he was done eating, Avatar placed the silver bowl beside him. He then struggled to stand up and began practicing his combat forms.

Link knew that Avatar was trying to regain his full strength, so he did not interrupt what he was doing. Link rolled up the sheets and put everything else away in order to clear out a wider space for Avatar to practice his forms.

Link then watched as Avatar moved.

At first, Avatar went at a slow pace, as his arm's injury had greatly affected the fluidity of his movements. Gradually, a dim red light began radiating from his body, especially from the wound on his arm. As the red light grew brighter, his movements began picking up speed.

Gradually, Avatar began losing himself in his movements. Though his eyes were open, they were not focused on anything. His movements were guided entirely by instinct, fluid like flowing water.

Link observed the Beastman's movements intently. He was a master himself in the art of combat, and his senses were also as acute as any other combat master. Even though

Avatar was only practicing one form, Link could sense his breathing rate, the movement of every muscle and the flow of Savage Power in Avatar's body.

Link recognized the form that Avatar was doing—it was called Soul Furnace, and it was a highly valued combat form of the Beastmen. The idea was to turn one's body into a furnace and one's soul into tinder. In the duration of the Soul Furnace, a Beastman's body would be able to recover from any injury twice as fast and even strengthen their bodies at the same time. Besides that, the synergy between soul and body would be greatly improved. Constant practice would also help boost one's battle instincts.

In other words, this was the Beastmen's trump card, just like the High Elves' World Tree and Ferde's Sunlight Power.

One could develop both physical and spiritual strength through the practice of this technique. However, even though Link understood the form's movements, he could not grasp how he should bring out his spiritual strength through those movements. Link simply watched Avatar practice for his own pleasure.

Two hours later, Avatar ceased all his movements. He put his arms down and let out a long breath.

His forehead was beaded with green drops of sweat. It contained the rest of the poison that Link did not manage to remove from his body. Avatar waved his arms. He could now move normally.

He turned to Link and said, "My injuries have almost healed completely, and I've regained most of my strength. I take it that you're able to grasp the form that I was practicing, Master Link?"

Link nodded. "Looks simple enough."

Avatar laughed. He took out a book whose cover was made from pelt and said, "This form can only be performed by those with Savage Power. It's not really a big secret. Everything you need to know about letting your spiritual energy flow in your body as you practice it is all in this book. You can take a look at it if you like."

Seeing how curiously Link had observed him, Avatar did not mind sharing such knowledge with him. It was not as if Link would be able to execute the form anyways.

Link took the book. As soon as he opened it, a message popped up before him.

Soul Furnace

The Beastmen's Battle Technique

Quality: Level-19

Description: Body, mind, soul, all coalescing together to form a warlord's path to ascension.

(Note: The road to becoming a god of war!)

Link jolted in surprise. Before, he probably could not pick this up, but now, the Realm Essence in his body had allowed him to ignore all racial limitations imposed on techniques like this one. He could now master even the Beastmen's prized battle technique!

# Chapter 561

## Perfect Dawn of Magic

Accepting Avatar's battle technique book, Link flipped through without changing his expression. Half a minute later, all the content was ingrained in his mind.

After finishing, he returned the book to Avatar, commenting, "Very good battle techniques. However, it's too restrictive. Even a Beastman would need absolute talent to accomplish it, right?"

In the game, every Beastman player tried for the Soul Furnace battle technique book. However, the book was not enough by itself. They had to fulfill many strict requirements. This was expressed by a set of practically impossible missions that had to be completed alone under three tries.

If the player failed at the third try, the book would disappear.

According to calculations, of all the lucky Beastman Warriors who could receive the Soul Furnace book, only 20% could successfully pass the test and learn the technique.

If the game was this difficult, real life would be worse.

As expected, Avatar looked proud after Link said that. Link had read too quickly, so Avatar thought his comment was a bit too rash. However, anyone liked hearing praises. Chuckling, he said, "You're right. Only three people in our entire race have learned this battle technique—Holun, Parmese, and I. Right now, I'm the best."

Link had to admit this point.

In the later stages of the game, Beastman King Avatar was the undisputable top Warrior. He was a legend amongst legends and had even injured Nozama, Lord of the Deep, forcing him to retreat back to the demon fortress.

It was completely true to say he was the best.

As for the Soul Furnace battle technique, Link had taken a look and determined he

could learn it. But if he wanted to learn it fully, it would be difficult. To reach Avatar's level would be practically impossible.

Not only did the practitioner need Savage Power, but they also had to have unshakeable and courageous will. They had to do things according to their heart, unaffected by anything else.

This was the path to a true and pure Warrior.

And Link was a Magician.

A Magician had to be flexible and agile. A powerful Magician couldn't forget their original intention but should use any method possible. In order to reach their goal, some white lies were alright, but this would betray their heart. This was the opposite of a Warrior. If Link forced himself to learn it, he would probably distort it.

But even though he couldn't learn this battle technique, it didn't mean that he couldn't use the wisdom in the book. To a Magician, everything had a pattern and could be learned and used. This included battle techniques.

The Soul Furnace seems to fit with the Soul Stamp of the game system. The two are different but have the same function. They both stamp power onto one's soul. If I can truly grasp the Soul Stamp, my spell-casting ability will truly follow my heart's wishes. My speed will really rival battle techniques, and I'll be powerful enough to destroy everything... I need to grasp this power as soon as possible.

Thinking of this, Link grew excited.

One must know that all current spells, regardless of whether they were mortal or Legendary, required a Magician to use their own power to build the structure and activate the outer force by shaking the structure to attack.

This was extremely powerful but lacked in speed. This shortcoming was especially obvious after entering the Legendary level.

There were two reasons: Firstly, Legendary spell structures were very complex. Even if a Magician was experienced, the spell-casting speed would still be restricted.

Secondly, the power after a Legendary spell structure reverberated was different from a regular spell. Regular spells used the power of the Firuman realm, while Legendary

spells took from the Sea of Void. This was hundreds of times more powerful than the former.

Firuman was actually submerged in a little “bubble” in the Sea of Void; they actually overlapped. Technically, this shouldn’t cause a delay. However, the laws of Firuman rejected the Sea of Void, thus causing the delay.

Due to these two reasons, a Legendary Magician’s speed was much slower than a Legendary Warrior. If the Warrior got close, especially if they were an Assassin, the result would be tragic. The Magician would barely be able to fight back.

This was why Link practiced martial arts to protect himself.

This was the only solution though. If Link could solve the problem using a spell, he would rather do that. Now, Link saw some hope in solving this shortcoming through the Soul Furnace.

These thoughts all flashed through Link’s mind in an instant. Then he heard Avatar sigh. “A pity that I lost the broadsword.”

Avatar was depressed. His obsidian broadsword wasn’t the best, but it had been with him for more than a decade. He was used to it, but it was forced out of his hands when he blocked the vine. It was probably left in Mara City.

Unexpectedly, Link waved at a long bag by the campfire as soon as he finished speaking. The bag flew to Link’s hand, and he pushed it towards Avatar. “Open it.”

When Avatar took the bag, he already got the feeling. “Is it my broadsword?”

Link smiled in reply.

Excited, Avatar unwound the cloth, ring by ring. Slowly, a reddish black blade appeared. It was the same color as his obsidian blade, but it was much smoother. The spine of the sword was sturdy and ancient-looking, while the blade was sharp and bright. It shimmered when Avatar moved it. The nicks on the blade were gone too.

At closer inspection, Avatar saw many faint gold runes on the sword. He didn’t know what they were for, of course, but they were very detailed. They fit with the overall style of the sword too. When the cloth was entirely unraveled, and the sword was completely out, Avatar subconsciously held his breath.

It was also a black obsidian sword, but his old one was like an ugly rod in comparison.

When he grasped it, he was even more pleasantly surprised. It felt like the sword was connected to his blood, like the sword was an extension of his arm. He swung it a few times and discovered the weight was just right. It whistled as it cut through the air; it was impressive as a dragon's low roar.

"How did it change so much?" Avatar didn't want to let go.

Link smiled. "It's your old sword, but I made some small adjustments. When you were unconscious, your arm was still bleeding. I used some of your blood for a blood refining method. I'm sure you felt that it could understand you, right?"

"Indeed." Avatar's eyes were glued to the sword without leaving for even a second. He caressed the sword gently as if it were his lover.

With a sword like this, he was confident in using many of the tricks that he couldn't before. His power could triple at the very least.

After appreciating it for a long while, Avatar suddenly said, "I can feel that it has another special power."

"You're very sensitive. That's right. It can cut through the causal ring... Uh, it's for fighting the Spear of Victory. That's the Naga's weapon. I think that you must have felt how dangerous it is, right?"

Avatar nodded. He had the feeling that if the Naga used her spear, he would definitely be dead. That was why he used all his might to make sure the Naga couldn't fight back.

Link chuckled. "You don't have to worry anymore."

"Oh... Thank you. I owe you a life and a weapon... But I need to ask something of you." Avatar lowered his head. It was hard to say because he really owed too much.

Without needing him to say anything, a crystal vial appeared in Link's hand. There was dark red liquid inside it.

"What is this?"

"The antidote. I stole a potion from that Dark Magician and spent a whole night



studying it to create this. A drop can cure a regular man.”

Avatar’s mouth fell open. He didn’t know what to say. After a long while, he said, “I will personally lead my elites to the Orida Fortress after this!”

Link had already done so much for his race. In return, there was no reason for the Beastmen to reject the alliance. Repaying in gratitude was the honor of the Beastmen!

Link was happy that his goal was accomplished, but he couldn’t show it. Calmly, he said, “There’s no hurry for the alliance. Right now, we have another challenge to face. You must recover to your peak as soon as possible.”

“What challenge?” Avatar was shocked.

Link smirked. “It’s those High Elves. They revealed their identities and have become your top enemy. After I saved you, they used a magic seal to lock this area.”

With that, Link pointed at the moon. “Look at the moon. Doesn’t it waver every now and then?”

Avatar looked and saw that it was true. Not only was the moon wavering, the air around them would ripple like water too.

“That’s the magic seal. It’s 30 miles in radius, and we’re inside. If we break through it, they’ll use a portal to appear by us within three seconds.

Avatar was shaken. “They’re going to make us die with the secret?”

Link nodded. “Not only that, they even temporarily allied with the Army of Destruction to increase efficiency.”

Before, Vance and Elin had said that the High Elves might very possibly break past their bottom line, but he didn’t expect them to go to this extent.

Right now, they had six enemies. Though Avatar had greatly wounded the three from the Army of Destruction, the High Elves had impressive healing techniques. They were probably mostly recovered by now.

Link wasn’t there match at all. Even if he could kill some, it would be over for him too. However, if he added Avatar and his new sword, Link was 80% sure they could wipe

out the enemy.

The fury Avatar had just repressed flared again. Gripping his sword, he gritted his teeth. “Good, very good. I was looking to cause them some trouble!”

# Chapter 562

## The Nine O’Clock God of Moonlight

The grass plains, nighttime

The caravans hastily made their way back to Norton Kingdom, but something unexpected happened. Around three in the morning, a mercenary ran back to his leader from the road up ahead. He seemed terrified, as if he had just witnessed something inexplicable.

“Leader, there’s a problem up front.”

The mercenary leader, Milo, looked a lot better than before. The symptoms of his poisoning had all but disappeared. He had also regained most of his strength.

Hearing this, Milo’s brows furrowed. He looked around and said in a low voice, “Don’t say it out loud, we don’t want this to get out.”

He feared that this would instigate panic among the merchants.

In a low, hurried tone, the mercenary said, “Leader, there’s something blocking our path in front. It’s wide and invisible, but it seems like a wall. A really big wall.”

Milo widened his eyes. Being more experienced than the ordinary mercenary, he had an idea of what they were up against. “Probably a magical barrier one of those masters had erected. Something big is happening right now.”

Milo felt powerless in the face of all this. In comparison with the masters of the continent, his power was simply inconsequential like a pebble in front of a huge rock. If the rock decided to roll over him, he would simply be ground to dust under it.

Knowing that there was nothing anyone could do about this, he went to the Red Earth Firm’s chief and explained the mercenary’s discovery to him.

The chief was a merchant and an ordinary person who had heard and seen much in his travels as well. When he heard Milo’s account, his face went pale. He was silent for

a while, before he finally said, “What do you think we should do, Milo?”

Milo had already figured out what their next step should be. He said, “We are definitely no match for these masters. The only thing we can do now is not get caught in the crossfire. I’ve heard that when two Legendary masters clash against one another, the shockwave they send out can spread across more than ten miles. Anyone caught in that area will be disintegrated in an instant. I think our best option would be to find a low-lying place to hide for now. It would be even better if we could find a cave. We’ll hide inside it and then cover its entrance with a pile of reeds. This way, we’ll have a higher chance of weathering the coming storm.”

The chief did not have anything to add to this. He found Milo’s suggestion reasonable. “Alright then, we’ll do as you say,” he said.

Milo began making arrangements. Before long, the mercenaries scattered out to find suitable hiding spots. The merchants were all anxious about this, but it did not seem like they were in any immediate danger at the moment. Their caravans continued moving forward on their path.

After trudging on for more than 3000 miles, everyone saw the transparent wall that the mercenary had just described. It was soft to the touch. However, the wall hardened as soon as pressure was applied to it. No matter how anyone tried to push against it, the wall did not budge an inch.

Everyone was able to see the other side of the wall, but there was just no way to walk through it. The entire thing was surreal.

There were shouts and cries of terror amid the merchants. However, most of them did not speak a word. Their faces were all pale as they braced themselves for what was about to happen.

Milo remained in the caravans. This at least gave some sense of security to the merchants. The mercenary leader did not appear as uneasy as the rest. He seemed confident in the solution that he had come up with to survive the coming storm. Milo’s presence was the only thing keeping the caravans from descending into total panic.

As everyone waited silently for the mercenaries to return with a report on their surroundings, suddenly, three flashes of green light appeared in the sky.

They hurtled towards the caravans at an unimaginable speed.

At first, the flashes of light streaked past the caravans overhead without any intention of stopping. However, they suddenly turned back and landed before the merchants in the form of three hooded figures.

One of them walked through the crowd towards Milo. The figure observed him from tip to toe and then asked, "You've encountered the poisoned Beastmen. You were poisoned, were you not?"

The voice was clear as a bell. It was female.

Milo wanted to ask who they were, but for some reason, when the figure before him posed her question, he could not seem to control his own body. He nodded and said, "Yes, I was poisoned, but then I was cured."

"How?"

"I don't know. There was a sudden beam of moonlight from the sky, and then I just got better," said Milo.

"Moonlight?" repeated the hooded figure strangely. Suddenly, she stabbed Milo's arm with a thorn before he even had time to react.

Fresh blood stained the thorn's tip. The figure gave it a lick and then went silent. Ten minutes later, she said, "I need to borrow something from you."

"What... what do you want?" Milo felt that something was wrong.

"I'll need to borrow your lives for a bit. Of course, none of you are in any position to refuse." The figure waved a hand. All of a sudden, a faint green mist appeared above the caravans in the air.

Without warning, the mist descended on everyone. The merchants began coughing uncontrollably in it. Ten seconds later, the green mist faded. There was now a hint of green on the faces of all 300 people in the caravans.

"You're now all poisoned. Two hours from now, you'll lose all reason and meet the same fate as the poisoned Beastmen you've encountered before. What you should do now is pray that the same beam of moonlight will appear once more and cleanse you all of the poison in your bodies. What's done is done. There's no use getting angry at me. Attacking me will only quicken the spread of the poison in your bodies. Now pray."

When she was finished, the figure stepped out of the crowd and returned to her companions. The three of them then turned into flashes of green light and zipped back into the sky.

Back on the grass plains, everyone sat on the ground despondently. Their faces were all ashen as they contemplated on their fates. Even Shallie, who always had a smile on her face, was stunned. She sat absently beside her father, unable to comprehend what had just happened to them.

“Father, why did she have to do such a thing? We didn’t even do anything to her,” said the girl to her father, Olan.

Olan chuckled bitterly. He looked at his daughter with a pained expression. He never thought that they would meet their end so soon. He should have never brought her along with him.

“Father, why?” asked Shallie.

Olan shook his head miserably. “Maybe it’s because... it’s our fate to die here.”

Shallie fell silent. After a while, hope welled up in her. “Father, do you think God will come and save us?”

“God?” Olan was taken aback by her question.

“Yeah, he saved Milo and Eyre before. If he could do it before, he’ll definitely do it again for all of us! Definitely!” Shallie was unwavering in her belief. She waved her arms about excitedly as if trying to keep her spirits up.

Suddenly, she thought of something. Shallie climbed up on a horse’s back and shouted, “Everyone, there’s no need to panic. If God knows what’s happened to us, he’ll definitely come and save all of us. But right now, what we should do is pray to him so that he’ll be aware of our plight!”

Hearing this, the caravans began to show some signs of life.

In times of hopelessness such as this, any shred of hope, no matter how faint it might seem, was worth holding on to.

However, someone asked Shallie, “But we don’t even know the name of this god. How

do we even know who to pray?"

"He's definitely the God of Light."

"You can't say for sure. The God of Light has never performed a miracle outside the walls of a church. Also, the power we saw before didn't look like his divine power of light."

Shallie did not expect such a contradiction to be pointed out. However, she managed to think up a response. "His power resembles moonlight, and the miracle we witnessed took place at nine last night. So maybe we should call him the Nine O'clock God of Moonlight?"

Everyone was speechless at this.

But Shallie did not care. She knelt on her wagon and began praying. "Oh benevolent and merciful Nine O'clock God of Moonlight, you are the light that drives out the darkness from this world. Here I pray that you may guide us through these troubling times. Before you I kneel, a humble servant promising to spread your deeds far and wide, and offer you my entire being."

It did not matter if her prayers went unanswered, nor did she care if she was doing it right. Shallie simply knelt there, praying for salvation again and again.

At first, she was the only one praying. Soon enough, some of the people followed her, including the mercenary leader Milo. He hesitated at first, then knelt on the ground and began praying in a low voice.

He did not copy Shallie's prayer word for word. He simply prayed inwardly, Lord, you've saved me before. I hereby swear that for as long as I live, I'll not be swayed by temptations of the darkness in my path and remain an honorable Warrior. Now, I've once again fallen into the same pit. If you still think I'm worthy of being saved, I beseech you, help me out one more time.

The mercenary Eyre was even more straightforward. He prostrated himself on the ground, crying, "Lord, save me!"

Gradually, the people in the caravans began kneeling and praying.

All their prayers were born out of a sincere desire to be saved from their current

predicament.

Behind a clump of grass, the three High Elves, Katyusha, the fallen angel, and Stormlord Parmese quietly observed what was going on in the caravans, somewhat troubled by this.

Katyusha whispered, "What's this about the Nine O'clock God of Moonlight? He can't really be a god, can he?"

The fallen angel whispered weakly, "Pointy-ears, this better not be a part of some elaborate scheme. If there's a god involved in this, you three will also be in trouble!"

No matter how strong a Legendary master was, they were nothing more than ants before a god. Normally, gods rarely interfered with the affairs of Legendary masters due to how much power they needed to spend to descend to the mortal plane. However, they had been known to make exceptions, especially when any one of their chosen disciples were harassed by an outside party.

There was another word for this. It was called suicide.

For instance, the God of Light was widely acknowledged to be a kind deity. However, he had meted out divine punishment twice in recorded history. Each time, at least one master was on the receiving end of the God of Light's divine stick. Of course, what these masters did was unforgivable. In their folly, they had attacked a holy city and paid the consequences for their actions.

There were two types of divine punishment, and they both needed some sort of medium.

If there was an altar, a god would simply need to appear on it. If there was none, said god would infuse his divine power into one of his disciples. In that moment, he or she would be in possession of unimaginable power so that they could carry out their god's will.

The possibility that one of the God of Light's favored disciples was in the midst of the praying merchants troubled the High Elves and the others. The girl who had first started praying seemed like a potential candidate.

Under normal circumstances, Legendary masters and gods were bound by an unspoken rule to mind their own businesses.



Ariel was beginning to grow suspicious. All the hints she had gathered pointed to a Legendary master who might have been responsible for curing the poisoned humans back then, but there was no evidence suggesting the involvement of a god.

She had also felt Legendary power that was extremely pure and concentrated. It was beyond the limits of a typical Legendary master.

A chill ran down her spine at the thought of this.

As they watched on from their hiding spot, unsure of what to do next, Link and Avatar had reached the caravans.

Seeing the fervently praying merchants, Avatar asked curiously, "What are they doing? And who's the God of Moonlight?"

Link did not know whether to laugh or cry as he saw what was going on. He explained, "I secretly saved two poisoned mercenaries back then. They must have mistaken what I did for a miracle."

"Well then, can you sense where they are now?" Avatar decided not to pay any heed to the praying merchants and mercenaries. With Link's help, he was now at full strength. Right now, he was raringly waiting to exact his revenge on the High Elves.

Link nodded. "I can feel them."

"Where?" Avatar was now gripping his obsidian sword.

"Wait, I need to set up a magic seal to protect these people first."

"We may reveal our location to them," said Avatar. They were vastly outnumbered, and giving themselves away would mean losing the element of surprise.

Link nodded. "I know, but they're still my people. I can't leave them unprotected."

Avatar decided not to say anything else. He remembered the tragic scene he had seen in Mara City. He understood what Link was trying to do.

At first, I thought he was like all the other Magicians, conniving and obsessed only with his ambitions. I never knew he would be just like me. Avatar seemed to finally understand Link as a person.

# Chapter 563

## Is it Really God's Punishment?

Golden Plains, night

Ariel studied the merchant caravan in the distance. Getting an idea, she gestured at the others. Look at the caravan. The air seems off.

Elovan and the others looked over. They really did see that, under the silver moonlight, there were some strange ripples in the air around the caravan. These ripples were very fine. Because the caravan was close to the magic seal, one would think that that was the reason if they didn't look carefully. However, they realized something was wrong after Ariel's reminder.

Of these six Legendary figures, the three High Elves led by Ariel were Magicians while Katyusha's group were Warriors.

The three Warriors saw that something was wrong but couldn't figure out where the opponent was from this. Thus, they turned to the High Elf Magicians, waiting for their conclusion.

Ariel said to Elovan and Milose, "You two protect me. The opponent has very strange power. It's hidden. I must put all my effort into tracking him."

She didn't trust the three from the Army of Destruction. She only trusted her own race.

Elovan and Milose stood to either side of Ariel. Their Natural Power surged into their wands made from the World Tree into the preparatory state.

Seeing that they were ready, Ariel gestured at Katyusha. If I successfully track the opponent's position, I'll point him out. Be ready to attack!

Katyusha didn't like these three young High Elves, but they were cooperating, after all. They'd also treated her group's wounds and hadn't done anything tricky. She would manage to trust them this time. She nodded, showing her agreement.

After preparing, Ariel composed herself. She took out the World Impaler and added Natural Power into the magic sword. After half a second, the sword tip glowed and buried into the air.

An instant later, the World Impaler peaked out of the ground near the caravan. After that, a strand of faint Natural Power poured out of the sword. Disappearing into the ground, it entered the grass surrounding the caravan.

The biggest advantage of Natural Power was that it could fuse perfectly with the plants in Firuman. It had a perfect cover in places with dense vegetation. This was something that no other race's power could rival.

After the strand of Natural Power entered the grass, it started sliding. There were very slight ripples during this, but they were absorbed by the grass. No one noticed.

A short while later, the Natural Power reached where Link and Avatar were hiding.

While Link was focused on setting defensive runes for the caravan, Avatar gripped his obsidian sword. He kept his eyes wide, staring at the place Link had pointed out in high alert.

The enemy hadn't reacted yet, so he didn't do anything. However, he couldn't feel the Natural Power sneaking up at him at all.

Just as the Natural Power was three feet away from him and about to touch his body, Link reached out and pushed Avatar slightly to the side.

A snake-like tentacle of Natural Power slid past centimeters away from Avatar without touching anything.

Avatar was shocked. Natural Power was very subtle, but he was surprised that it was to this extent. He could obviously feel the change in power around him. As soon as Link touched him, he reacted immediately. Without any hesitation, he stepped aside, following Link's push.

His martial arts skills were practically flawless, and he had perfect control of his body. Even though he was huge, his movements were as light as a feather. He didn't disrupt anything when he dodged.

He was like a large buffalo that had the agility of a cat. One couldn't help but be amazed

at the sight.

Less than half a second after the first tentacle of Natural Power came, another came. Link was still setting up the runes, but he tapped lightly, and Avatar sensed it. He moved lightly, following Link's direction. He moved at a speed and distance that was just right to avoid the tentacle.

After that, a dozen tentacles passed by him. Link moved Avatar around as if he were a puppet on strings.

To avoid the intrusive tentacles, Avatar had to make a lot of weird movements too. For example, he had to leap in the air and then spin three times. After landing, he had to go on his tiptoes, arch his back, move his hips with a hand on his pelvis, and much more.

Avatar was annoyed, but he had to follow Link's orders. It was like performing a weird dance under the moonlight.

He had to make sure Link would keep this a secret. If people found out that the Beastman king did all these weird things, they would dislocate their jaws laughing.

On the other hand, Ariel was deep in thought as she focused on searching. She could feel that the opponent was somewhere nearby, so she repeatedly checked that place. But strangely enough, she just couldn't find any trace of him time and time again.

After a full ten minutes, she was still fruitless.

At this time, she was forced to retract her Natural Power. Otherwise, she would use up too much power and affect her fighting later.

Retracting the World Impaler, Elován asked with a gesture, How is it?

Ariel shook her head. I can't find him, but I can feel he's less than 2000 feet away!

Beside her, Katyusha pursed her lips with some disdain. She wouldn't say anything though. Gesturing, she asked, What do we do now?

The opponent was putting runes in the air around the merchant caravan. Clearly, they were getting ready to fight. Since Ariel couldn't find where the opponent was, there was no reason for them to stay here now.

Ariel was silent for two seconds. As soon as she was about to speak, the situation changed.

There was a soft sound in the air around the merchant caravan. Then the strangeness in the air disappeared. Other than the whistling wind and the merchants' prayers, the plains grew abnormally quiet.

He finished the magic seal.

He's going to attack!

But does he know where we are?

The six gestured speedily, trying to find a solution.

The seconds ticked by, but they couldn't reach an agreement. Ariel finally couldn't take it anymore and said out loud, "Stop arguing. This Magician is powerful. He knows where we are! Get ready!"

Everyone flinched and then got into defense mode, waiting for the hidden enemy to attack.

But what happened after that was unexpected.

Near the caravan, a pillar of silver light, like moonlight, appeared. It was more than 15 feet in width, and so tall one couldn't see the tip. More terrifying was that it didn't rush up from the ground—it descended from the sky.

It was as if a hole opened up in the boundless void and watery light flowed out to somewhere on the plains.

Seeing this, the merchants were shocked. A moment later, they fell into ecstasy.

Shallie excitedly cried, "There really is a god of moonlight. He responded!"

"We'll be saved!"

Mercenary leader Miro sighed deeply. He'd been on one knee earlier, but now, he knelt fully. Placing his hands on the ground, he murmured inwardly, God, you saved me once again. From now on, I will be your most loyal slave. I am your sword, and your will is

my glory!

On the other hand, Ariel's group all gulped, shivering.

This power was too pure and subtle. Other than the silver glow, no aura seeped from the pillar of light. Right now, the six felt that this beam was so obvious, but it seemed to exist in another realm. They could only see it without sensing it.

"F\*ck. Is this really god's punishment?" The fallen angel gaped at the brilliant silver moonlight. He could feel his hands shaking. His newly-recovered wound was hurting again.

Ariel didn't know either. She just swallowed subconsciously. It was as if she'd angered some horrible existence today. Before she could speak, she heard Katyusha say, "What if we retreat?"

She could tell from the sight that they weren't a match.

As a servant of the God of Destruction, Katyusha had some knowledge about divine punishment. The God of Destruction had used the same method to pour power into a sacrifice or a messenger's body.

In that case, there was probably a god's messenger nearby. This nameless god had poured his power into him.

From the look of things, there would probably be a terrifying god's messenger coming after them in a while. If they didn't escape now, they would have no chance later.

"But we're six people. There's probably just one god's messenger. Maybe we have a chance?" Storm Warlord Parmese wasn't satisfied.

But just then, Ariel felt something was wrong. The scene looked scary, but it just didn't feel right.

Like... a god's punishment shouldn't be like this.

She didn't feel the danger of being in a hopeless situation. As a Magician, gut instinct was important, but she didn't feel the relative danger... What did this mean?

A thought popped up in her mind. What if this is a farce to divert our attention?

# Chapter 564

## A Complete Defeat

Back in the game, Ariel was the most promising magical prodigy among the new generation of High Elves. In the later stages of the game, she was even on par with the most gifted character in the game, Eliard.

Feeling that something was off, Ariel quickly produced a tree seed in her hand. This was the seed of the High Elves' strongest combat puppet, Golden Tree Spirit.

The Golden Tree Spirit, commonly known as the vine devil, and the Black Gold Tree Spirit were two sides of the same coin. Though they were both formed from barbed vines, their colors were different.

The Black Gold Tree Spirit was, as its name implied, black and usually used offensively. Its barbs were highly poisonous. On the other hand, the Golden Tree Spirit was golden and used defensively most of the time. Its barbs were extremely solid and could interlace with one another to form a defensive mesh.

At that moment, Ariel did not know where her enemy would strike from. Instinctively, she decided to go the defensive route and took out the Golden Tree Spirit's seed.

Legendary-level Nature Power flowed into the seed. When jade green light shone out from the seed, she quickly threw it down to the ground. When the seed hit the ground, it began taking root immediately. Shortly after, countless barbed vines broke through the seed's husk.

The vines intertwined with one another, forming a tight net around the three High Elves. Due to the urgency of their situation, Ariel had left the other members of the Army of Destruction out in the open to deal with whatever was out there.

At that moment, a black shadow sprang out from a clump of grass nearby.

A fiery red light swirled around the figure's body as it appeared. It let out a roar as it swung its dark red sword down at them.

“Die, High Elves!”

It was the Beastman King Avatar!

Avatar was able to get up close enough to them to execute an ambush while they were distracted by the moonlight that Link had produced.

With all his strength, he came at them with his unique skill: Wild Battle.

In an instant, the blood red dazzle from Avatar’s blade bloomed like a lotus flower in all directions, with his body as its center. All three High Elves and the others were immediately enveloped inside the burst of light!

The light was akin to the plow of a Grim Reaper, violently loosening the soil it touched. Destructive damage would be inflicted upon those standing on the soil it touched.

The attack had caught them all by surprise.

With their lives on the line, the only thing Katyusha, the fallen angel and Stormlord Parmese were able to do was to block the attack with all their might. They were unable to dodge it; they had already missed their chance to do so.

Sounds of metal clashing against one another rang out in quick succession. Energy rippled out from the points of impact, which blew up a powerful storm and uprooted the grass around them.

The clash of weapons and the resulting storm were so intense that they would blow away an ordinary adult standing a few hundred feet away from the vortex.

Dust flew about in the air, blocking out the starry night sky and moon. Everything went dark in that moment.

However, when the storm was about to hit the caravans nearby, it mysteriously died down.

In front of them, the wind howled like restless phantoms. However, the wind was no more than a quiet breeze as it reached the caravans a few feet away from the action. The only thing that everyone could see from there was the occasional rumble of thunder and flashes of lightning produced by the clash of weapons.



Shallie was first to notice this. She shouted, “The God of Moonlight must be protecting us!”

“Lord, thank you for your protection!” shouted someone in response.

This time, no one doubted a single word Shallie said. Way too many things had happened tonight. This deity had evidently performed miracles to protect them from all manner of misfortune. This much was irrefutable.

On the other side of the plains, the battle raged on.

Even at their full strength, Katyusha, the fallen angel, and Parmese could not entirely block the Beastman king’s onslaught. At that moment, their wounds had only begun to heal, and they had not even regained their strength completely. In their currently weakened state, their chances of coming out of this alive grew ever slimmer.

Katyusha was now covered in cold sweat and screaming inwardly at the hopelessness of her situation. She did not even have the time to activate her Thorn of Fate skill. She sensed that she would be done for at any moment.

As the storm raged on, she saw the fallen angel from the corner of her eye desperately trying to block Avatar’s attack. His chest had already been slashed open. Blood poured out profusely from his wound.

Katyusha suddenly leaned to one side and retreated behind the fallen angel.

The fallen angel was too busy deflecting the rapid glimmers from Avatar’s sword that he did not notice Katyusha retreating behind him. He began to retreat as well while blocking the incoming attacks, but before he could even take half a step back, he sensed that something was wrong. There was someone blocking his way behind him.

Katyusha did not deliberately block off his retreat. But under such circumstances, a moment’s hesitation could mean life or death.

He reacted immediately. “Get out of my way, Naga!”

At that moment, the fallen angel was caught between the storm of sword glimmers in front of him and Katyusha, who had blocked off his retreat behind him. The only thing he could do was continue keeping the sword glimmers of death away from him as long as he could.

As long as he continued blocking the attacks, there was still a chance he would be able to make it out of this alive. Otherwise, he would be cut to ribbons.

He tried to block off the attacks with all his might, but reality was a cruel thing. In the span of a second, the fallen angel had blocked at least 30 attacks from Avatar. However, the sword glimmers did not let up, and he had already exhausted most of his strength.

An instant later, the sword attacks sliced through the fallen angel's body, turning it into mincemeat.

Stormlord Parmese met the same fate as the fallen angel. With his nimbleness greatly affected by his injured leg, Parmese's body was instantly chopped to pieces by Avatar's onslaught.

The whirlwind of sword glimmers lasted for three minutes. Two Legendary masters of the Army of Destruction had been torn to pieces in it. On the other hand, Katyusha had hidden behind the fallen angel and was able to escape with her life.

The three High Elves fared better than the rest of their party.

With the power of the Golden Tree Spirit's seed, Ariel was able to erect a sturdy vine barrier, but the barrier only lasted for one second.

In that one second, the sturdy Golden Tree Spirit was instantly ground to fine dust by Avatar's sword glimmers. However, before the attacks reached them, Ariel and the others were able to set up a powerful magical barrier.

Under the magical barrier's protection, the three of them scattered, safely evading Avatar's attack.

Avatar had used up all of his strength in his attack. He had faced six Legendary masters on his own and was able to slay two of them. This was a feat worthy of recognition throughout the continent.

But his enemy had no intention of leaving him alive even after accomplishing such a feat.

After managing to survive Avatar's ambush, the three High Elves and Katyusha proceeded to carry out a counterattack against him.

In an instant, Katyusha's Thorn of Fate, Ariel's World Impaler, Elovan and Sonya's Black Gold Tree Spirit all came at Avatar at the same time.

All four of them surrounded the Beastman King, blocking all his escape paths.

The Beastman was simply terrifying. His sword attacks had made everyone fear for their very lives. After escaping his onslaught by the skin of their teeth, their first reaction was to kill the Beastman immediately before he could do any more damage.

However, Avatar was laughing.

He made no attempts to defend himself. The Beastman King simply remained in place, laughing at the attacks that inched closer and closer towards his body by the second. As he laughed, a white light suddenly engulfed his body. He then faded away like a mere mirage.

A moment later, all four attacks converged on the same spot at the same time, but their target had vanished into thin air.

Ariel shouted urgently, "Careful, it's an extremely powerful teleportation spell. The one who's not yet revealed himself is a Spatial Magician!"

She then began to readjust her body, ready to intercept the Spatial Magician's attack.

At that moment, she did not know that the Spatial Magician was Link himself. Due to the fact that the power she had sensed was different from Link's, Ariel only assumed that it had come from some unknown master.

Just as she shouted her warning, the Magician's attack came towards them at a frightening speed that they could barely even react to it.

All four of them had come at Avatar in unison a moment ago, ready to kill him where he stood. Though they had sensed the Magician's attack, they were unable to pull back their attacks and readjust their bodies in time.

To a Legendary master, the length of time to readjust one's body in anticipation of an enemy's attack was usually no more than a tenth of a second. It was a skill ordinary people could not hope to master. Even among Legendary Magicians, it was extremely difficult to grasp as Legendary spells required time to prepare.

Logically speaking, their enemy could not possibly follow up a teleportation spell with such a powerful offensive spell so soon.

But the person they were up against was Link. Though his spells never hit hard, they were fast.

“Not good!”

Warning bells were now ringing in her head. Without hesitation, Ariel cast Moonlight on herself. She would not be able to survive her enemy’s attack. Her only option now was to flee.

But her movements were still too slow. Avatar was indeed frightening; his flurry of slashes back then had given them no room to execute a counterattack. But the person they were now facing was a hundred times more frightening than Avatar.

Just as her Moonlight spell’s protective layer began to take shape, a seemingly normal steel sword appeared behind Ariel out of thin air. With a swift stroke, it pierced directly through her heart.

Ariel’s body trembled. Her eyes widened. Her heart had been stabbed. At that moment, her internal energies were in a state of chaos, unable to put up any resistance against foreign energies.

Shortly after, a rush of spatial power spread from her wound across her entire body. She was instantly turned into a spatial statue, frozen completely on the spot.

At that moment, she was neither dead nor alive.

The sword then disappeared. It reappeared in another corner and struck Katyusha. She trembled at the moment of impact. Her heart was also stabbed, and her internal energies were sent into disarray.

Spatial energy flowed out from the sword and easily locked her in place.

Seeing that Ariel and Katyusha were immobilized by the sword, Elovan and Milose quickly tried to escape by dissipating into flashes of light.

But the two of them were no match for Link.

With two short hums, two sword tips appeared out of thin air and stabbed the High Elves' light forms at the same time. Elován and Milose were forced to return to their physical forms. They fell out of the sky and landed on the ground, throwing up blood.

As they were in their light forms, there were no visible wounds on both High Elves. Still, the integrity of their bodies was damaged. For a short period of time, they would not be able to fight back.

Link had landed the finishing blow on all four of them as they came at Avatar. Though his method was a bit underhanded, it was still a means to an end. The High Elves had a long history of fighting dirty anyway, so Link had no reason to feel shameful for his actions.

Once Link had subdued all four, he strolled out of his hiding spot towards them.

Elován and Milose were still conscious. When they saw Link, their eyes went wide like saucers. They had no idea the one who had ambushed them was Link himself since the power they had felt from him before was so different from the Magician who had attacked them.

Despite knowing that there was a Magician hidden somewhere in the vicinity, they had decided to attack Avatar in full force.

A normal Magician's attack was usually preceded by some obvious sign. It would also not come as quickly as a Warrior's. At that moment, all four members of the Army of Destruction were confident that they would be able to react to it in time.

They did not expect to be ambushed by a Master Magician who was also well-versed in the martial arts.

Elován asked, "Link, do you really want to start a war between Ferde and the Isle of Dawn?"

Milose added, "If you kill us here, are you not afraid that the Isle of Dawn and the Army of Destruction will join forces against Ferde?"

Link smiled faintly. "Of course I'm scared. That's why you three are still alive."

The two High Elves looked at each other. Link had admitted that he was afraid of the Isle of Dawn's retaliation, but still the smile did not leave his face. He did not look at

all afraid. Anyone looking at him then would be chilled to the bone.

Remaining silent for a few seconds, Elován finally asked, “What do you want?”

# Chapter 565

## Direct Breakdown from Torment

Golden Plains

Before Link could answer Elovan's question, another voice rang out. "Of course we'll kill you all to avenge for my race!"

It was Avatar, the Beastman king.

He'd used up almost all his power in the last attack. Now, panting heavily, he dragged the obsidian broadsword as he slowly walked out of the grass.

"You pointy-eared elves from the Isle of Dawn will do anything for your goal. We are thousands of miles away from the Isle of Dawn but still angered you somehow. Now, you've lost. I'll make you taste the most horrible punishment in this world!"

When he finished, he was already beside Elovan and placed the sword on the elf's neck.

The skin on Elovan's neck twitched, but he still kept staring at Link. "Ferde Lord, don't forget that your territory is less than 500 miles from the Isle of Dawn. You won't be able to keep this a secret. You will be declaring war on the Isle of Dawn!"

Avatar scoffed. "This has nothing to do with Ferde. I'm the one killing you." With that, he looked at Link. "Master, will you stop me?" he asked coldly.

Link shrugged. "I want to because that High Elf is right. This may very possibly spark a war between Ferde and the Isle of Dawn. But seeing our relationship, I can't force you to listen to me."

Knowing that Link agreed, Avatar chuckled. He applied pressure, and his blade turned, glinting. With two sounds, Elovan's hands dropped from his body.

Avatar's cutting style was very unique. Rather than using the blade's sharpness to cut off the hands, he used the reverberations of the sword's body to forcefully rip the

hands off the wrists.

It was impossible to imagine how painful such a method could be!

“Ow! Ahh!”

Elovan had wanted to show his courage, but his eyes almost popped out of their sockets immediately. A gurgled cry left his throat.

Beside him, Milose heard it and shivered. He yelled to Link in panic, “Ferde Lord, stop this Beastman!”

Link shook his head and gazed at Milose. “When Ariel chose to use the lives of the human merchants to force me out, there was no more room for negotiations.”

With that, Link turned around, not wanting to see the tragic scene anymore. He focused on casting the antidote spell for the merchants from thousands of feet away.

From here, one could see beams of silver moonlight falling from the sky and entering all of them, driving away the poison.

They were all regular folks with the most powerful only at Level-4. Link didn’t use more than ten points of Realm Essence for each person. There were around 300 people, so it only cost around 3000 points. With his current power recovery rate, he recovered fully within half a minute.

The entire process only took a minute.

During this minute, he kept hearing Elovan’s distorted cries. He just pretended not to hear them. When he finished and turned around, he saw that Elovan’s body was practically shattered. Avatar had ripped off his limbs by each joint. Now, his one arm lay scattered on the ground in 20-some pieces.

He wasn’t dead though. Seeing Link turn around, he immediately cried, “Lord! Lord! I’m begging you to forgive me. Please forgive me. This is all Ariel’s idea. I’m just a follower, really. Please, save me...”

At the end, he actually started crying.

Beside him, Milose’s eyes widened at this. He couldn’t say anything. During this,



Elovan suffered physically, while Milose suffered psychologically with every second. He knew that once Elovan was tortured to death, he would be next. He almost went crazy when he thought of how this cruel fate would befall him.

Often times, being tortured wasn't the scariest. The worst part was the waiting.

This was worse for High Elves. Since birth, they'd lived on the peaceful Isle of Dawn. They mostly came to the mainland after having powerful abilities. Though they'd experienced some things, they were very rarely at a disadvantage. They'd never had emotional trauma. Even if they'd gone through hardships, they'd just grow a thicker skin.

Faced with this bloody scene, that skin had cracked. Elovan had broken down, and Milose was close.

By now, Avatar was tired from it all. He'd been exhausted originally and now broke Elovan's arms and legs into dozens of pieces. Panting heavily, he paused.

Seeing Elovan's teary and snotty face, a large portion of his anger was gone. He stabbed his sword into the ground and rested against it. At the same time, he scoffed coldly.

"I thought you were powerful, but I guess you're just some kids."

He glanced at Link. "Alright, I've vented my anger. Master, how do you prepare to punish them?"

Link had already thought of it. Seeing how Elovan had broken down, he got another idea. Of course, he couldn't say it aloud now.

He pointed in Mara City's direction. "They released the poison and have infected almost the entire city. Thankfully, the poisoned Beastmen haven't spread out due to the surrounding magic seal. We must cure them promptly, but it's too slow with the two of us. We need their help."

Curing the poison was the most important task at hand.

Avatar was instantly enlightened. He hit his head in annoyance.

"I cut off this guy's hands and feet. Now we have one less person. It'll slow us down!"

“It’s alright. Broken bones can be reconnected.”

Avatar didn’t believe this. “They can be reconnected?”

So Link started using the Magician’s Hand. First, he collected all the pieces of limbs and arranged them in the right order. Next, he used the Magician’s Hand to connect them in the right shape.

Then, Link took out the Song of Tomorrow magic sword. He drew runes in the air around the arm. He was so fast that the sword tip just quivered and countless runes lit up in the air before sinking into the body parts.

Something miraculous happened. When the runes entered the arm, the bloody marks at the cut faded, faded, and finally disappeared. The skin just melded together like that.

But that wasn’t all.

Link didn’t stop and kept drawing runes. When he stopped after more than ten minutes, Elován’s hands and feet had recovered their original appearance. The only difference was that one could see many faint magic veins on the skin.

After that, Link said, “Stand up and try walking.”

Elován cautiously stood up. He stretched his arms, shook his feet, and walked around. Then he said to Link, “Lord, there are no more problems.”

As a fellow Magician, he was familiar with this spell. Technically, it came from the flesh magic puppet spell of the High Elves. However, Link’s spell for making magic puppets had been developed to another level. He’d added many of his own innovations too. For example, his feet and hands felt just like the original. This was something the High Elf spell couldn’t do.

Of course, there were still side effects. The biggest one was that he couldn’t add Natural Power to his extremities anymore. After influence from great power, his power might even stop working.

Avatar made noises of appreciation. He’d fully witnessed the power of Magicians today.

As a king, today’s experiences made him realize how important magic was. A race that

didn't know magic might be eliminated, but his race barely had any Magicians.

My race must have our own Magicians, he thought. Shamans aren't enough. Otherwise, if something like this happens again, would I have to ask for help outside again?

On the other hand, Link obviously didn't know what Avatar was thinking. Looking to Milose, he asked, "What about you? Do you need King Avatar to pick apart your limbs and then come help or help now?"

Milose scrambled up from the ground. "I'll help now. I'll help now."

"Oh, you're very smart." Chuckling, Link said, "Then let's start."

# Chapter 566

## Do You Think It's Safe?

Plains

The four hurried over to Mara City.

Elovan and Milose were at the front. Link and Avatar followed behind them. Link was empty-handed while Avatar had Ariel and Katyusha's statues in each hand as he walked beside Link.

The four were extremely fast. Three minutes later, they stood before the sturdy dirt wall of Mara City. Here, Link told the two High Elves, "Let's start."

The High Elves were scared of Link now, so they were very obedient. Since Link wanted them to detoxify the poison, they started casting spells immediately. They were responsible for the poison, so they were much more efficient than Link.

The two Legendary High Elves released a fog spell together that covered the entire city. The light of this spell swept over Mara City like a broom and cured all Beastmen within. Even those who had been badly poisoned and had gone insane recovered as well. The only side effects were that they were weak and needed to rest for a while.

The recently-cured Beastmen touched their heads, standing in place dazedly. They didn't know what had happened. After a while, shocked cries came from all over. Clearly, people were scared by the corpses scattered on the ground.

Of course, these were all unimportant details.

Seeing that there were no major problems, Avatar urged, "Many people escaped outside the city. We need to cure them too."

Elovan and Milose both nodded. Natural Power surged within them; they were about to turn into light and fly out to cure the poisoned.

Seeing that they were about to leave, Avatar reminded, "Don't think about escaping.

Your Princess Ariel is still in our hands.”

Hearing this, Link smiled. He pointed at the two and two tiny dots of light sank into them. “Remember,” he said, “this is a curse.”

The two High Elves shuddered involuntarily. Then, without a sound, they transformed into emerald light and split apart to find and help the individual victims.

Avatar watched them leave from the city wall. “What do you plan to do with them?” he asked Link.

“What do you mean?” Link asked in return.

“Of course I’ll kill them one by one. They’re disgusting, especially the three High Elves. I wish I could chop them up to feed to the dogs!” Avatar huffed. But after he said that, his tone changed and he looked to Link. “However, you did more to catch them, so you can decide how to punish the captives. I’ll agree with whatever you decide. But to be fair, you should also give me the equivalent reimbursement.”

This was indeed fair, and Link agreed completely. Smiling, he said, “In that case, I want all four. They will be important bargaining chips in my battle with the Isle of Dawn.”

Killing them directly was satisfying, but other than venting his anger, there weren’t any practical benefits. As a lord, he couldn’t choose this option.

If these four were still alive, Ferde would gain greatly either by holding them hostage or using them to exchange with the Isle of Dawn.

With that, Link looked to Avatar and asked, “So, Your Majesty, what would you like to receive from me?”

Avatar sank into deep thought.

Before, he knew that magic was powerful, but he’d always thought that the Beastman Shamans were enough. He’d thought that they could fight against Magicians. But after today, he discovered that when a spell reached a certain point, a Shaman would be helpless.

Divine spells were powerful, but they were actually still the weakest ones. They weren’t a match for the truly strong at all. Thus, Avatar discovered that the Beastmen

needed true magic.

Thinking of this, Avatar said, “My race needs Magicians—Beastman Magicians who truly belong to us. But you know that we have no magic foundation, so I need Ferde to provide tutors for us.”

“Oh?” Link looked at Avatar a bit strangely. “Magic is a very difficult study. If you want it to be effective, it will take at least five years. During this, a Magician’s tuition is at least 5000 gold coins...”

Avatar shrugged. “I need to train at least 200 Beastman Magicians. Just follow what you said and let them study for five years. As for tuition... We don’t have money. Just count it as the benefits I got from this time.”

Link chuckled wryly. “That’s one million gold coins suddenly. Your Majesty, you’re really asking for a lot... I can only train 100, no more.”

“Master, you received four Legendary fighters this time,” Avatar insisted. “You can’t buy this with money. Two hundred, no more, no less, no discussion.”

Link thought and gave in a little. “Here, let’s not talk about the specific number of apprentices and only discuss the specific cost. In five years, I’ll prove one million gold coins for Beastman apprentices to study magic until you use it up. As for how many students you wish to send, you can choose.”

This suggestion was not bad. Avatar calculated in his mind and thought it was cost-efficient. This way, he could send many Beastmen with magic talent to Ferde. He could spend more money on those who were better talented and less on the others. His race’s coffers weren’t completely empty. If the one million was used up, he could still pay some ten thousand coins. By then, he would use his own money to support the extraordinarily talented.

After a few years, his race would have their own Magicians. It wouldn’t be much in the beginning, but with the seed planted, it will grow naturally.

Thinking of this, Avatar had already agreed to Link’s suggestion. But since they were discussing conditions, he still had to ask for more. “One million isn’t enough. At least 1.5 million.”

“One point one million, nothing more.” That was 10,000 more gold coins and could

feed so many mouths. Link obviously wanted to give less if possible.

“One point four. I won’t do it if it’s less!” Avatar gave in a bit, but he wasn’t stupid.”

“1.15.”

“1.3.”

“1.15.”

“1.25... ah, you’re scamming me.”

“Okay, then 1.25 million.”

“1.3!” Avatar huffed.

“Alright, alright,” Link acquiesced. “Let’s take the average. How about 1.27?”

Avatar was still annoyed, but if they really kept arguing, it was just the difference of a few ten thousand. Beastmen were naturally coarse, and he was too lazy to argue anymore. “Master, then let’s do 1.27 million. But I think you’re better as an evil merchant.”

Link laughed loudly. “Okay, after I return to Ferde, I’ll send Magicians to choose some talented youths and take them to Ferde. All travel costs will be on Ferde. What do you think?”

“That’s better. But can’t adults go learn?” Avatar didn’t want to send children. These guys didn’t have set personalities yet. If they lived in somewhere like Ferde for too long, they might not want to come back.

Link chuckled and shrugged. “Adults are fine, of course, but their bodies are set already. The various magic training won’t be very effective. Their minds are set too and lack creativity. Even if they can learn spells, they won’t become very accomplished. Your Majesty, if you fear that the children will forget the plains, you can send Warriors to teach them the traditions.”

He made sense. Avatar thought hard and couldn’t find any problems. He finally nodded. “Good. Let’s do that.”

Coming to an agreement, the four Legendary captives now belonged to Link.

After that, the two started talking about the alliance and went through another round of bargaining. Finally, Avatar agreed to take 100,000 elite Warriors northward. The requirement was that the humans must provide all food needed and 10,000 sets of equipment equal to what Norton's official soldiers had.

Undoubtedly, this was a huge cost for the humans, but they desperately needed Beastman power. Link gritted his teeth and agreed.

Done with that, the two stayed at the city wall for another hour. Then Elovan and Milose hurried back.

"How are things?" Link asked.

Elovan quickly replied, "Everyone is cured, and the rivers are cleaned. No one should get poisoned again."

Avatar glared. "What if someone does?"

Elovan hurriedly took out a big bottle of dark red potion. There was around a liter. "Your Majesty, this is the antidote. You just need to put a drop in a bowl of clean water and have the poisoned drink it. They will recover fully."

Avatar accepted it, satisfied. He pointed at Link. "Okay, you don't have anything to do with me anymore. You two are the Ferde lord's captives. He'll punish you."

Hearing this, Elovan and Milose were relieved. This was great. That Beastman was too barbaric and illogical. It was much easier to deal with Link. From what they knew, Link didn't torture captives. If they went with him to Ferde, they could definitely live well. Then, when the Isle of Dawn heard of what happened, they would rescue them.

They would be able to escape this place.

The two immediately went to Link's side, staying away from Avatar.

Avatar looked at them with scorn and sneered. "Little lambs who aren't even fully grown, you're lucky you're alive!"

With that, he said to Link, "Master, I'll go arrange the soldiers now."



“Go. I must return to Ferde too. Say hi to Holun for me.” Link smiled. Holun was a warlord, but he had a candid personality and was easier to communicate with than Avatar.

Avatar could feel that Link was happier when he mentioned Holun. “I will. He always talks about you.”

Link nodded. White light flashed around him. Under this light, Link, the two High Elves, and two statues disappeared together. An instant later, the five appeared tens of thousands of miles away.

Here, Link’s face darkened, and his lips curled up. Sneering, he looked at Elován and Milose. “Gentlemen, you think you can return to the Isle of Dawn now, right?”

# Chapter 567

## Conquer Some, Destroy Some

Woo, woo. The wind on the plains at night was like a ghost's wail. The moonlight was ghastly pale in the sky, illuminating the world with cold light and turning it into a ghost region. All the animals were quiet because of the seemingly repressive atmosphere. There was no noise.

After Link uttered that phrase, Elovan's heart skipped a beat. His eyes flew to Link, and then he lowered his head, gripping his World Tree magic wand. "Lord," he mumbled, "how do you prepare to punish us?"

Milose hadn't been tortured, so he was in a better state of mind than Elovan. It had been many hours since the horrible torture; he'd recovered greatly. Hearing Link's words, he inhaled sharply. "Link, you're the lord of Ferde. You can punish us if you think we've committed something bad, but you should still consider the interests of Ferde, right?"

Link nodded. "You're right. I indeed must consider the interests of Ferde. That is why I can't let you return to the Isle of Dawn."

"You want to kill us?" Milose paled.

"That's not the best plan." Link shook his head. With that, he smiled at Elovan. "If I remember correctly, you're from a commoner family in the Isle of Dawn. Your father is a minor official while your mother died while giving birth to you. That is why your father has hated you since your birth. He thinks you're the physical incarnate of bad luck, is that right?"

Elovan nodded silently.

His background wasn't difficult to investigate. Once he entered the Legendary level, it was like entering the spotlight. Anyone who wanted to know his past only had to spend some money. Link was the lord of a wealthy territory. It was extremely easy if he wanted to know these things.

Reminded by Link, Elován couldn't help but think of his past. When he was little, he would be beaten and punished by his father for no reason. At eight years old, he was forced out of his home. No matter how he cried and screamed, it was to no avail.

If the old Magician in the village didn't adopt him, if he didn't display high magic talent, he would definitely be part of the Isle of Dawn's lowest class.

Seeing Elován sink into deep thought, Link turned to Milose. "As for you, your bloodline isn't that pure. You have a tinge of human of blood given by your great-grandmother. Because of that, you've always been marginalized. It doesn't matter how excellent you are... In reality, this is the same for your father and grandfather, right?"

This hit Milose's weak spot. He also lowered his head in silence.

Mutt!

Scum!

Get out of the Isle of Dawn!

These were the phrases he'd heard the most. Whenever he had a conflict with someone else, High Elves would insult him, either to his face or behind his back. Whenever he heard these words, it would feel like someone stabbing his chest with a knife. It felt horrible.

Then Link gazed at Princess Ariel's spatial seal statue and smiled. "Look at this one, the noble elven princess. She isn't as powerful as you two, she isn't as skilled as you two, but just because of her status, she received the powerful World Impaler. Look at the magic bracelet on her wrist and the beautiful magic robe on her body. Tsk, so enviable."

With that, Link suddenly turned to the wand in Milose's hand. "Hmm, you actually treasure a wand made from a twig. The Mana inside that wand is as messy as a pile of trash."

That really hit Milose hard. Even though they were all from the World Tree, the branches had different qualities too. His wand indeed had the lowest quality of the four Legendary Magicians. His hand retracted subconsciously, hiding the wand that Link had insulted.

Link chuckled. “You can hide the wand, but you can’t hide your robe. Your robe... tsk, it’s only for an elite Magician, right? I thought Legendary Magicians should wear the Wild Robe that Sonya and Elovan have. Why are you wearing a Natural Robe? Did no one tell you or did they not make it for you yet?”

Milose’s face reddened. Link was right. Of the five new Legendary Magicians, only he was still wearing a Natural Robe. It was difficult to make a Wild Robe, so only one was made per month. He was last in line.

This wasn’t that bad, but after Link pointed it out, he felt humiliated.

“No, it’s just not my turn yet. It’s not—”

“Oh, it’s not your turn yet. So why are you last?”

“I...” Milose couldn’t reply. He knew the reason—it was because of his bloodline.

After that, Link turned to Elovan. Even though he had a pure bloodline, he didn’t have a powerful family. His treatment wasn’t any better.

“You’re wearing a Wild Robe, but it just feels weird for some reason. Oh, they really slacked off when making it. Look, you also have the Natural Guidance spell, but your guidance rate is only 70%. Ariel’s is 98%. Compared to hers, yours is just a rag.”

“Ariel is a princess,” Elovan refuted weakly.

“Oh, she’s a princess. A princess is so high-class!”

Here, Link suddenly undid the spatial seal on Princess Ariel. Time started acting on her body again. Link had stabbed her heart. A strong figure wouldn’t die from it, but it was still a heavy injury.

Once the seal was undone, Ariel collapsed onto the ground. Her body was limp and powerless.

Link cast a dragon recovery spell for her, managing to heal her wound and keep her alive. However, she still couldn’t move. Any movement would cause extreme pain.

She scanned Link, Elovan, and Milose. Link had a cold sneer, Elovan looked downtrodden and weak, and Milose’s face had a fury that even he didn’t realize he had.

Ariel was smart. She knew immediately that things would go bad now. These two High Elves would probably turn towards Ferde.

She opened her mouth to speak, but she felt her tongue go numb. Something restrained her. Other than “ah,” she couldn’t say anything else.

Link activated the Magician’s Hand, and Ariel’s World Impaler flew to him. Then he gave it to Milose. “Take it and stab Ariel’s chest in one move!”

Milose gaped. He reached out but didn’t dare accept the World Impaler. “No, I can’t. I can’t do that. I’ll die!”

If he did it, he would never be able to turn back and return to the Isle of Dawn.

Link scoffed. “Oh, so you can live if you don’t do it?”

Milose winced. He looked up at Link to see that his hand was already on his sword. He knew Link. He knew Link had top-tier swordsmanship and magic. With their close distance, Link could kill him and Elován in an instant.

They wouldn’t even be able to fight back.

Should he die now?

Or kill Ariel, join Ferde, and fight for a chance to live?

It wasn’t even a choice.

Trembling, Milose took the World Impaler. Grasping it with both hands, he moved towards the struggling Ariel.

“Ah, ah, ah!”

Ariel screamed with her eyes wide open. Her movements were too big and opened her wound many times. Link was forced to heal her a bit so she wouldn’t die halfway through.

Finally, Milose got to Ariel and pressed the sword tip to her chest... Then he relaxed his hold. Due to gravity, the sharp sword pierced Ariel’s chest, nailing her to the ground.

Link recorded this entire process with a Memory Crystal.

After Milose was done, he said to Elovan, "You too. Stab her."

Elovan had already given up. He was willing to do anything to live and was more resolute than Milose. He walked over, yanked out the World Impaler, aimed at Ariel's heart, and stabbed down.

"Uh." Ariel twitched violently. Grasping the sword hilt, she gaped at Elovan.

Now, she realized that her tongue wasn't restrained anymore. She could speak. Voice rough, she said, "Why?"

It could be said that Milose had been forced, but Elovan had done it without hesitation. He'd decided on joining Ferde.

Elovan didn't reply. He pulled out the World Impaler and turned to Milose. "Milose, I belong to Ferde now. What about you?"

The sword in Elovan's hand dripped with blood as he spoke. It was as if he could kill Milose if needed too.

Milose had no way back. He stepped forward, grabbed the World Impaler, and raised it. He stabbed through Ariel's forehead, nailing this talented High Elf princess to the ground.

Then he said, "Me too."

He'd thought it through.

Technically, Milose was a half-elf. He knew that Ferde had a half-elf with a high position too. That guy was called Eliard.

Since Eliard could accomplish that, why couldn't he? In Ferde, he had opportunities that he would never have in the Isle of Dawn!

Link chuckled. He waved, and the World Impaler jumped out of Ariel's forehead. Her corpse ignited too. It burned to ashes in the fire and blew away with the wind.

Link could control Milose and Elovan, so he chose to take them in. Princess Ariel was

a top talent. She hadn't matured fully, but she would definitely become a terrifying Magician in the future.

Link wasn't confident he could control someone like that, so he chose to destroy her.

He still had one more captive—the Naga, Katyusha.

He'd thought of a way to deal with her too. However, he didn't have the needed method of control. For this, he had to return to Ferde and brainstorm with the core Magicians.

"Alright, my companions, let us return to Ferde. Once there, you must change your appearance and identity for safety."

"Yes, Lord."

Elovan and Milose saluted to Link.

# Chapter 568

## Ferde Lord, Prepare to Pay

One day later, Link brought Elovan, Milose, and Katyusha's statue to Ferde's border. By now, Elovan and Milose's appearances had changed greatly.

First of all, their pointy ears were gone. Link had used a flesh magic puppet spell to round them and change their faces.

High Elves were all very attractive. Even Milose, who was plain amongst High Elves, was above average amongst humans. Now, they looked completely like common men.

If not for their Natural Magic auras, no one would be able to tell they were High Elves from their appearances.

When they got to the border, Link cast a transmission spell to avoid alerting the soldiers. Under white flashes, the group appeared within the main Mage Tower.

Just as the two High Elves steadied themselves, their hearts jumped. They sensed the magic aura coming out of the Mage Tower. It was majestic, deep, and heavy. They felt like they were facing an unshakeable mountain.

Before, they didn't think much of human Mage Towers by instinct. With their magic knowledge, they thought that they would definitely be at the top level. They obviously couldn't beat Link, but they could still be second or third.

Now, they weren't as confident.

Even more shocking, it wasn't just the Mage Tower that looked majestic. The entire Scorched City was shocking. It was filled with a warm aura like sunlight. It was strange.

This "sunlight" was omnipresent in the Mage Tower and outside in Scorched City. Especially to the north of the city where the sunlight aura was abnormally dense—they could even feel the heat.

Sunlight was warm, but when an immense amount of warmth was gathered together,



it would become a sun with unlimited power. There was a sun like that burning in the northern part of the city!

Shock was written in Elovan's features. He asked without thinking, "Lord, what's with the north?"

The Isle of Dawn had always paid attention to Ferde, and they thought that they were knowledgeable in Ferde's basic situation. However, they couldn't sense this aura. From the outside, nothing special seemed to have happened other than the new buildings they'd built.

But now, he saw an entirely different Ferde in the Mage Tower.

"The military camp is in the North," Link said, chuckling. All of Ferde's power was covered by the Mage Tower. The only place they could see the entire city was in the Mage Tower.

"Military camp?" Elovan flinched. He seemed to understand something and was instantly shaken. Not only did they need a lot of people to create such a convergence of power, but they also needed many strong figures. They needed at least 5000 soldiers over Level-6 to create a scene like this.

If they had 5000 Level-6 soldiers, it meant that Ferde now had an entirely new type of power.

He'd interacted with Eliard before and felt the pure and warm aura inside the other. At that time, he'd only thought that Eliard was the exception. He didn't think that Ferde's power had reached this level.

At first, he thought he'd only won a chance to survive by joining Ferde. Now, things seemed much better than he'd expected.

Judging from Ferde's current display of power, they still weren't a match for the Isle of Dawn. It didn't mean they had no chance though. Plus, humans had a great population. This was a huge potential. After a few years, Ferde's power would reach an unthinkable level.

Originally, Elovan had been forced to join Ferde. Now, he saw huge hope. With this hope, he was practically willing to be loyal.

Then he turned to his companion Milose. The other was clearly thinking the same thing. When he turned, Milose had also turned towards him. He saw shock and respect in Milose's eyes.

During this time, Link had still been walking forward. The two followed in his footsteps until Link stopped before a magic portal door.

"It's Evelina's Mage Tower up ahead."

Evelina was the first High Elf to join Ferde. Elován and Milose had been scared, but after hearing Evelina's name, they became calmer. At the same time, they also had complicated feelings.

Link never admitted that Evelina was in Ferde, but everyone knew, so Elován and Milose didn't find this surprising.

After opening the portal door, the three stepped in. The scenery changed and they reappeared in a hallway of a totally different style.

The two walls were made of wood with flowing veins. There was the fragrance of wood and grass in the air. A long-tailed green robin perched on one of the lights on the wall. After seeing them, the robin said with a feminine voice, "Welcome, welcome."

The decorations were completely elven.

Another part of Elován and Milose were reassured. Link continued leading them all the way to Evelina's room. Then he knocked on the door. "Master Evelina, are you here?"

The reply came quickly. "I'm here, Lord. What's wrong?"

At the same time, the door creaked open. Evelina was sitting before a large table, her hands were playing with an Ethereal Crystal. She was making Ethereal equipment.

"I'm sorry. You worked hard these days, but I found two helpers for you." Link moved to the side, revealing Elován and Milose behind him.

Seeing them, Evelina felt for their auras and was horribly shocked. "Elován, Milose, why are you here?"

The two High Elves felt awkward. They didn't know what to say.

Link felt like he was extra here and left Evelina to take care of everything. "I think," he said, "it's better for you three to talk amongst yourselves. I'll go rest now."

As soon as he finished, white light flashed around him, and he disappeared from the room.

Evelina pushed down her shock and waved, closing the wooden door. Then she used the Magician's Hand to place two chairs across the table.

"Sit and tell me what exactly happened."

Milose and Elován walked up. Milose was still reserved as before while Elován was always the leader, so he was the one to speak this time as well.

"I..." He opened his mouth but then realized that he didn't know what to say. He had some worries. He was afraid that if he said too much and Link heard, he would bring trouble.

This often happened on the Isle of Dawn. There wasn't any torture or punishment, but if you said the wrong thing, you would be banished to the fringe of society. You wouldn't be respected your entire life because the Isle of Dawn didn't lack talents.

It was useless even if they reached the Legendary level because there were handfuls of youths that had the same potential. Within three months, there would be at least five Magicians who would reach the Legendary level.

Evelina had lived in the Isle of Dawn for many years. She obviously knew Elován's worries. Waving her hand, she said, "Don't worry. No one will eavesdrop. You can speak freely with me."

Milose was shocked. He couldn't help but say, "The Ferde lord trusts you that much? What if we plot betrayal?"

Elován had the same suspicions. In his opinion, Link had said he would leave, but he must be hiding in the shadows. He would eavesdrop on them to see if they were honest. This was common on the Isle of Dawn.

Evelina covered her mouth and chuckled. "Betray? Do you dare?" she asked in return.

“I was just saying. Don’t take it seriously,” Milose explained hurriedly. He was afraid too.

Evelina shook her head. “Don’t worry. This isn’t the Isle of Dawn. Here, no one has the time to eavesdrop. As for grouping together to plot betrayal, it’s even more impossible. The system within the Mage Tower makes it impossible.”

“Oh, what do you mean?” Elován was interested.

Smiling, Evelina raised her voice slightly and said, “Lily, explain to these country bumpkins.”

Lily was the Mage Tower’s tower spirit. As soon as Evelina finished, a gentle female voice said, “A strict surveillance system operates within the Mage Tower. All magic items must be on record. All Magicians, including manager Master Link, who use magic items, will be recorded. By checking the flow of items, one can deduct the user’s intentions. If someone uses too many dangerous items, the Magician will be marked as a ‘dangerous figure’ and be placed under more scrutiny. If...”

Lily’s explanation was very detailed. The system was strict and had no loopholes at all. It was clearly complicated, but because most steps were run by the tower spirit, it was actually quite simple in reality.

When Lily finished, the two Magicians were mostly clear.

Smiling, Evelina said, “See? The system ensures that you can’t do anything big. Even if you discuss for your entire life, you won’t have the weapons.”

Without the help of magic equipment, a Legendary Magician might not even be the match of a fully-equipped Level-9 Magician. They wouldn’t be able to do anything.

“But I can still stab the lord in the back when we work together. He can’t prevent a sudden accident, right?” Milose asked.

Evelina nodded. “Indeed, he can’t prevent it. But let me ask again, do you dare?”

Elován and Milose met eyes and shook their heads.

Elován’s reaction was even more obvious. When Evelina asked, he shuddered slightly. He’d thought of the torture on the plains again. He never wanted to be reminded of

that painful experience ever again.

They really didn't dare.

The more one interacted with Link, the more terrifying he became. It seemed that his magic would improve a lot whenever they met. They had no clue what power or tricks he had.

Just the thought of fighting him appearing in Elovan's mind scared him, let alone actually doing it.

Evelina casually pushed the Ethereal Crystal to the side of the table and brought over a cup of elven honey tea for her old companions. "You two were most likely forced to join Ferde," she said. "I'd love to know what Master Link did to make you so obedient."

Elovan and Milose fell silent. After a long while, they started to speak at the same time and then stopped again. Finally, Elovan murmured, "He made us kill Princess Ariel."

"What? Ariel died?!" Evelina was shocked.

The two nodded and then remained silent.

After a long while, Evelina sighed. "Now, Firuman will have trouble again."

Almost at the same time, in the palace on the Isle of Dawn, a High Elf messenger brought a confidential letter to the queen. She opened it and paled drastically, unable to even grip the paper. She tottered unsteadily and leaned against the wall.

"My daughter!" she murmured, tears rolling down her shining cheeks.

She had three children—two daughters and one son. Milda was the eldest daughter, and Ariel was the second. Now, Milda was somewhere in Aragu while Ariel was dead. All of this had to do with Link.

Ferde Lord, prepare to pay! She turned and sped to the High Elf Elder Council.

## Chapter 569

# There's Somewhere This Magical in the World

Ferde Mage Tower

Evelina started planning the treatment of her two brethren after communicating with Elován and Milose.

She was now a core Magician in the Ferde Mage Tower. Her authority was second only to Link, and also she had the powerful tower spirit Lily's help. She could do all this by herself.

After a flurry of activity, she gave two identical plain metal rings to the two elves.

"Put it on."

"What is it?" Elován took the ring and studied it carefully. No matter how he looked, the ring seemed ordinary. There weren't many runes on it either. It was just like a normal metal ring.

But Ferde's magic equipment was quite famous. They were known for their fine appearance and stable power. Why did they give such a plain magic ring?

Milose couldn't believe it. He flipped it around, trying to find something from the ring.

Evelina smiled. "No need to look. This is just a regular ring. It's known as the Ferde Black Ring, used to show your status in the Mage Tower. The only good thing about it is that it has Level-10 ordinary authority. It lets you use a portion of Level-10 magic power within the tower."

"Ordinary authority? Level-10 magic power? What's that?" Milose asked. While speaking, his eyes went to Evelina's hand.

Evelina also had a ring, but it was made of precious Thorium and had a crystal red gem. Fiery light flowed through the entire ring. It was beautiful.

Compared to hers, their black rings were like trash.

Touching her ring, Evelina said proudly, "Mine represents my status too. However, mine is called, 'Master Magician's Burn Mark.' It has the complete Level-10 authority. It can activate some Level-11 defensive spells, a portal spell of at least five miles, and a Level-11 Destructive Beam. In Ferde, only the lord's ring is more powerful than mine."

Milose was jealous. "What's the use of a complete Level-10 authority?"

"Use? Of course it's useful. For example, before you accumulate enough magic points to upgrade your ring to the Master Magician level, I'll be in charge of your power..."

Elovan heard one word. "Wait, wait, you said you could upgrade the ring? How?"

Unexpectedly, Evelina stretched and drawled, "I'm tired now and don't want to talk anymore. If you want to know, ask the tower spirit, Lily."

As soon as she finished, the door creaked open. She picked up the Ethereal Crystal on the table and started making magic equipment again.

She was obviously telling them to leave.

Milose was annoyed. "Evelina, what are you doing? We're—"

Evelina's expression changed. "Watch your language, Magician," she said coldly. "This room is my private territory. Even the lord has to knock and receive my permission to enter. Now, turn around, leave, and go back to your room!"

Milose was furious at her attitude. But before he could speak, he heard footsteps. Turning, he saw Elovan. The other elf was hurrying towards the door as if he had something urgent to do.

But what could he do? Milose was curious and hurried after him. He thought of Evelina's words about upgrading the ring and magic points... Wait, Evelina was so arrogant now because she had the Master Magician's Burn Mark. Could he also achieve that level by following her method?

Could he become a core figure of Ferde—someone truly in the top class?

Thinking of this, Milose's heart started pounding. Elovan had left the room and was about to disappear from his vision. Feeling urgent, Milose didn't feel like arguing with Evelina anymore. He followed Elovan out of the room.

Watching the two disappear at the end of the hall, Evelina shook her head. Two more Magicians will become obsessed now.

She closed the door and focused on making Ethereal equipment again.

Since Ariel was dead, the Isle of Dawn would definitely get the news. They wouldn't let it go. Ferde must accumulate more power!

As for whether they would win or not, Evelina was absolutely confident. The process would be difficult, but Ferde would definitely win in the end. Even Ariel, who she'd thought would never fail since childhood, had died in Link's hands. Who else in the Isle of Dawn was his match?

On the other hand, Elovan had returned to his room.

This room was on the fourth floor of the Mage Tower. It wasn't big or small. It was around 120 square feet and was equipped with all the necessary furniture.

According to what Evelina had said, as long as he didn't disturb Ferde's safety, everything in the room belonged to him. Even the lord had no right to forcefully search him.

Evelina shouldn't lie to him. The Ferde Lord's actions when entering Evelina's room earlier had proved her words.

Thinking of this, Elovan was slightly reassured. As a High Elf suddenly becoming a member of the enemy and entering their Mage Tower, he was understandably anxious. Now, he had a private place that belonged to himself. It wasn't big, but it helped relax him greatly.

After closing the door, Elovan composed himself. Following what Evelina had said, he found the portal to the signet in the room. It was on the wall, on the pendant of a pretty woman's painting.

He pressed his ring against the gem and asked, "Lily, are you here?"



The profile floated out of the wall and expanded into a realistic three-dimensional image. She had a gentle motherly smile. "I'm here, aster."

Elovan was intrigued and circled the image. He found that, if he didn't witness it being made, he wouldn't be able to tell that this wasn't a real person.

Such a detailed illusion, he praised inwardly. The gentle woman made him comfortable. "I want to know everything about magic points and upgrading the ring," he said.

"Understood. Please listen carefully..."

Lily started reciting the specific rules for upgrading in the Mage Tower. She was very detailed. Of course, because they were simple rules, it was also boring.

However, Elovan listened seriously, not letting a single word pass by.

He was a commoner and had no background in the Isle of Dawn. He went through the levels purely by virtue of his talent. This entire way, he'd experienced all the good and bad of humanity. He couldn't explain the feeling to others.

At first, he thought all of Firuman was like this. At first, he thought the Isle of Dawn was a peaceful heaven. Even though there were bad parts, it was 100 times better than the messy mainland. But now, he suddenly realized that there was a place as miraculous as Ferde.

The lord was actually willing to give his authority to a tower spirit. He was actually willing to create rules to restrain himself. This was incomprehensible, but it made Elovan feel a burning desire inside.

As Lily explained steadily, that desire burned hotter and hotter. After a full hour, Lily finished, and Elovan worked to compose himself.

"So you mean I can upgrade my metal ring into the Master Magician mark, enter the top level of Ferde, and become a core Magician?" he asked softly.

Lily nodded. "Of course. You only need sufficient magic points."

"Then please give me missions!" Elovan said immediately. He couldn't wait any longer.

He knew Ferde was wealthy and had a great amount of precious magic material. He knew that Ferde's enchantments were very advanced. The Golden Rune Workshop's fame had surpassed the Isle of Dawn. He also heard that Ferde's alchemy was unique in its attainments. Recently, they also created a useful potion. They seemed to be catching up to the Isle of Dawn.

All in all, Ferde wasn't much weaker than the Isle of Dawn. If he could become a core Magician in such a magic paradise, he could receive much more than struggling in the Isle of Dawn!

In that case, why should he still think about the Isle of Dawn?

In that case, why shouldn't he work on moving forward?

"Thank you, Lily," Elován said. "Show me the missions available for my level."

Now, he didn't have any unwillingness left. He was completely willing to stay in Ferde.

In the other room, Milose was feeling similarly. Because of his bloodline, he'd been discriminated against much more than Elován. Now, that didn't exist anymore. He immediately found the motivation to advance.

At this time, Link and Eliard were in the main tower. They faced the Katyusha's spatial seal statue.

"No, this is too hard. Her soul is very powerful—more so than most of us. We can't wipe her memory without damage, let alone add command orders using hypnotization." Eleanor shook her head. She couldn't do it.

Link had wanted to wipe Katyusha's memory and add the command order used for magic puppets. This way, she would become Ferde's battle puppet.

Katyusha was a Warrior genius and had the Spear of Victory. She was a fatal weapon. If Ferde could use her, the territory would have another ace card.

"Then we'll think of a way," Link said. No matter how hard something was, they'd just have to think of a solution.

# Chapter 570

## We Need Power

The Isle of Dawn, royal courtyard of the High Elves, Andwar

There was a clear brook behind the palace under the World Tree. It was called the Brook of Tranquility. The water was always clear, its flow gentle. At night, the whole brook would shine with an ethereal glow under the moonlight.

Palm-sized flowers floated on the water's surface. A soft purple glow radiated from every flower. Soft tinkling sounds rang out from them like wind chimes. The sound was clear and pleasing to the ear, and anyone who heard it would have all their worries and emotional turmoil melt away.

On that day, ten High Elf Elders were by the brook with the High Elf Queen. She was holding a flower that shone with a golden glow. She slowly walked to the brook, knelt down and placed the flower on the water.

The water flowed on, carrying the flower with it. Its golden glow began to form the image of a young High Elf woman in the middle of the flower. It was Ariel. She was holding a long, narrow sword in her hand. She danced and brandished her sword in the middle of the flower, repeating the same form without any hint of exhaustion.

The flower floated off into the distance along the brook.

The queen saw the flower off till it finally disappeared into the hazy moonlight.

A breeze was blowing, and she shrank back against the cold wind.

A middle-aged High Elf man with white sideburns came to her side and put a green cape over her shoulders. He muttered, "My love, Ariel is now finally at rest. Let's go back."

The man was the queen's husband, King Mordena. He was also one of the masters in High Elf society who had chosen to live as a total recluse.

Most people believed that Bryant was the most powerful master among the High Elves. This was not entirely wrong. In terms of sheer power, Bryant, who possessed Level-12 power, undoubtedly was the most powerful High Elf in the Isle of Dawn. However, in terms of magical knowledge and actual competence on the battlefield, Bryant's number one status might not be as secure as one would be led to think.

During his youth, Mordena had been the most prominent High Elf prodigy. Back then, Bryant had looked up to him and had sworn that he would someday be a pillar of High Elf society just like Mordena.

It was because of this that, despite his modest upbringing, Mordena had caught the High Elf Queen's fancy, who at that time was still just a princess in the royal palace. The two fell in love and soon were married to each other.

Ever since then, Mordena had stood in the queen's shadow, maintaining a low profile till he faded away from the consciousness of the outside world. 30 years had passed since. Even the High Elves nowadays would be hard-pressed to remember Mordena's glory days.

Despite living as a recluse, Mordena never abandoned his magical training. No one knew just how powerful he had gotten. This was because no one had seen the fruits of his training with their own eyes for the last 30 years.

The only thing people could sense from Mordena was the power within his body. Though he had already reached Level-11, Mordena usually kept his power hidden deep within him. Upon meeting him in person, normal Magicians would have the impression that they were facing a vast ocean stretching out into the horizon.

The queen did not try to put up a brave face in front of her husband. After putting on the cape, she turned around and leaned her forehead against his chest. She began to weep silently.

Mordena did not speak a word as he patted the queen's back. He said consolingly, "Everything will be alright, Your Highness."

He looked on at the golden flower that drifted further and further away from them as he said this.

His vision was better than the High Elf Queen, who was still a Level-9 Magician. He could still see the image of her daughter brandishing her sword about on the flower.

Looking on at such a familiar sight in the distance, Mordena drew in a long breath. The composure that he had maintained all these years was finally broken by a growing bloodlust in him.

He had kept a low profile for the queen for at least ten years, staying out of the Isle of Dawn's affairs and simply focusing on his magical studies. But now, the Isle of Dawn was under threat. Even their own daughter had been killed. He could not stand on the sidelines any longer.

The queen never knew who her own husband really was, as a person. The love they had shared in their youth had long since eroded under the slow grind of time. Before Ariel's death, the queen had not seen him for almost half a year and did not even know what he was up to during that time.

Suddenly, the queen sensed something in him as she was leaning against him. She shivered and raised her head to look at Mordena. "You..."

She sensed her bloodlust.

"Your Highness, I am Ariel's father. I need to do what must be done," whispered Mordena.

"But you're not his match."

"That remains to be seen." Mordena smiled faintly. He extended a hand. With the force of his will, a noticeable curve appeared in the air above his palm. "I can perform spatial magic as well. As for the martial arts, I wandered the island as a wandering knight when I was young. When it comes to swordsmanship, no one was my equal. Or have you already forgotten this?"

"You..." The queen felt as if she no longer knew the man standing before her.

Mordena said once more, "Your Highness, the Isle of Dawn is in need of my power more than ever. When it no longer requires my help, I will once again return to my place behind you."

According to the traditions of the Isle of Dawn, its king should never dabble in politics. It had always been this way for more than 10,000 years.

The elders behind the queen had heard what Mordena had said. If it had been under

any other circumstances, they would have been the first to voice their objections. Right now, the High Elves were facing a problem unlike any other in the past. The elders were silent. A few tried to say something, but in the end, they simply let out a collective sigh.

Mordena had come from humble beginnings. Right now, he possessed power that the Isle of Dawn sorely needed. Once he had done what needed to be done, everything would still be able to return to normal. Besides, there was no immediate harm in breaking the old ways once or twice.

The queen was also of the same opinion. She sighed and touched Mordena's face. "It's been so long, and you haven't changed one bit. I'll allow this, but be careful. I can't bear to lose you again, my love."

With that said, everything was settled.

Mordena nodded. "I won't overestimate the enemy, nor will I underestimate him. I won't even try to confront him head-on. I'll do whatever it takes to facilitate the reunification of the elves."

The reunification of the elves was something the High Elf Elders had come up with after Ariel's death.

The High Elves and Dark Elves had existed on the Firuman continent for a long time. However, 3000 years ago, before the occurrence of the Mana Disaster, the two races had belonged to one race. The fact that they both shared a common ancestral line was grounds enough to work with each other now.

The way things were going, the Isle of Dawn would not be able to keep Ferde under its thumb any longer on its own without risking retaliation. They needed outside help.

That outside help came in the form of the Army of Destruction in the north.

This was the Isle of Dawn's approach to restoring the balance that they had worked so hard to maintain for the last 3000 years. A few years back, the High Elves had formed an alliance with the humans to resist the forces of darkness. Now, they were forced to ally themselves with the Army of Darkness to keep the humans down.

The High Elves would only switch sides if this alliance threatened to wipe out the humans and disturb that balance once more.

However, this time, things were different. The enemy that the Isle of Dawn now faced possessed immense power. As a result, the High Elves were forced to come up with a response to deal with this threat.

The High Elf Queen said in a low voice, “No, it’s too dangerous to proceed with the reunification of the elves now. I’ll leave this matter to Bryant. Also, this will only be a temporary solution to our problems. The Isle of Dawn is still in need of power to carry out its ends... I want you to execute the reunification of the realms.”

Realm reunification was another response the elders had come up with.

Once the two realms of Firuman and Aragu were reunited, with Milda as the center point, the Isle of Dawn would be able to strengthen their forces with the large number of elves living in the Aragu realm.

If they were able to reunite both realms, the humans would effectively lose the advantage they had over the High Elves with their numbers. The High Elves would be able to fight the humans to the bitter end on equal ground.

Hearing what the queen said, Mordena frowned.

“Link was the one who had provided the coordinates for the Aragu realm. Knowing him, he must have set up a countermeasure against anyone trying to use them. Building a realm portal is just too risky.”

“I know. That’s why I’m letting you do it. My love, our daughter Milda is still in the Aragu realm.”

Mordena jolted at the name. He nodded. “I’ll do whatever it takes to build that realm portal.”

Due to him having stayed out of High Elf politics for quite some time, Mordena did not fully grasp the whole idea of realm reunification. He had assumed it meant building a realm portal.

But that was not the case.

“No, not a realm portal, you’re going to reunite the two realms!”

Mordena was stunned. “That’s just impossible. Combining both realms would require

an unlimited power source!”

“Don’t forget, we have the World Tree on our side,” said the High Elf Queen.

“I... I understand. I’ll do as you asked!” Mordena nodded, letting out a long sigh.



# Chapter 571

## The Foundation of Cooperation

North, Black Forest

In the dark forest, a beam of green light shot between the black pine trees. He was impossibly fast, crossing thousands of feet within a second. Half an hour later, he'd broken out of the Dark Forest and was in the icy wintry world of the North.

Here, he continued northward. Five minutes later, a giant fortress made purely from bones appeared before him. This was the darkest and most terrifying structure in the North—Skeletal Fort.

Once, this was the residency of the Dark Serpent's first owner. Now, it had become the camp of the Army of Destruction.

When the green light was around six miles away from the Skeletal Fort, two Level-9 four-winged fallen angels flew up to meet it on either side. Their spears formed a cross in the sky. One cackled coldly. "High Elf, flying is forbidden here. Descend if you want to live!"

The green light immediately turned in the air and landed obediently, transforming back into human form. It was an elder with white hair—the Prophet, Bryant.

Standing in the snow, he said, "I asked to see Holy Priest Molina. I believe she knows that I am here."

The two four-winged fallen angels also landed. The one that had spoken before continued, "Priest Molina has told us. Follow me."

With that, the two fallen angels turned to lead Bryant. They didn't go to Skeletal Fort though. Instead, they turned left and walked towards a small wooden building on a hill.

Bryant didn't say anything. He pulled his bearskin cloak tighter around him and followed.

When they reached the building, the two fallen angels stood on either side of the door. At the same time, the door creaked open by itself.

Bryant walked in. There was a large room with a fireplace warming up the place. Naga priest Molina stood quietly inside the room. Her brows were slightly furrowed as if there was a troubling matter.

Hearing the noise, she turned around. Seeing Bryant, the worry disappeared, and she smiled. "My apologies for the simple conditions. Please bear with it."

"No problem." Bryant found a warm corner near the fireplace to stand. He looked down at the dancing flames and said, "You seem to have something on your mind."

Molina smiled bitterly. "You must know what happened. Katyusha is in Ferde's hands now. I can sense that she isn't dead yet, but she is in danger. Ferde seems to want to control her soul."

Bryant wasn't surprised. Since Link dared to kill Ariel, controlling Katyusha's soul wasn't too much for him. Those Magicians of Ferde dared to do anything behind the scenes.

He nodded. "The Isle of Dawn suffered great losses too. Princess Ariel was murdered. Our queen views the Ferde lord as the biggest enemy now. We prepare to support your army."

"I am sorry for your misfortune. However, I must say that our cooperation isn't enough. You supplied various types of magic equipment, alchemy, and potions, which is good, but we need Magicians the most. The more, the better. You have so many Magicians but won't even send one over to help. This is insincere."

"Indeed." Bryant actually nodded in agreement, but then he changed his tone. "This is in the past. Soon, we will send at least 1000 Magicians, all above Level-6."

"One thousand? Ha, it seems that the Isle of Dawn is really sacrificing a lot." Molina twisted her boneless body and walked to the fireplace. She stoked it with a rod, saying lightly, "To be honest, 1000 isn't enough. It's like placating some beggars. Everyone in Firuman knows what the Isle of Dawn thinks. If you want me to help you fight Ferde, 1000 Magicians isn't enough. I need to add another condition."

"Yes?"

“Help us rescue Katyusha and get the Spear of Victory back. If you succeed, we can continue cooperating. If you can’t, it’s over. If any High Elf dares to enter the Black Forest after that, not only will we attack, we’ll spread the news all over the mainland. I’d like to see if the humans would still buy your magic equipment!”

After that, Molina stoked the fire casually, patiently waiting for Bryant’s response.

Crackle, pop. The fire crackled lightly. Under Molina’s movements, sparks flew. Gradually, a human face appeared from the red flames.

Not only that, the face’s mouth opened and a low raspy voice said, “Molina, this is the one you said you would cooperate with?”

The voice was very strange. Just hearing it shook one’s mind, making one feel uncontrollable. The voice seemed to represent boundless and endless darkness.

Standing in the corner, Bryant inhaled sharply when he heard the voice and subconsciously uttered, “Nozama, Lord of the Deep.”

Nozama, Lord of the Deep, was at the pinnacle of Level-19. One step away from entering the godly level, he was the most powerful of all mortals.

He was always watching Firuman. Throughout history, he’d activated tides of darkness into Firuman many times. It could be said that he was the one responsible for the wild tide two years ago.

Three hundred years ago, Bryant had personally faced Tarviss, the Legendary demon that Nozama had sent. During the battle, Bryant had met Nozama’s projection into Firuman. That meeting had shattered Bryant’s hopes and was the major reason that pushed him to join the Isle of Dawn.

The face in the fireplaces moved and cackled. “You still remember me. You have a good memory, but you just won’t improve your skills. After so many years, you’re still only at Level-12. Not fun, so not fun.”

Bryant was angry too and couldn’t help but say, “You’re the same. Three hundred years ago, you reached the Legendary Pinnacle, but you’re still there. Why didn’t you improve? I guess you’ll never see the mysteries of the divine territory. Just die from an old death in the Abyss.”

“You... Haha, you have a smart mouth, but you’re right. We shouldn’t laugh at each other. We’re both failures.” Nozama laughed easily. Despite the flying sparks that crackled and popped, he wasn’t angry at all.

Seeing that the two were about to fight, Molina interrupted, “Gentlemen, don’t forget what we must discuss. We must rescue Katyusha and take back the Spear of Victory!”

“Oh, alright.” The fiery face moved and two eyes made of black coal turned to Bryant. “I’m not familiar with the current Firuman. What ideas do you have?”

Bryant shook his head. “I don’t have ideas. I can’t do it, and you can’t do it. Ferde’s power is beyond our imagination. The lord is terrifying... I don’t know what level he is now, but I’m definitely not his match.”

“Oh...” A sigh came from the fireplace. Then there was a huge explosion. Flames flew in all directions, splattering across the room.

“That bastard took my daughter and my other daughter is missing too. If I get my hands on him, I’ll turn his soul into a candle and light it for a thousand years!”

Bryant scoffed. He patted off the dust on him and mocked, “It’s useless to lose your temper in the Abyss. Think of a way to deal with him.”

The fireplace calmed instantly. After a while, the remaining fire formed another face. It could be seen that Nozama had composed himself. His coal eyes turned to Naga Priest Molina.

“I don’t have any solutions unless you can think of a way for me to enter Firuman without any damage to my power. Otherwise, we can only watch that proud little bastard.”

Molina actually did have an idea. A runestone appeared in her hand. Chaotic dark red aura wrapped around the runestone. As soon as it appeared, all light in the room turned dark red. Under it, the yellow fire turned the room a bloody red color.

This time, even Nozama was shocked. “This is... the Sacred Rune of Destruction?”

Molina nodded. “Indeed. There is only one use for this sacred rune—restriction of time. After activation, everything within two miles will be frozen in time. The stronger the power that is frozen, the shorter the duration. Judging from the conditions in

Ferde, it can freeze time for one second.

“One second? That’s too short!” Bryant frowned. The sacred rune was indeed powerful. One second gave them the chance to rescue Katyusha, but after that second, they could even lose their own lives if they messed up afterward.

But Nozama nodded. “One second? Not bad, not bad. A god is truly powerful. Here, make a portal door, and I’ll send my last daughter over. She will be powerful enough to help you rescue the person. If there’s a chance, kill that Link boy too and give me his soul. I need a candle!”

“Thank you.” Molina nodded.

As soon as she finished, the fiery face disappeared. Nozama’s conscience left too. Molina turned to Bryant. “The Isle of Dawn and Ferde haven’t declared war yet. You should be able to get close to Ferde’s core, right?”

“What a f\*cked up mission!” Bryant swore, but he still agreed. “Wrap up the sacred rune. Don’t make it so obvious. It’s best if you use some sacred spell. I don’t want any accidents!”

# Chapter 572

## Time Veil

“Argh!!! No!!!”

In the quiet bedroom, Celine, who was fast asleep, suddenly let out a cry. This startled Link, who had been studying a time magic book at his desk.

He placed a paperweight on the page he was reading and turned down the brightness of the magic lamps in the room. He then walked over to the bed where Celine slept. However, her sleep seemed troubled. From time to time, her brows would furrow, beads of sweat glistened on her forehead, and her hands were gripping tightly on her sheets.

Must be having another nightmare. Link sighed inwardly. He sat beside the bed and held Celine’s hand gently.

This was one of the major side-effects that came with Celine’s clairvoyance. She was just about to transcend Level-9, and her ability to foresee the future was becoming even stronger. Nevertheless, she still could not master this ability. As the situation on the continent was becoming even more complicated, her prophetic nightmares became even more frequent.

These nightmares suggested that danger was imminent, but the core Magicians of Ferde did not need a clairvoyant to tell them what they already knew. The ship that was Ferde was now already sailing across stormy waters.

There was an air of tension among Ferde’s high-ranking Magicians as they braced themselves for war.

Usually, Link only needed to hold Celine’s hand in order to calm her down. This time was no different. After holding her hand quietly for ten minutes, Celine’s brows relaxed. Her breathing was steadier, and she slept soundly once more.

Link did not move away from the bed. He took off his robe, leaned back against the headboard and beckoned at the desk. The magic book on it floated obediently towards

him.

He then turned on a magic lamp beside him and continued reading the impossibly difficult time magic book.

The three main pillars of the realm were space, time and energy. Link already had a profound understanding of space and energy. Only the mysteries of time remained uncracked by him. He was still a beginner at this stage.

As he was absorbed in deciphering a magical formula, Celine, who had been sleeping beside him, suddenly turned around. Her hand touched Link's waist, and she spoke, "Still awake?"

Link closed the book and asked, "Did I wake you up?"

"No, I just had a dream. I was woken up by it," said Celine lazily. She took the book from Link's hands and looked at its cover. "Is this book that hard?" You've been studying it for more than two months, and you've only finished the first chapter."

Link's head was already on the verge of bursting. When Celine snatched the book away from him, he decided not to read it any longer. He massaged his throbbing forehead and laughed bitterly.

"It's not just hard; it's very, very hard. It's way past my power level. I may need to reach Level-14 first if I hope to make any progress in my research."

Back in the game world, the first time spell available to a Magician was Time Acceleration.

All the spells a player had acquired before Level-14 were incompatible with time spells. Spatial spells were incredibly difficult to master, but time spells were a hundred times even more difficult. Time spells involved complicated calculations of causality, logic arrays and time ripples, which were enough to cause Link's brain to overheat.

Despite noticing the tired look on Link's face, Celine did not tell him to get some rest. Instead, she steered the conversation towards another topic that required less brainwork. "How's the Naga?"

"The Naga?" Link smiled. "Progress is going smoothly. Vance and the others have found a reliable way to put her under our control. The only problem we've encountered was

her Spear of Victory, which was built to automatically defend its mistress. But the weapon's power is limited. I estimate that it would use up all its power in a week."

"That sounds great. But I just had a dream that was related to the Naga. Do you want to hear it?"

"Tell me."

Celine placed the time magic book on the bedside table. She then sat up and leaned against Link's shoulder, before saying, "The dream was a blur, and it was mired in metaphors and symbolism, but it was also strange and frightening."

Link never dared to take Celine's dreams lightly. He listened attentively.

Celine closed her eyes as if trying to recall the dream she had. A moment later, she said in a low voice, "In the dream, I saw my father. Ever since I had my Demon Power suppressed within me, this was the first time I had seen him in one of my dreams. In it, I saw a figure heading towards Ferde from the ocean. The figure was strange. There was blood gleaming off of it. From afar, it looked like a High Elf. But up close, it looked like a girl with a pair of goat horns on her head. The girl's face was indistinct. As she reached Ferde's port, I think she saw me. I then heard her saying something to me. It was clear and distinct, like it was real. She said, 'Big sister, Father misses you.' When she was done, she suddenly transformed into a man shrouded in shadows. Even though I couldn't see his face clearly, I knew deep down that it was Nozama. He spread out his wings and grabbed me with a huge claw..."

Celine's dream sounded outlandish, as if it was simply the stuff of her overworked imagination. But what she had described was enough to send a shiver down his spine.

"Nozama, a High Elf, the glint of blood, you being called sister, this is just a bit too eerie to be a simple dream. Why don't we pay Elin a visit? She's not called Lady Fortuna for nothing. She specializes in dream interpretation, so she'll probably be able to tell us something we don't know about your dream."

At the mention of Celine's younger sister, Link immediately thought of Saroviny. But she was supposed to still be in the Aragu realm.

Saroviny had probably spent a few hundred years in Aragu by now. Could it be that she had attained enough power to break free from the realm? Or could it be that Nozama had found her there and proposed an alliance with her?



All these scenarios in his head made Link a bit jumpy.

“Alright, I’ll go with you. But it’s already getting late. Get some sleep, try not to worry too much about it.” Celine tugged against Link’s arm, trying to get him to lie down.

Link allowed himself to be pulled down by her. He lay back on the bed, relaxed himself and before long, fell into a deep sleep.

The night passed by without a word from either one of them.

The next day, Link went to check up on Katyusha’s condition. Making sure that everything was progressing smoothly, he brought Celine along with him to the Yabba people’s Blue Stone Isle.

The island was originally an uninhabited island, but after a year of development by the Yabba people, the island was beginning to look more like a city.

When Link saw the island in the distance, he began to slow down and lower his altitude. He then used Void Walk to complete the rest of the journey and finally came to rest on an airship platform by the docks.

When the airship supervisor saw Link landing on the platform, he immediately went out to greet him. A small airship was prepared for him immediately after Link told the supervisor where they were going.

Link and Celine got on the airship. The vessel took off and flew low in the sky. Five minutes later, they reached an elevated region on the cliffs near the sea, where a small Mage Tower stood. This was where Elin resided—the Tower of Fate.

Link and Celine walked towards the tower. Before they could even knock on the door, it opened. A 12-year-old Yabba girl stood at the threshold. She looked at Link with a pair of emerald green eyes and said with a high-pitched voice, “My lord, the prophet has said that she’s prepared afternoon tea for the two of you on the balcony. She’s been expecting you.”

Link and Celine looked at each other before entering the Mage Tower. The tiny Yabba girl led the way, skipping and hopping all the way to a great hall on the third floor. Outside the hall was a balcony. Elin was standing beside a round table outside, smiling at them.

When Link and Celine stepped out onto the balcony, Elin said to them, “Welcome, my lord and lady.”

Though both of them still had no plans for marriage, everyone knew what sort of relationship they were in. Link intended to officially marry Celine once they had defeated the Army of Destruction. Everyone knew about this as well. As such, Link and Celine were both fine with Elin calling Celine “lady.”

All three were seated around the table, and before Link even had the chance to speak, Elin said with a smile, “Not a word. First, let’s draw two cards out, shall we?”

Elin then took out a deck of tarot cards and lay them out across the table.

“My clairvoyant ability is now one with this deck of cards. My lord, just like before, think of the question that you want answered, and the deck will give you its answer.”

Link nodded and focused on the dream that Celine had described to him the other night. He then drew out two cards.

Seeing that there was no one else on the balcony other than the three of them, Link flipped them open.

What they saw shocked the three of them.

There was nothing but a grey blur on the two cards that Link had drawn out, absolutely nothing for Elin to make a prediction with. Upon a closer look, they noticed that there was, in fact, an image on each of the two cards. There was an indescribable power obscuring the images, making it impossible to decipher their meanings.

Sensing the strange power around the two cards, Link jolted up and recalled something he had read in the time magic book: a Time Veil!

A Time Veil was what would happen when a future chain of events sent out time ripples so violent one’s premonitions would be severely distorted by them.

Link’s face grew solemn as he saw the fogged-up cards. He sensed that the imminent danger they were about to face this time was unlike any other they had faced in the past.

“What happened?” asked Celine.

Link looked at Elin as well, expecting an answer from her.

Elin was shocked as well. She took the cards and gently felt the patterns on the backs of both cards. She had familiarized herself with every card in the deck. By feeling for the patterns' subtle differences, she was able to tell the cards apart.

A strange look came over her face when she felt the backs of the two cards. Her mind suddenly went blank as she tried to figure out what the images on the two cards were.

Finally, she gave up. She then said, "Forgive me, my lord, but it seems to me that whatever you want a prediction is completely beyond my clairvoyant powers. I think you should tell me everything yourself."

# Chapter 573

## The Prophecy's Reminder

Tower of Fate

Celine recounted her dream again. This time, she added more details. After she finished, Elin sank into deep thought.

She didn't speak or even move; she just sat there like a statue for over three minutes. Finally, she started organizing the tarot cards in her hands speedily. When she finished, she started taking out cards.

Glancing at the cards she took out, she shook her head and put them back. Then she shuffled, took cards, and repeated.

Repeating 18 times, Elin suddenly coughed. Blood appeared at the corners of her lips. Celine was shocked at this; her mouth dropped open. "You—"

Link immediately covered her mouth. "Shush, don't disturb her!"

Elin was forcefully predicting the future right now. Any disturbances could make all efforts go to waste.

Ignoring everything around her, Elin kept going without stopping. She pulled cards three more times. At the third time, her pupils constricted as she shoved two cards back into the deck.

Now, her face was ghastly pale and flushed; her body wavered. Her big emerald eyes were dull and half-closed. She looked like an eggplant covered in frost.

Link immediately cast an Essence Vitality spell for her. After more than ten minutes, Elin had recovered a bit.

She let out a long sigh and murmured, "The future is very lost. Many forces interfere with my sight, but just then, the fog lifted slightly. I saw a god of death approaching a poisonous snake."

“Oh?” Link was shocked. The god of death represented misfortune and the poisonous snake... Was it Katyusha?

“Huh?” Celine had some thoughts too.

The two exchanged glances, and Link stood up. “Elin, thank you for your help. Please take a break.”

“It’s alright. I’m happy to help.” Elin smiled weakly.

The two stopped disturbing Elin. Link used a transmission spell, and under the flashing light, he appeared on the sea thousands of feet away. Then he used the Void Walk to fly towards Ferde.

“So it seems that the Army of Destruction is planning to rescue Katyusha?” Celine asked.

Link nodded. “Indeed. I couldn’t think of how they would save her, but a High Elf appeared in your dream. I’m afraid they’ll have a hand in this rescue mission.”

“Don’t forget, there’s also a demon,” Celine reminded. “She called me sister. Perhaps because of our shared blood, she was especially clear in my dream. I could even see her horns. They were curled and short like a goat’s. Her eyes were faint green.”

Link slowed down and thought. After a while, he said, “It isn’t very possible for this demon girl to enter Ferde directly. She will probably get help from the outside. The High Elf is the one who will truly enter Ferde.”

Judging from Celine’s description, this demon girl probably wasn’t Saroviny. It was probably Nozama’s other daughter. After all, that guy had so many descendants. It was normal that there were daughters that didn’t appear in the game.

However, Link wouldn’t be afraid even if Saroviny came. Ferde’s magic defense wasn’t weak. For example, the Divine Punishment protocol that attacked proactively was only Level-15 at the beginning. After many upgrades, it was now Level-19. Any mortal who came would die.

Thinking of this, Link asked, “Which High Elf do you think it’ll be?”

Celine already had an answer. Looking to Link, she discovered he was looking back at

her. "I believe it will be Bryant. Didn't the Orida Fortress send a message that there were traces similar to Bryant in the Black Forest?"

"I think that too." Link smiled.

The two continued analyzing Celine's prophetic nightmare.

"The High Elf was covered in a bloody light," Celine said. "But thinking more closely, it doesn't seem like a bloody light. It might be the power of the God of Destruction. Do you think Bryant would have some sacred gear?"

Link shook his head. "Sacred gear? If there's sacred gear, the Army of Destruction can just come southward. Who can stop them? Why would they care about the Spear of Victory?"

"Then maybe it's just a sacred rune?"

Sacred runes were one-time tools and could be made with the addition of sacred power. It was far from sacred gear.

Link nodded. "That should be it, but I don't know what function it can have."

Here, the big picture was clear. If the Army of Destruction wanted to come rescue Katyusha, regardless of whether they used Celine's prophecy or objective observations, Link and Celine's proposed rescue plan was still possible. If Ferde didn't prepare, the enemy could very possibly succeed.

But now, Link was prepared.

After returning to the Mage Tower in Scorched Ridge, Link didn't alert anyone else. The rescue would definitely be a sneak attack without many people. If he and Celine prepared well and had Lily's help, it would be enough.

Celine went to practice with her fire gun. Link went to the top level and started adjusting tower spirit, Lily. He wanted to improve Lily's ability to discern the power of the God of Destruction and demons. Then at critical moments, she could see through the enemy's disguise and attack.

Link was very familiar with these two types of power. There were samples in the Mage Tower too. He could use them to experiment now.

This adjustment took Link more than ten hours. After that, he went straight to the enchantment room. He needed to make something else. It was called the Order Compass!

Link thought that since the enemy dared to rescue Katyusha, they must possess something that Ferde didn't have. Now, Ferde had most powers from the mortal world. The only one missing was the power of time.

The power of time was highly mysterious. It could make someone's brain explode to research its principles. But to a god, it was nothing. The sacred rune from the God of Destruction should be related to time.

Link still only had a shallow knowledge of time power, but this didn't stop him from using it. After all, he had the game system and close to 600 Omni Points.

The game system used the power of the God of Light. Link didn't have enough knowledge about time, but the God of Light definitely did. The Omni Points were equivalent to usage rights that the God of Light gave. Link had 600 points now. It was enough to buy any Legendary spell.

Of all the magic cards, there was a very powerful time spell called the Order Compass.

Order Compass

Level-16 Legendary Spell

Cost: more than 20,000 Realm Essence points

Effect: Incomparable power consolidates into a unique material. This creates the compass of time. Within a range of 3000 feet, the controller can speed up or slow down the flow of time after paying sufficient power.

(Note: Chase the arrow of time.)

Link's current max was 8300 Realm Essence points. If he relied solely on his own power, he wouldn't be able to use the Order Compass. This was okay though. He was in the Mage Tower and had more than enough magic material.

He could save up his power and solidify this Level-16 spell into a rune. This was a one-time-use rune, but with it, Link wouldn't have to worry about the enemy defeating him

with the power of time.

Going to work immediately, the motivation surged in Link, and he started creating the Order Compass rune.

While Link was working hard on preparing against the rescue attempt, a High Elf ship slowly entered the pier three days after Link returned to Ferde.

In the cabin, Bryant gazed at the lively Ferde port through the window. His eyes were complex.

Ferde lord, will today be your last day?

While thinking of this, he gazed at his wrist. A small white snake with yellow stripes wrapped around his wrist. After sensing his gaze, it suddenly said, “Old man, stop looking at me. You’ll expose me!”

This was Nozama’s daughter. She was only Level-10—not as strong as the others. However, she had no demonic aura about her. She could also shapeshift, which was an ability that others couldn’t prepare against.

This wasn’t a spell. Her body could truly transform. For example, she was a tiny snake less than one-foot long.



# Chapter 574

## Rescuing the Naga (1)

The wheels of the carriage that the port administrator had arranged for Bryant rattled on as it drove straight towards Scorched City.

The stretch of road that Bryant was on was at least 20 feet wide and had been leveled flat through the use of a Petrification spell. The road ahead of the carriage was practically a straight line. There were tall buildings neatly lining both sides of the road, from the port all the way to the Scorched Ridge.

Looking out from the window in front of the carriage, he could see groups of buildings crisscrossing with each other. A few miles down the road, skyscraping Mage Towers rose up from the horizon.

From afar, one could clearly see networks of Mana intersecting with each other around the Mage Towers. Under the faint golden light emanated by the Mana, the whole city seemed even brighter and warmer as if the place was illuminated by a sun that never set.

Bryant could not help but feel calmer and cheerful at the sight of this magnificent city being bathed in everlasting sunlight.

He had just left Skeletal Fort in the North and was somewhat depressed by its sight. The city's golden glow dispelled all the negative emotions in him in an instant.

"What a beautiful city," he exclaimed.

From his sleeve came a hissing voice. "Like hell it is! I hate it here! It's too bright and hot, and it stinks of humans everywhere. This is a disgusting place! If my father rules this place one day, I'll make sure to have him tear down that tower in the distance!"

Sensing the clammy wriggling in his sleeve, Bryant warned, "I think you'd best keep it down. We're approaching the Mage Tower. Wouldn't want to risk getting exposed now, would we?"

“I don’t need you to tell me twice!” grumbled the voice in his sleeve, and then it went silent for the rest of the journey.

The carriage pressed on until it finally arrived at the entrance of the Scorched Ridge. Bryant was stunned by what he saw there. Looking out of his carriage, he saw a black-haired young man standing at the entrance, smiling at him.

The young man was wearing a standard magic robe. He was holding an ordinary-looking magic wand. He looked like an ordinary Magician’s Apprentice. But Bryant knew all too well that this was simply a magical illusion. The aura that he sensed from the young man had already revealed to him who he really was.

It was Link himself.

The “Magician’s Apprentice” walked towards the carriage, opened the door for Bryant and then gave him a Magician’s salute.

“Master, please follow me.”

Bryant felt his heart beating even more quickly. Link’s appearance had caught him off guard. This was unexpected.

Though Nozama had asked him to kill Link, Bryant never intended to do so in the first place. The Time Stop spell would only last for one second, which was just too short. If he wanted to end Link, he would need to be sure of where Link was and be close enough to him in order to activate the divine time seal.

However, Link could easily turn on him if he tried to activate the divine seal. Bryant might even be killed by him before he could even activate it. No matter how powerful the seal was, it would all be for naught.

Seeing Link coming out to welcome him personally, Bryant could not help but feel suspicious about this. He suddenly had an impulse to turn around and leave.

However, he managed to get a hold of himself. Bryant coughed and then said, “I did not expect you to come out personally, Link.”

Saying this, Bryant’s arm tensed up, warning the little snake hidden inside his sleeve to be careful. She wriggled back in response. Bryant could feel that the little snake was also nervous. She had not moved a muscle when she saw Link standing before them.

It was as if she had already entered hibernation in his sleeve.

What Bryant did not know was that Link had seen this little exchange between him and the serpent. He had already suspected Bryant was up to something. Seeing the High Elf personally at the entrance, Link was able to confirm his suspicions about this meeting.

He let out an inward sigh. Seems like Celine's dream was true. I never knew that the High Elves would be working with the Army of Destruction.

Still, the smile on Link's face did not fade.

"I've been quite free lately. When I heard that you were coming for a visit, I thought I might greet you personally. You said that you were coming to discuss the matter of reconnecting with the Aragu realm. Well, I'm all ears."

Reconnecting with the Aragu realm was what Bryant wanted to discuss with Link, at least on the surface.

Bryant did not think that Link would be interested in the subject. Somewhat startled, he smiled and said, "I see. After you."

The two began walking along the street of the Scorched Ridge.

Compared to the bustling outer city of Scorched City, the Scorched Ridge was a different matter altogether.

Ordinary folk lived in the outer city. Though their houses were laid out neatly, due to how fast construction had taken place, some of them looked shoddily built. There were still places in the midst of construction.

Those living in the inner city belonged to the upper circles of society, including high-ranking military officials and Magicians. The buildings here were all splendidly built. However, it was extremely quiet in the midst of this splendor. There were few people on the street, each one of them dressed in high-quality attire. There were even a couple of young Magicians hurrying about.

One of the pedestrians had his head lowered as he walked, apparently deep in thought. A few others were huddled together in a heated discussion about something as they passed by. Everyone walked at a brisk pace, as if they had all come out for a jog out on

the street.

Bryant also saw a few Magician's Apprentices buried in their magic books as they ate something.

One would not find such bustle in the Isle of Dawn.

The High Elves' lifespan was thrice that of humans. They were also more gifted in the mystic arts than the human race. The High Elves had always preferred peace and tranquility. It would be diligence of the highest order if a young High Elf Magician was willing to spend eight hours a day in his or her magical studies.

Bryant walked on, amazed by the sight before him.

He remembered his days as a young Magician. At that time, he had been so obsessed with unlocking the secrets of magic. However, when there was not much else he could learn from human magic, Bryant decided to set out into the world.

He had basically left his mark across all of Firuman. He had climbed mountains and crossed oceans to learn magic from the dwarves, the Yabba people, the High Elves and the dragons. However, his time studying magic in Andwar had left a deep impression in him.

In order to study magic in the Isle of Dawn, he had paid 200,000 gold pieces up front. During his time there, he had even helped the High Elves carry out many questionable deeds on the Firuman continent. In the end, the magic books he had gotten for his effort were no more than Level-8.

When he walked along the streets of Andwar, the High Elves would avoid him like the plague and then whisper behind his back. They would look at him as if he were a monkey in a zoo.

His magic might have seen a drastic improvement during those years, but it was also one of the most humiliating times of his life.

Looking again at the scenery around him, Bryant said to Link, "My lord, you've already built a Mage Tower. All these young Magicians are now thriving in your city. You don't need to travel the world just for a bit of magical knowledge here and there."

Link shook his head, still smiling. "Whether this place will thrive tomorrow, or the day

after, still remains to be seen. I may have built myself a Mage Tower, but I've also angered many people. This city may seem prosperous now, but it may also be reduced to ashes tomorrow. Take me for example. I may be the object of adoration and envy today, but one of my enemies may get the chance to destroy my body tomorrow and subject my soul to whatever horrendous torture they could think of. Who's to say for sure what fate has planned for all of us?

Link's words seemed to be hinting at something. Hearing this, Bryant jolted and laughed weakly. "Surely you're joking, my lord?"

Link gave a vague smile. The two of them reached a courtyard garden. Link extended out a hand, inviting Bryant to enter the place first. "After you. Whatever it is you wish to speak, we'll be discussing it here."

Bryant raised his brows in surprise. Glancing at the not so distant Mage Tower, he asked, "Hasn't it always been tradition to discuss matters in the Mage Tower?"

The Sacred Rune of Destruction he had with him was telling him that Katyusha was currently being imprisoned in the Mage Tower. But now, there was no way to enter the place, determine where she was being held prisoner or spring her out of captivity.

Link smiled, "The Mage Tower is now no longer open to guests. It's one of the new rules I've enacted."

"I see. Then we'll talk here." Bryant was somewhat disappointed. This was unexpected, but also understandable, seeing that there had been many clashes in the shadows between Ferde and the Isle of Dawn.

He had a backup plan.

Once they were inside the courtyard, a beautiful magic puppet maid came over to lay out treats on a table. Casually seating himself beside the table, Link said, "I've read the documents you've sent me. I take it that the Isle of Dawn is prepared to reconnect with the Aragu realm?"

Bryant nodded. "In truth, we've already begun building a small-scale portal. Princess Ariel has vanished without a trace, but the royal line must continue. So, we've been working to reconnect with the Aragu Realm and bring back Princess Milda. During the process, slight vibrations will be felt in the realm. But rest assured, this is all normal. We hope that Ferde will not overreact to this."

“I understand,” said Link, nodding. It sounded as if Bryant had feared that Link would begin jumping to conclusions when this happened, and so decided to let Link know what was going on beforehand.

After pausing for a while, Link asked, “Is there anything else?”

“There’s one other thing. Opening a realm portal is a complicated and dangerous business. We aren’t really confident about all the details of this operation, and of course, nothing must happen to the princess during the process. And so, I’ve brought the magic circle we’ve designed for the portal. Our highness wants you to take a look at it and see if there is anything that could still be improved on. You will be sufficiently compensated for your work, of course.”

“I see. Do you need it soon?” asked Link.

“The sooner, the better. I’ll be waiting here for the next few days. When you’re done, I’ll bring the plans back with me.” Bryant even handed Link the blueprint for the realm portal.

Link gave it a look. The design was incredibly complicated, but it did resemble a realm portal’s magic circle. He nodded and said, “I’ll have it ready as soon as possible. I’ll need at most three days.”

“Thank you. I’ll wait for you in the outer city then,” said Bryant.

“No need. You can stay here in this courtyard. It’s much quieter here.”

Bryant nodded, accepting Link’s offer.

Without another word, Link turned around and left the place. After seeing Link off at the courtyard’s entrance, Bryant went back into the courtyard.

“Alright then, I guess it’s all up to you now, Merna. Be careful, though. Link’s acting strangely. I think he may be on to us.”

“Understood.” Merna was the name of the snake. She slithered out of Bryant’s sleeve, made her way to the middle of the garden and finally squeezed into the opening of a drain out in the street.

# Chapter 575

## Rescuing the Naga (2)

“Link, do you think he’s really coming to discuss important matters?”

Celine walked up to Link as soon as he returned to the Mage Tower. She stayed at the top level during Link’s meeting with Bryant, aiming her big fire gun at the Magician. No matter what Bryant did, she would fire as soon as she felt danger.

She wouldn’t be able to kill Bryant, but she could at least affect his power.

However, she didn’t observe or sense anything abnormal. Bryant seemed to have really come to discuss the portal.

Link found it strange too. Prophecies were always a bit iffy. They made nice reminders, but there would be problems if one completely relied on prophecies.

From the interaction, he believed that Bryant was up to something. However, he wasn’t sure how he would rescue Katyusha or if he was here for another reason.

After thinking, Link said, “There’s no hurry. He gave me the drafts now and will stay in Scorched Ridge for three days. If we wait patiently, he’ll expose himself.”

Celine shrugged, a bit confused. “That’s too troublesome. He’s not your match. Why don’t we just capture him and interrogate him?”

Link shook his head immediately. “Celine, you’re too confident in me. Bryant is still quite powerful. If we fight, I’ll have to kill him. I can’t capture him.”

For someone like him, capturing him alive was 100 times harder than killing him.

It was easy to kill Bryant. Link could activate Lily and attack, ending Bryant in a few moves. However, if Bryant fought back before he died, the entire Scorched City could be destroyed.

Scorched City was Link’s camp. He couldn’t do something so risky.

“Alright. I’ll continue watching him.” Grasping the big fire gun, Celine returned to the Mage Tower’s balcony. She could see the entire city and also had the magic seal for protection. It was the best place for spying.

Link took out Bryant’s draft for the portal matrix and started revising it. Of course, he was only getting rid of some flaws.

...

### Sewage system under Scorched Ridge

Merna swam through the sewage tunnel. In order to avoid having her aura sensed, she used her physical power. All her movements looked like a regular snake.

The sewage system was as complex as a maze, but Merna had shocking memory. She also had a great sense of smell. She could smell her own scent even in the dirty water.

These strong points paired with her acute sense of direction helped her reach the outside of the Mage Tower’s foundation after around two hours.

There, she ran into a new problem.

The Mage Tower’s defense was abnormally dense. Even the foundations underground were practically seamless. Merna circled it many times but couldn’t find any flaws.

Even the drainage hole had a very detailed detection matrix. If she swam over, it would be activated immediately. She stared at it for half an hour without finding any defects. It was so sophisticated that she felt helpless.

The material elsewhere was extremely sturdy too, at Level-9. The critical parts reached Level-11. If she wanted to force her way in, it would cause a big commotion.

Who built this tower? Is he crazy? Would it kill him to leave a crack? Merna was frustrated.

Not willing to give up, she swam aimlessly, circling around the tower three times to no avail. Sneaking in from underground wasn’t going to work.

Merna could only backtrack. After returning to the yard, she used the foliage for cover and slithered back to Bryant’s room.



Bryant was lying on a chaise and reading. Two magic puppets stood behind him. One massaged him gently while the other held his drink.

“Stronger, lower, ah yes. Feels good.”

“Let me drink again.”

The servant walked over and gently spooned him the drink. All Bryant had to do was slightly move his head. He was in paradise.

Seeing this, Merna almost exploded in anger. She'd swum in the disgusting water of human feces for hours and had even accidentally swallowed some of it. But this guy was here enjoying everything. Feeling the difference, anger rose up in Merna. She rushed over and bit Bryant's calf, injecting poison.

Crash! Bryant almost fell from his chair in fright. Stinging pain came from his calf. Looking down, he saw that it was bruising at a speed visible to the naked eye. There were also two fang marks.

This was extreme poison.

Bryant hurriedly drank some Elf Nectar to push the poison down. Then he looked to the two magic puppets. They stared at him, confused, but didn't do anything abnormal.

He let out a sigh. Feeling Merna go inside his robe and wrap around his arm again, he said to the magic puppets, “Okay, I want to rest. Go out.”

They turned and left the room.

Finally, Bryant muttered, “What? What did I do?!”

Merna huffed. “I risked my life to investigate the Mage Tower, and I was annoyed to see you like this, so I bit you!”

“Alright, alright... How's the situation?” Bryant did feel that he'd crossed the line, but Ferde's magic puppets were really nice. They were beautiful, had soft voices, gentle movements, and served extremely well. If he wasn't scared of being laughed at, he would take two back to the Isle of Dawn.

“The defense is very dense. I can't break through by myself. I need your help.” Merna

sighed. She'd underestimated Ferde.

"That bad?" Bryant was shocked too. He'd personally experienced Merna's espionage skills. If even she was helpless, Ferde's defense was really something.

Thinking, Bryant said, "How about I go out? I can definitely find an apprentice that will take you into the Mage Tower... Of course, you have to change your appearance, like a parrot that can talk or a white rat. Or another animal that people won't be scared of."

Merna sighed. "Fine. I'll do as you say."

The two immediately started acting.

Merna started changing her appearance in a hidden corner while Bryant walked out and wandered down the street. He walked until six at night. When he returned, there was a mouse the size of two fists in the room. The mouse was extremely fluffy and white. It was adorable.

Bryant petted Merna, praising, "Perfect."

Then he sat down and sighed. "Merna, my plan won't work."

"What now?" Merna felt depressed. The two large eyes on the cute mouse face glinted red. She'd spent the entire afternoon transforming, and now Bryant said this. It made her want to go crazy.

Stomping, she yelled, "You're a Legendary Magician! You've lived for almost 400 years, and you can't fool some 20-year-old apprentice?"

"Of course I can, and he would take you in, but from what I've observed, Link has a powerful Tower Spirit in the Mage Tower. She will detect all organisms brought in. If it isn't verified, the spirit will activate the alarms. So..."

"So none of our plans will work?" Merna was about to explode.

"Yes."

So Merna exploded. She jumped around on the table, yelling, "Link is crazy. Is he going to think a cockroach is an invader?! He should just die!"

“Actually, yes. I manipulated a cockroach into climbing in through the door. One second later, it was killed by a Level-0 spell.”

Merna was speechless.

After a long while, she said, “Katyusha can survive two more days at most. After that, we will have failed our mission. You must think of something.”

Bryant had a headache too. “Don’t worry. We still have two days. Tomorrow, I’ll go out again. I’ll find something. I must!”

# Chapter 576

## Rescuing the Naga (3)

Main Mage Tower, a magic laboratory in the fourth basement

Purple magic runes crackled in the air like electricity. The runes were arranged in circles. Like soldiers in the vanguard, they charged towards a dark red glow in the center.

Three crystals as big as a human's brain were placed in a triangle around the dark red glow. They were the source of the purple magic runes.

Beyond the crystals stood two Magicians—Eleanor and Vance. The two of them were intently observing the crystals' power input. Should any anomaly arise, they would immediately step in to rectify it.

"How's it going?" Link asked. He had come to check on Katyusha's conditioning.

"Everything looks to be in order. But something strange happened a while ago," said Vance, a confused look on his face.

"Do tell."

Vance pointed at the white energy flow pouring out of the Mage Tower. "It happened just last night. The energy flow here had always been stable. We never had an issue with it. However, since one in the morning, there have been three small consecutive Mana outbursts, as if something's disturbing the energy flow. What's strange is that Eleanor and I have inspected the surrounding Mana channels. But there seems to be no sign of anyone tampering with them."

Link was stunned. The first thing he thought of upon hearing this was that this must be Bryant's handiwork!

The energy flow that was used to break through Katyusha's defenses came from the Mage Tower's Mana core. Link had personally overseen its construction and regulation. Every Monday, he would come by for an inspection to make sure that the

Mana core was functioning properly. His last inspection had been two days ago. It was still working normally back then.

Also, Link would be able to sense the presence of any foreign power interfering with the Mage Tower's energy flow from a hundred miles away. However, nothing seemed to stand out in the vicinity at the moment.

"I'll go check on the main tower's Mana network."

He was now feeling a bit anxious. Bryant had been staying in the Scorched Ridge for the past few days. Celine had reported that the man's behavior seemed suspicious. He might have found a way to gain entry into the laboratory.

Link began checking the main tower's Mana system, starting from the laboratory, then along the conduit pipe, all the way to the Mana core. Still, he found nothing.

Everything seemed normal. There was no sign suggesting that an outside force had invaded the place, which meant that the disturbance was not man-made.

Link was now puzzled. Strange indeed. Could it be that Bryant's using a technique even I don't know about? If that's the case, what's he sticking around here for?

Still trying to figure out how Bryant did it, Link decided that he needed more data. He began observing the Mage Tower's energy flow. He had also set up a Memory Crystal in order to record the next energy outburst when it happened.

He had only just started looking at the numbers when an hour later, another Mana outburst occurred.

This time, Link saw with his own eyes the disturbance in the Mana current. An abnormal tremor appeared in it, affecting the whole thing. The sensation Link had at that moment was that of a giant rocking the entire Mage Tower about, trying to tip it over.

When the tremor occurred, due to the continuous flow of Mana, tiny chaotic eddies began to form in it. They might not have much effect on low-level magic, but they presented a serious threat to the Legendary-level Hidden spell that was keeping Katyusha subdued. These tiny disturbances were able to cause the spell to lose its effect!

Link immediately tried to suppress the sudden disturbance in the Mana channel. He noticed that Vance and Eleanor were also trying to do the same thing.

Four seconds later, the eddies disappeared. Everything was back to normal.

Link took a look at the high-quality Memory Crystal he had placed beside him. It had recorded the whole thing down as it happened.

Link then watched the disturbance unfold again and again on the Memory Crystal. Each time, he would look at the numbers he had jotted down and then make all sorts of calculations with them.

He had completed the entire evaluation process after watching the Memory Crystal at least 12 times. However, his anxiety only intensified as he scanned the formulas and intensity curve of the tremor he had scribbled down in his notebook.

All signs indicated that in order to set off such a tremor in the Mage Tower's Mana system, the disturbance needed to be global in scale.

In other words, this disturbance needed to encompass the entire realm.

Just what kind of power are we up against, to have such an effect? Could it be the appearance of another divine gear? Link frowned.

When the Dark Serpent first descended on the mortal plane, Link's power was only at Level-6. He was still so weak at the time that he did not sense any disturbances in the realm and so never experienced anything like this in the past.

This did not mean that others were oblivious to the ripples sent out by the Dark Serpent's appearance.

After thinking for a while, Link sent a telepathic message to Lily the tower spirit. In an instant, Lily conveyed the message to Evelina, Elován, and Milose.

When the Dark Serpent first appeared, the Isle of Dawn must have kept a record of the changes brought about by it across the realm.

Five minutes later, the three Legendary High Elves arrived at the main hall of the Mage Tower. As one of Ferde's chief Magicians, Evelina walked in front, followed from behind by Elován and Milose.

“My lord, is there something wrong?” asked Evelina. The two High Elves behind her were also looking curiously at Link.

Link was about to explain what was going on when suddenly he stopped. He then raised a finger and whispered, “Try to feel the Mana flow in the Mage Tower.”

A new tremor had appeared, this time even more intense than before. There was even a sudden fluctuation in the brightness of the overhead magic lights.

Of course, ordinary people might not be able to perceive these changes. But to a Legendary master, these changes were as clear as day.

As soon as he sensed the Mana current growing even more turbulent, Link immediately tried to bring it back under control until it returned to normal. He then looked at everyone and asked, “Did you all feel that?”

The three High Elves nodded.

Evelina said, “This disturbance is most unusual. Even my Elemental Pool was affected by it. I was just about to report this to you. It felt like someone was barraging the city with Level-10 offensive Legendary spells from the ocean a hundred miles away.”

Link nodded. He looked at Elovan and Milose. “What do you two think?”

Elovan said, “I am of the same opinion as Evelina, but judging from the direction of the disturbance, it seems to be coming from the Isle of Dawn.”

Milose was about to say something but then closed his mouth.

“If you have something to say, say it now. This is a mission of sorts. If you’re able to provide valuable information, you will be rewarded with Magic Points,” said Link.

Milose jerked up and then said, “When the Dark Serpent appeared, I was stationed at one of the Isle of Dawn’s watchtower. From the watchtower, we would watch for any energy disturbances in the Firuman realm through a magic net powered by Nature power. The commotion we felt just then was a lot more intense than the one caused by the Dark Serpent itself.”

“Oh?” Link was surprised to hear this. He then asked, “I also sensed that the energy disturbance this time was coming from the north-east, which is where the Isle of Dawn

is. What do you think?”

“Yes, that’s what I was thinking as well.”

“What about you two? Anything you’d like to add?” Link looked at Elován and Evelina.

Elován thought for a moment, then said, “If what Milose said is true, then it is possible that the Isle of Dawn may be working to activate the World Tree’s power as we speak. Such a thing has only happened twice in the past. The first time was 2300 years ago when the Calamity Dragon King Ira invaded the Isle of Dawn. The High Elves had activated the World Tree to trap the Dragon King within an impenetrable Eternal Time Ward. The second time was 800 years ago, when the God of Slaughter, Dalas was attempting to descend on the realm of Firuman. Though he had been thwarted, he had left a huge crack in the realm. The High Elves had used the World Tree’s roots to seal up the crack. The two times the High Elves used the World Tree’s power had left permanent changes on the entire realm. Even now, the Tree’s effects can still be felt. If the Isle of Dawn is activating the World Tree right now, there is a high chance the High Elves’ target this time is Ferde. My lord, we need to prepare ourselves immediately!”

Link was stunned. He had known for a long time that the World Tree possessed incredible power. But now he learned that it was even capable of fending off foes like the Dragon King, Ira and the God of Slaughter, Dalas, both of whom were terrible presences closer to divinity than anything else in the realm.

Link now had a clearer picture of its power:

The World Tree was a force that stood on the pinnacle of the Firuman realm. Outside the Isle of Dawn, Link might be untouchable, but if he dared come within shooting distance of the island, his body and soul would probably be disintegrated on the spot.

Link then asked, “Is there no way at all to deal with the World Tree?”

“There may be a way,” replied Milose.

Raising a brow, Link asked, “Let’s hear it.”

“The World Tree’s power may be the pinnacle of the realm, but it is also way too powerful for any mortal being to handle. Not even the High Elf queen could wield its power alone. For 1000 years, the World Tree has operated according to an innate set of rules. One of those rules was that it should never be used to attack those who



possess Nature Power. Even if those with Nature Power were to attack the World Tree, it would only seek to defend itself and drive its aggressors out of the Isle of Dawn.”

Elovan added, “The rules governing the World Tree are not that complicated. Besides not attacking its own people, the World Tree’s rules also include protecting those with royal High Elf blood. Under its shade, royal High Elf members will not be injured by attacks from the outside and are also prevented from hurting each other.”

Hearing this, Link looked at Evelina. She was a High Elf princess. Though her blood was impure, royal blood still ran through her veins.

Evelina shrugged. “Basically what they said, but I would just like to correct what Elovan said. In truth, the royal family members can attack each other. To do so, the High Elf elders must first deliberate with each other before activating a judgment magic seal. After being granted permission by the World Tree, the elders would then remove all Nature Power from an offending member of the Royal High Elf family in order to pass judgment on him or her.”

Link fell silent, ruminating on something. Half a minute later, he said, “Evelina, I would like to study your bloodline power.”

High Elf customs had always been an enigma to him. He decided to go to the Isle of Dawn one of these days to probe even further into this.

“It would be an honor...” Evelina gave Link a bow, but before she could finish her sentence, she was interrupted by a sudden explosion.

The explosion had come from the North. The impact was so great that they could feel a violent tremor running through the Mage Tower.

Startled, all four of them quickly rushed to the window. They saw a white ball of light with a diameter of more than 20 feet rising up from behind a hill.

Evelina shouted in surprise, “My god, it’s a Level-9 Blazing Sun spell!”

The Blazing Sun spell was one of the most potent fire spells in the mortal realm. If the ball of light exploded in the middle of the city, everything in it would be wiped off the map.

This should not have happened. Lily the tower spirit had been keeping watch for any

energy anomalies in the city all this time.

If the spell were to go off in the outskirts of the city, the explosion would engulf everything in a sea of eternal fire, and there would be more than 1000 casualties as a result!

# Chapter 577

## Rescuing the Naga (4)

The might of Level-9 destructive fire spell Blazing Sun was practically at the peak of mortal power. After it exploded, the huge blast spread in all directions, sweeping through the entire Ferde within seconds.

Under the light of the giant surging fireball, the entire Scorched City sank into terror and chaos. Looking down from the Mage Tower, one could see people scurrying around on the street for somewhere to hide. Link had great hearing; he could hear shocked cries from all over.

Even the Mage Tower fell into an uproar.

Many apprentices wandered like aimless flies. Faced with such a change, most people were dazed; they had no clue what to do.

In Link's room, Evelina, Elován, and Milose were all floored. They gaped at the burning white ball in the distance. The three High Elves couldn't imagine that someone dared to use such a spell in Ferde. Did that person not fear for their life? Or did they not fear Ferde's power?

Their minds were in a mess. However, some were still calm.

Link recovered immediately and ordered, "Lily, upgrade battle mode!"

In the battle mode, Lily would be given the biggest authority. She would be in charge of a range of ten miles around the Mage Tower. Within this, she would kill anything that didn't follow the safety rules!

"Mode changed. Currently in battle mode!" Lily's voice used to be gentle, but as the mode changed, it became cold and murderous.

Whizz, whizz, whizz. The defense matrixes in the Mage Tower cluster were all activated. Under the various dazzling flashes, a 20-centimeter-thick golden crystal shield appeared on the walls. This was a Level-11 defense spell—Crystal

Enchantment. It was very sturdy.

Not only that, a thick magic door appeared before each critical entrance in the Mage Towers. The critical zones were locked and impassable.

While following these commands, Lily also sent commands to the Magicians of different levels in the Mage Tower.

“All apprentices must stay in place and keep quiet.” This was what the apprentices received.

“All official Magicians, converge on the second-floor hall... All official Magicians, converge in the second-floor hall and await further instruction.”

This was the alert for all Magicians under Level-6. The passageways were locked, but they could go through with their badges.

The message for Magicians above Level-6 was different. They were the elites of Ferde and only numbered to around 30. They were told to converge on the third floor. When they all reached the location, they saw that Magician Eliard was already waiting for them.

Eliard quickly assigned tasks. He sent a Magician to watch over each node in the Mage Tower to ensure that the tower would operate normally.

When each Magician who received their task hurried to their location, two magic puppets would follow closely for protection. These magic puppets weren't only servants. When needed, they could be powerful Warriors equal to Nana, the first magic puppet.

On the other hand, Link gave orders to Evelina and the others. First, he looked at Evelina and said quickly and powerfully, “Eve, protect the Mage Tower's core!”

“Uh... yes!” Evelina finally recovered.

Link turned. “Elovan, Milose, your authorities have upgraded. Go immediately to the secret room underground. Ensure that the ‘weapon’ transformation won't be disturbed!”

The weapon was Katyusha. Link had a feeling that this crisis was for her.

“Understood!” The two High Elves turned and ran towards the underground room.

After these orders, white light flashed around him. He disappeared, and an instant later, he reached the balcony. Celine was watching Bryant there.

Even with this great and sudden change, Celine still wasn't disturbed. After all the wars, her mind was much stronger than those High Elves. No matter what happened, she wouldn't even blink if Link was still alright.

Right now, she still had her eyes on Bryant.

“How are things?” Link asked.

Celine's eyes didn't leave from the lens. Knowing that Link was here, she said, “Bryant is still in the yard. He looks normal.”

“Oh?” Link activated a Spatial Lens and saw Bryant through the distorted light. The elf was reading in his room, unaffected by the chaos outside. His movements didn't even change. He was just reading page after page.

“I've been watching for a few days, and he's always like this,” Celine says. “It looks like he's patiently waiting for you to finish designing.”

Link watched closely but didn't find anything strange. He couldn't keep watching. As the lord, he had to hurry to the suburbs and take care of the explosion.

Thinking, he said, “Keep watching him and call Lily if anything is wrong, then fire. Don't give him time to react! I'll teleport back immediately.”

“Understood.” Celine nodded. She rubbed her reddening eyes and continued watching Bryant.

Seeing her like this, Link cast an Essence Vitality on her. Celine felt the power surging through her and smiled at Link. Link smiled as well. Then he activated the transmission spell again, hurrying to the suburbs.

When he got there, it was empty. Link could sense Jacker bringing many soldiers here. They were fast, but they couldn't compare to Link's spell.

The explosion site was around five miles from the Mage Tower. It was at the border of

Scorched City, and the buildings were sparse. The Level-9 spell only destroyed around 30 houses. Link circled in the air and got an estimate of the casualties. Around 100 had died while close to 1000 were hurt. This was much better than he'd expected.

At this time, Jacker arrived with 1000 Sunlight Warriors above Level-6. Link descended.

"Lord!" Jacker ran over and saluted. The others followed suit.

Link nodded and ordered, "The attacker has escaped, and this place is safe. Go help the affected citizens... Oh, leave a dozen to help me. I will investigate the explosion site."

"Yes, Lord." Jacker immediately turned. "You, you, you, you guys go help the lord!"

The chosen Warriors were all excited. Puffing up their chests, they walked forward in unison, yelling, "Understood, general!"

Link waved. "Come with me."

"Yes, Lord!" they replied together. They were so excited that they were as tense as robots.

The group hurried to the heart of the explosion.

...

While everyone in the upper level of Ferde was in a flurry, Bryant was still reading in his room. He looked calm. Fifteen minutes had passed since the explosion. During this, he seemed to have flipped through 20 pages. He actually hadn't comprehended any words.

Taking advantage of the chaos, Merna had successfully infiltrated the Mage Tower. However, she seemed to have disappeared, having not said anything after all this time.

She didn't even send their signal, let alone show up.

Bryant looked out the window. The Mage Tower loomed before him. At this time, it glowed with dazzling magic light. Less than three seconds after the explosion, the entire Mage Tower completely closed off. The magic seal was very powerful—at least

Level-11.

His reaction is too fast. Merna can't break through the magic seal with her power. I hope she'll be okay.

Bryant was very anxious. Honestly, if Merna wasn't Nozama's daughter, he would have left immediately after seeing the Mage Tower's transformation. This place was too dangerous. Trying to rescue someone from the tower was no different from suicide.

I'll wait for four more hours. If there still isn't any news, I'll find an excuse to leave Ferde! Bryant decided inside.

As for the rescue plan, Bryant didn't think about it. The Isle of Dawn and Army of Destruction were only temporary allies. There was no need to die for each other.

At that time, Merna was going crazy inside the tower.

With the detection earring from the God of Destruction, she had a vague sense of where Katyusha was. Thus, she went straight to the underground room after entering the Mage Tower.

She was very fast. Within two seconds, she was on the first underground level. She ran into trouble when she tried entering the second level.

Just as she was about to get through the entrance, a magic door appeared in the previously open passageway. Surprised, she retreated immediately but found that it was blocked behind her.

Even more shocking was that the magic door was very powerful. It was impossibly sturdy, and the runes on it were past her understanding. She couldn't even break through forcefully, let alone undo it.

Thus, she was stuck in the first underground level. She couldn't walk as wished either because there were detection runes all around. Many were hidden in unnoticeable corners too. She would be exposed easily if she wasn't careful.

This damn Mage Tower is scarier than the Abyss!

The only thing she could do was hide in a corner and wait patiently until the other lowered their alert. Then she would find a chance.

However, Merna didn't notice that there was a painting of King Charlie on the wall behind her. The king's eyes were so detailed that they seemed to be real.

And now, they were staring at Merna's back.



# Chapter 578

## Rescuing the Naga (5)

Mage Tower, Mana core

“Where’s Link?” Eliard had been looking for Link, but found Evelina instead.

“He went to check on the explosion and left me in charge of the Mana core. Is something wrong?” Evelina did not turn around to face him. She had to maintain control of the Mana core.

“Nothing really, just that I found something quite interesting on the first basement,” said Eliard. He then raised his voice and gave the tower spirit Lily a command. “Lily, open up mirrors 13 and 17.”

“Command received,” replied Lily. There was a whirl. Then, a two-sided magic mirror materialized near the Mana core out of thin air.

The first basement was where the Mage Tower’s storage rooms were. All kinds of magic materials, food and wine were kept inside them. There was enough for a thousand people to survive for at least ten years.

The magic mirror displayed a corner of one of the food storages. The left side showed a pile of potatoes, while the mirror’s right side showed a row of oaken wine barrels.

Evelina looked at the two displays. Finally, she gave up, shaking her head. “I don’t see anything.”

Eliard chuckled. “You can’t see it here. It’s hiding in a blind spot between the two detection runes.”

Evelina asked curiously, “Then how did you find it? The tower’s Mana network didn’t pick up any unusual activity.”

“If I’m going to tell you how I found it, I’ll need to start from the time the Mage Tower was still in construction. Back then, I had overseen its entire construction process. I

was even there when they began laying out its foundation. In the first basement, there, in mirror 17, do you see a mural on the wall?”

Evelina looked at where Eliard was pointing and nodded. “Yes, though it looked a bit crude. The scribbles of a High Elf child in the Isle of Dawn would have looked much better there.”

Eliard looked offended. “It was me. I painted it in my free time. When I was still practicing the Stoneshaping spell, Master Grenci told me that painting murals was the best way to master the spell. That’s not the point. The point is, I spent a lot of time on the eyes. Do you notice that the eyes of King Charles on the mural here seem to be gleaming?”

“It certainly does. Does this have anything to do with what you’re saying? There doesn’t seem to be any magic at work in those eyes,” said Evelina, still confused.

Eliard shrugged, then said disparagingly, “Evelina, I’ve been telling you that your thinking has always been rigid. I’ve already given you a hint, and still, you can’t see the secret behind the mural. If Link was here, he would have immediately known what it is.”

Evelina kept her calm. She had heard such talk from Eliard far too many times during their discussions. If she had let his words get to her, she would have been driven mad by him a long time ago.

However, no matter how closely she looked at the magic mirror, she still could not see what she was supposed to be seeing. “Where is this secret you’re talking about?”

Eliard said to Lily, “Magnify mirror 17, focus on the mural’s eyes.”

“Magnifying…”

The image was slowly expanding. Throughout the magnification process, the mirror’s image maintained its definition. When the image was magnified tenfold, Eliard shouted, “That’s enough. Evie, look at the reflection in the figure’s eyes. There, do you see it? It’s a white-furred mouse.”

Evelina had already seen it when the image was only magnified fivefold. Deep down, she admired Eliard’s observational powers, but she would never be caught dead admitting that to him out in the open. She glanced at him and said with a huff, “Alright,

I admit you have quite a keen pair of eyes.”

“I... won’t argue with you over that,” said Eliard as he pointed at the reflection. “The mouse is a Magical Beast. It’s extremely intelligent, and it’s not as weak as it looks. This little fellow managed to sneak into the Mage Tower when the place was in chaos for at least two seconds. It had slipped into the first basement without even tripping the detection seals in its path. Despite its size, its speed and observational powers are extraordinary. I estimate that its power may be above Level-8.”

Evelina had listened to Eliard’s evaluation of the creature with a solemn face. When he gave his estimation of the creature’s power, she said incredulously, “Isn’t it a bit of a stretch to assume that such a tiny creature has Level-8 power?”

“Not at all. Have you read Magician Opello’s magic book called Big and Small? asked Eliard.

“No, what’s it about?” Evelina felt a bit awkward. Half the time, she did not understand a word of what Eliard said, and this was not the first time. Was she getting old?

“You should give it a read. Opello’s a Level-5 Magician in the Mage Tower. He’s quite imaginative. The book’s filled with all of his wondrous ideas and imaginings. In the book, Opello presented his theory that an object’s size does not have any substantial value. For instance, through spatial manipulation, a person can be shrunk into the size of a peanut, without affecting his strength in the slightest.”

“Alright, I believe you. I’ll read it when I’m free. Right now, what should we do?”

Evelina was aware that new books were being added into the Mage Tower’s library collection every day. Before, she did not really think too much about it. She had always assumed that these low-level Magicians had nothing to offer her since she had surpassed them all in terms of knowledge and power. But now, she saw them in a new light.

Eliard had already thought of a plan. “This little fellow hasn’t realized that it’s been found out. It hasn’t moved from its hiding spot all this time, probably waiting for us to lower our defenses. It must be heading towards the laboratory where the Naga Katyusha is being held prisoner. If that’s the case, we could lay a trap ahead of it through a portal. When the Mage Tower’s defenses are sufficiently lowered, and the magic door is opened, it will walk right into our trap...”

Before he could finish, a white light filled the great hall. Link's figure appeared when it subsided.

Eliard clapped his hands and said, "Link, you're back just in time. I've discovered an intruder in the Mage Tower."

Link had just finished inspecting the site of the explosion. The culprit was cautious. He did not gain much information from the scene. At the moment, he only knew that the culprit had used a delayed-action magical spell. It had been triggered using a Level-9 runestone. He had spent half a day searching for other clues, but even with the aid of a Focus spell, he did not find anything else.

All evidence clearly pointed to the fact that the culprit's method was extremely advanced and was not at all an inferior to Link.

When he heard what Eliard said, his eyes lit up. "Intruder? What intruder?"

Eliard began explaining his discovery to Link in great detail. When he got to the part about the eyes on the mural, Link immediately said, "You were able to spot it from its reflection in the mural's eyes? Not bad, not bad at all."

Eliard seemed pleased with himself, then gestured at Evelina. "See, I told you Link would understand immediately. You still have a long way to go."

Evelina's mouth contorted with irritation.

When Link listened to Eliard's plan, he pondered it for a while before saying, "I see nothing wrong with your plan. It's just a bit too risky. You may even alert the Magical Beast's owner. There's still a lot of room for improvement."

"Hmm, let me think it through again." Eliard frowned, deep in thought.

Link smiled. He already had a plan ready. "How about this? Let's not try to catch the Magical Beast. Instead, we'll pull a trick on it."

"A trick?" Eliard was silent for a few seconds. He then immediately said, "Are you suggesting that we let it find its target and then contact its owner in order to bring him or her out of hiding?"

Link nodded. "It's still too risky to let the beast reach its intended target. We may be

in trouble if its owner has some powerful technique up their sleeve. As a safety precaution, we'll set up an illusion and fool the Magical Beast into thinking that it's found its mark. At that point, it will make contact with its owner. We'll be able to trace the connection back to the real culprit hiding in the shadows!"

Eliard's eyes were glowing as he listened. He nodded furiously. "It's definitely a better plan than mine. What are we waiting for? Let's get started! This guy sure has some nerve, causing so much trouble in Ferde! He's gonna pay for his actions, big time!"

# Chapter 579

## Rescuing the Naga (6)

Merna stayed in the basement of the Mage Tower for around two hours. Then she heard a soft click. The magic door's aura disappeared.

They lowered the security! Merna was overjoyed. However, she didn't hurriedly act. Instead, she remained in the corner. It was most likely a trap.

This didn't mean that they'd found her. Instead, they didn't find her yet but wanted to use this to lower her guard and make her come out of her hiding place. Thus, she kept waiting quietly. After another hour or so, she finally snuck out of the spot.

There were detection runes hidden all over the storeroom, but Merna's body shape was her advantage. She also had great vision. Even the most hidden runes were visible to her.

Carefully, she walked in the blind spots of all the runes. Three minutes later, she successfully got to the second basement floor.

Here, her detection earring vibrated faintly. This meant she was getting closer to her target. It was less than 60 feet away!

Merna was overjoyed. Only a bit more. If I find the right location, I can save her!

Now, another thought appeared in her mind. It's been more than three hours. We agreed that I'd contact that old guy once I got in. Should I send a signal?

This idea circled in her mind before she scrapped it. The Mage Tower is too scary. There might be other detective methods. I shouldn't risk it at the most critical part. Let's figure out the situation first.

Composing herself, Merna continued feeling her way forward. A while later, she was at the entrance to the third floor. Her detection earring was vibrating more strongly now. Katyusha was right before her!

Merna repressed her excitement and continued. After a while, she saw a magic door.

This magic door was different from the ones that had appeared because of the security alert. This one was semi-transparent with many magic runes overlapping on the surface. Looking through the tiny cracks between the runes, Merna saw Katyusha.

The Naga was curled up inside a circular pool, bathed in red light. This red light came from the Spear of Victory in her hand instead of from herself. There were many faint purple runes outside the light. They constantly corroded at the red light, trying to get inside Katyusha's body.

Even further away stood three Magicians. They guided the Secret runes forward. Under their effort, the Spear of Victory's red glow was already very dim and at the brink of defeat.

Merna was shocked. It's Secret magic. Ferde wants to control Katyusha!

She wasn't a Magician, but she was still familiar with each type of magic so she wouldn't get fooled by others. For example, she didn't make a rushed decision after this initial conclusion of the current situation. She started distinguishing the runes carefully. After five or six minutes, she finally concluded that it was true.

Katyusha can't hold on for longer. I must alert that old guy!

Merna left the magic door and retreated to her safe corner in the second floor. She took out a small silver ring and started adding power in.

Her father had given this to her. It wasn't that powerful, but it had a unique technology for sending messages. It was very secretive.

Merna sent out everything she'd seen in detail. Because it had to be secretive, she sent the messages slowly. What he didn't know was that five pairs of eyes in the Mage Tower were watching her every move—Link, Eliard, and the three Legendary High Elf Magicians.

"It's contacting its owner, but the method is very secretive. I can't trace it. Who could it be?" Eliard whispered.

Link already had a candidate—Bryant. However, he couldn't be completely sure, so he didn't speak.

“The method is quite powerful,” Evelina said. “I can’t detect the signal at all.”

“Judging by its make, I think it’s from the Abyss.” Elován stared at the ring in the fuzzy mouse’s front paw.

At that time, Celine’s voice sounded in Link’s mind. “Bryant moved. He’s coming towards the Mage Tower!”

Alerted, Link replied, “Don’t hesitate. Shoot!”

By now, the entire Scorched Ridge was still in high alert, and Bryant was walking towards the Mage Tower which was out of ordinary. Even if he wasn’t responsible, his actions now were going to get him killed!

Simultaneously, Link started directly controlling the Mage Tower’s Divine Punishment protocol. He set the target, adjusted the Mana, and gathered power in one smooth action, activating the Level-19 Divine Punishment laser.

Boom! A soft sound came from the balcony. Celine had fired at Bryant. Link saw fire streak past the corner of his eye.

Almost at the same time, the Divine Punishment laser appeared too. Whoosh! An almost invisible beam of light shot out from the tower towards Bryant.

If Bryant wasn’t prepared, he would definitely be dead. Even if he’d escaped from this, he would die under Celine and the Mage Tower’s later attacks. But in that moment, Link suddenly felt something strange, along with an indescribable feeling of danger.

His focus sharpened to an unprecedented level; his thoughts whirred. In his eyes, time slowed down and almost stopped.

At the same time, Link felt the world change oddly. The light outside the window and room dimmed and dimmed.

What’s going on? Dark magic is swallowing light... No, it’s not dark magic. It’s time magic. Even the speed of light is slowing, freezing. Less light is reaching my eyes, so the world is darkening!

Spatial magic could restrain practically all existences in the world, but other than singularities, it couldn’t affect light. So even though Link used spatial magic to seal



Katyusha, she didn't turn into a shadow. One could still see her clearly because light could still travel freely within the frozen space.

But not even light could escape from the effects of time on this realm. When someone froze time, everything there would look dark.

Light was dimming quickly, but Link's thoughts were still burning brightly. So that divine rune freezes time. What a great method!

As that thought flashed past, he focused on his neck. There, a pocket watch-like thing hung from a Mithril chain. A runestone was hidden inside the watch. It was the Order Compass that he had made to defend against time attacks.

Realm Essence followed his thoughts and entered the Order Compass. That instant, Link's entire body, and soul shook. Then a gold thread appeared from his chest.

The thread organized itself, instantly forming the apparition of a gold pocket watch. There was a clock with one hand. The needle measured milliseconds. Each circle was one millisecond.

Before, the hand had spun extremely quickly. Now, Link saw it tick by bit by bit. It was so slow but was still getting slower.

Time is freezing! Link's heart shook. The world in his eyes was already very dark. In this darkness, he saw Eliard, Evelina, Elovan, and Milose.

These four were all Legendary or close to it. Faced with this kind of change, all of them had reacted. Shock was written in their faces, and their eyes were all trained on Link.

Under their gazes, Link's thoughts focused on the millisecond hand on the Order Compass. It was still slowing down. Link had to speed it up.

He forced Realm Essence onto it. Move!

Click. The hand quickened only a tiny bit, but Link had used all his might. One-fifth of his Realm Essence had been burned.

It wasn't enough. The divine rune's power was too strong. His power wasn't enough alone.

He gazed at the four Magicians. They were looking at him too. For people at their level, they could completely figure out each other's thoughts by applying their gazes to the current situation.

The four Magicians couldn't move, but power extended from their bodies. They snaked to the needle on the Order Compass and applied force to move it.

Link did the same.

At this moment, the five strongest Magicians in Ferde put their powers together.

Click, click, click. The needle moved much faster. The ticks were like cracking ice in everyone's ears.

The five continued to use their power. Click, click, click. Time had stopped slowing and was regaining speed, recovering back to normal. The room brightened again.

This didn't mean that the Order Compass was more powerful than the divine rune. Instead, it was that the five Legendary Magicians working together surpassed the level of the small divine rune.

If one's power wasn't enough, they would fail. This was the basic law.

No matter how many tricks one had, if they didn't have enough power, it would be useless. They still wouldn't be able to change the world.

The divine power inside the rune still wasn't enough. Paired with the repulsion that Firuman had against divine objects, Link's group won this battle.

What had been frozen went back to normal. What followed was the chilling alarm ringing throughout the Mage Tower.

"Alert! Alert! Invader discovered! Invader discovered!"

Bryant was inside the Mage Tower!

# Chapter 580

## A Wretched End to a Glorious Life

When the flow of time returned to normal, Bryant had reached the first basement.

There was a tearing sound. It came from the divine time seal in his hand. In an instant, it crumbled into a pile of ash which scattered into the air.

He was taken aback. "How is this possible? Only a tenth of a second has passed!"

His targets had resisted the seal's effect. This was to be expected. But he had hoped that the seal's effect would last for at least eight-tenths of a second. Though its duration was not as long as he would have liked, Merna had already planned out his route for him. Eight-tenths of a second was enough time for Bryant to enter the place, rescue Katyusha and immediately teleport out of there.

Only one-tenth of a second had passed. As soon as the thought flashed across his mind, he felt an intense magic reverberation surrounding him. A magical barrier was taking shape around him.

He turned around and saw that magical runes had appeared on the walls around him. Level-11 magical barriers surfaced one after another, completely trapping him within and preventing him from destroying the Mage Tower.

A chill ran down Bryant's spine as he saw the barriers forming one after another.

He had thought about destroying the Mage Tower as his last resort. But there was no chance of that happening with this thing around him. The magical barriers were all Level-11. Though he could still bring the whole place down, he would need time, which was not what he had plenty of at the moment. As soon as Link reached him, he would be done for.

He knew that right now, his only option was to flee. He could not afford to waste another second, or else he would definitely be killed in this Mage Tower. He was the one who had cast the Blazing Sun spell in the outskirts of Scorched City. There was no way he would be able to hide his tracks from his enemy. Knowing Link, if given the

chance, he would certainly execute Bryant on the spot.

He needed to escape from this place immediately!

Turning around, he saw a tiny shape running out of the entrance to the Mage Tower's second basement. A shrill voice cried out, "Wait for me, take me with you!"

It was Merna. She had realized something had gone wrong. If they did not flee now, they would both be dead. She did not really know the Naga anyway, and she had no intention of throwing away her life for a complete stranger. Now that their plan had failed, Merna's first reaction was to flee as well.

She also knew that she would not be able to get out of there alive on her own. She was up against four Legendary masters of Ferde and the Mage Tower itself. She needed Bryant's help in this.

Bryant glanced at her, then at the enclosing magical barriers around him. Without any hesitation, he turned around and began to run.

It was every High Elf for himself. It would be a miracle if he managed to escape from the Mage Tower with his body still intact. He could not care any less about a puny little demon like Merna.

His body dissolved into a faint green light. Like lightning, he was able to pass through a crack under the magic door that was materializing in its door frame and reach the great hall on the first floor.

Layers of magical barriers were taking shape in the great hall. They were all Level-11. The scale of magic being used here was huge. At that moment, two layers of barriers had already materialized in the hall.

There were even more magical barriers forming near the Mage Tower's great door. His opponent apparently had no intention of letting him leave the place. But thanks to his lightning reaction time, Bryant had chosen to retreat as soon as things went awry. At that moment, there were only two layers of magical barriers around the Mage Tower's great door. He could still break through them.

In his desperation, Nature Power boiled in his body as he raced through the air with lightning speed. He had also channeled his magical energy within his wand. A silver leaf shot out, clearing a path in front of him.

The silver leaf then broke through the barriers. It immediately lost all its momentum and returned to Bryant's wand. Taking the opportunity, Bryant burst through the great door.

Once outside the tower, Bryant's magical energy again rushed into his wand. There were three leaves on it. At that moment, a blinding light shone out from them in unison. One of the leaves expanded into an emerald shield. The other two danced around him, ready to intercept any incoming attack from any direction.

When he finished casting his spell, there was a sudden palpitation Bryant's heart. The Mage Tower has locked onto me. It's even able to affect time. Damn it, its attack is above Level-15. There's no way I can block it!

He turned around swiftly and began doing an erratic dance in the air, trying to dodge the incoming attack.

However, just as he began moving, a streak of dazzling light shot down from the sky. It hit squarely against the emerald shield that was spinning around him.

The emerald shield's magic was Level-12. Bryant was unharmed, but he could feel the impact of the attack.

While he was still shaken by the impact, the Mage Tower launched a second attack. It was the same unblockable laser as before. He was still slightly dazed. There was no way he could dodge the attack in time.

Is this the end? No, I still have a chance! Substitution spell!

In an instant, one of the leaves flew forward with blinding speed. In mid-air, the air dissolved into a faint green mist, out of which appeared Bryant. The green mist he had left behind solidified into another leaf with the same shape as the one before.

The newly formed leaf was shot down by the laser. The World Tree's leaf was Level-17, but it was disintegrated immediately by the Mage Tower's attack.

Bryant did not have time to look at what happened behind him. He had just cast a Substitution spell to propel himself 1000 feet forward. He was now outside Scorched ridge, flying in the air above the outer city.

Just as he was about to let out a sigh, there was the same palpitation in his heart again.

The Mage Tower was still targeting him. It seemed as if there was no end to its attacks.

Thank god I've put some distance behind me. I can still dodge its attack. Bryant was about to dodge to the side. But before he could even move, another laser shot down from the sky. This time, the attack blocked off his trajectory.

Bryant was stunned for a moment. Under such circumstances, his reaction speed was slowed down. Before he could even react, there was a tearing sound in the air. A transparent laser had pierced through his green light form.

Before the laser's energy exploded within Bryant's body, a searing pain bore through his head. Bryant immediately reacted to this by activating his wand's special effect.

Death Substitute!

Death Substitute

The World Tree's divine spell

Description: After activation, the World Tree wand will absorb all the damage its user has sustained and die in his or her place.

(Note: Try not to get yourself killed, as you can only use this once.)

When Bryant activated the spell, the World Tree wand in his hand began to splinter. Before long, it was completely shattered into pieces.

The wand had been by Bryant's side for 300 hundred years, and now, it was shattered beyond repair. Still, there was no time for him to mourn as the danger had not yet passed.

Without the World Tree wand's protection, he had lost his ability to disturb the flow of time. On the other hand, Link's Mage Tower seemed capable of freezing time itself, and Celine never missed her mark with that magic rifle of hers. At that moment, Bryant had no chance of dodging either one of their attacks. He would be dead for sure when the next wave of attacks reached him.

Bryant felt a growing dread in him as he realized that he was doomed. He returned to his physical form and amplified his voice magically as he shouted at the Mage Tower behind him, "I surrender! I surrender! Don't kill me!"

He was floating motionlessly in the air.

Surrendering himself was his only way out of this alive.

Celine was about to take her next shot at him but soon stopped as she saw Bryant giving himself up. At the magic core area, Link was also stunned. The Mage Tower's offensive magic formation was already charged up and poised to fire another shot at Bryant.

Around Link, Eliard and the three High Elves looked at Bryant. None of them said a word as they waited for Link to make a decision.

Fearing that Link had no intention of sparing his life, Bryant shouted again, "I know all of the High Elves' secrets, including the World Tree. I knew the High Elf Queen herself, as well as all of the core members of the Royal High Elf family. If you promise to spare me, I'll tell you everything you need to know. I'll even defect to Ferde and devote all my talents to you."

Bryant had said all this in earnest. His voice amplification spell was one-directional. Only Link and the rest of the core Magicians heard what he said, while everyone else in the city could not hear him. This way, he would not spark outrage among the people of Ferde, and Link would not have Bryant answer for the resulting chaos in the city.

One's crime usually tended to fade away from people's memory if hidden away from scrutiny for a long enough time.

Hearing this, Evelina said, "My lord, we should subdue him immediately. He's more useful to us alive."

Eliard knew that the Blazing Sun spell that exploded in the south of the city was Bryant's doing. Seeing him surrendering himself in order to live a little bit longer, Eliard's contempt for Bryant intensified even more. But from a logical point of view, it was indeed better to keep Bryant alive. Eliard did not say a word, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with Evelina.

Though the other two High Elves were Legendary masters, they were not exactly core Magicians of the Mage Tower. As such, they were not in any position to voice their opinions. Milose's mouth twitched as if he wanted to say something, but Elovan pulled his arm back, stopping Milose immediately.

Link thought about this for half a minute. Then, he said to Celine, “Shoot him down from the sky. Nullify his powers, but don’t kill him.”

Though Bryant’s life was spared, his actions could not be pardoned so easily. The High Elf’s extensive knowledge of the Isle of Dawn was the only thing Link needed from him. His powers, on the other hand, was of no use to Ferde. It might even bring more harm than good, and so there was no need for him to keep them. He might even decide to turn on Ferde again in the future.

Celine knew what Link had in mind. Without any hesitation, she fired her rifle.

Bang! A streak of light raced out across the sky and tore through Bryant’s legs.

There was another bang. Another streak of light took out one of Bryant’s arms. Bryant could not keep himself afloat in the air any longer after taking those two hits. Like a bird whose wings had been injured, he began to fall from the sky

A third streak of light arched across the sky and hit Bryant’s other arm, slowing his descent through the air.

A moment later, there was a dull thud. Bryant had landed on the road, breaking god knew how many bones in his body. Due to the last bullet that slowed his fall, he managed to survive the impact.

Bryant lay on the ground, pain paralyzing his arms and legs. Due to his indomitable spirit, he was still conscious enough to feel the indescribable pain gripping his body after his fall.

He sighed. Who would have thought this glorious life I have led until now would all come crashing down?



# Chapter 581

## The High Elves Are Crazy!

Oh, ah! My arm! My leg!

Bryant shuddered and was shocked awake from his nightmare. After regaining consciousness, he felt that he was under the covers of a bed. It felt warm and soft. His broken limbs weren't in pain either. They didn't seem to be hurt; he could even move them.

He found this strange. What's going on? Were they all nightmares? And now I'm awake, so none of that had happened?

Opening his eyes, Bryant looked around. He was lying in an open and bright room. The furniture inside looked familiar. At closer inspection, he seemed to be in the courtyard from before.

Sitting up, he looked at his hands. He realized that there were many subtle runes on his skin. Immediately, he recognized that his hands and feet weren't actually his. This was a flesh magic puppet spell.

Oh, seems that everything that had happened was real. Bryant sighed.

"You're awake?" a voice asked.

Bryant looked over. There was a table by the illuminated window. Link, clad in casual clothing, sat there. He closed his book and looked over.

Ferde now was bright and sunny. Golden sunlight shone in from the window like a gold beam inside the room that was dim in comparison. Link was half bathed in sunlight and half covered in shadows. Because of the light, Bryant couldn't see his expression clearly. He just felt like the other was very calm.

"How long did I sleep?" Bryant clutched his head. It felt heavy like there was cotton stuffed inside. His thoughts couldn't flow smoothly.

“Not long, 75 hours.” Link’s voice was light and emotionless.

Bryant suddenly discovered something. All his power had disappeared, not a shred left behind. His body was empty; he was no different from a regular person.

“You sealed my power?” he asked. He wasn’t surprised.

“No, I didn’t,” Link said. But just as Bryant sighed in relief, Link continued, “I just separated it completely from your body... What I truly sealed was your soul.”

Bryant was shocked. He subconsciously clutched his head, trying to think of a spell to cast. But when he tried it, he discovered something even more shocking. “Where are my spells? Why can’t I remember them? What did you do?!”

Only spells under Level-2 were in his memory, and they weren’t much either. Thinking carefully, he only knew five or six harmless spells. Everything else was gone. Like a book soaked in water. His memory was like the words in the book. There were some imprints, but he couldn’t think of anything if he tried.

“No, you can’t do this to me! Magic is my everything. You must return it to me!” Bryant used all his might to sit up in bed, but he discovered that some power had restrained his limbs. All struggle was in vain.

Link didn’t speak or even look at Bryant. He just sat in the chair and read his book, completely focused.

After struggling, Bryant finally realized that right now, he was just an insect to Link. All his struggling, growls, and roars were useless. Link could isolate him from the outside world with a small spell. The world wouldn’t even be able to notice his situation.

Understanding this, Bryant gave up. He leaned against the bed, panting heavily. When he caught his breath, he said, “Alright, what do you plan on doing to me?”

Link closed his book again. “While you were sleeping, we read all your memories, including your cooperation with the Army of Destruction, the Isle of Dawn’s plan, as well as the exact actors, their personalities and characteristics, and even the names of some young talents. Basically, we know everything that you know. Right now, you’re useless to Ferde.”

Bryant's heart went cold. "So you'll kill me?"

"No, you're wrong." Link shook his head. He waved at the door, and two beautiful magic puppets walked in. One was slender and delicate; the other was curvy and full. Both were attractive.

"Your explosion destroyed hundreds of homes. As the lord, I should give you the death penalty. However, we also received a great amount of information from you. As an exchange, you kept your life. Now, you can only live in this courtyard, unable to step outside forever. You can't interact with anyone. If you have any needs, these two magic puppets will do their best to satisfy you... Don't try escaping with the magic puppets either. They're different from typical war puppets. They're only slightly stronger than a regular human..."

"You're holding me captive!" Bryant was furious. No matter what, he was at the Legendary level. Now, he was being imprisoned by a junior for life. He had to be angry.

Link ignored his reaction and continued, "There is no room for you to fight back. As a disabled man, no one will risk things to save you. Enjoy the rest of your life, Bryant."

He didn't care about Bryant's reaction. After speaking, white light flashed around him. When the light faded, he'd already left the courtyard.

Bryant felt the magic restraints on him disappear as well. He lay on the bed without moving like a soulless puppet.

After a long while, his stomach grumbled. The feeling of hunger traveled to his mind. He was hungry.

The curvy puppet immediately said, "Master, I will go prepare your meal." Her voice was smooth and lovely.

After she left, the slender puppet walked over with some clothing from the bedside. "Master, I will help you change," she said softly. Her voice was gentle and unique, very lovely as well.

When the puppet got closer, Bryant smelled a clean fragrance. This reminded him of his first woman. She was a human girl of 19 years old called Lilian. The smell was similar to Lilian's. It was filled with youthfulness but was still so different.

For a moment, Bryant felt like he'd gone back hundreds of years. At that time, he was still a human. He was still a hero worshipped by thousands of humans... Ah, that was all in the past.

He'd always heard that Ferde's puppets were top-tier. Earlier, he was busy with saving the Naga and didn't focus on the magic puppets. Now, he realized that they were also made with flesh magic puppet techniques. This one looked exactly like a real human. Her movements were gentle too. When she helped him change, her pressure was just right. He didn't feel any discomfort.

After changing clothes, he waited a few minutes before the plump servant walked over with food. The delicious smell floated over, tempting him.

"Master, I will help you," the puppet said. After that, Bryant didn't have to move at all. He just had to sit on the chair.

He drank some of the soup made by the puppet. It was very fresh and brought his appetite to life. After finishing all the food, he burped happily and stretched. The plump puppet started clearing the dishes. The slender one began massaging him. Her pressure was just right, and her technique was great. Bryant was close to moaning in pleasure.

His anger slowly extinguished under this enjoyment. Fine, whatever. Without my power, I won't be able to live much longer. I'll just retire here.

Sighing, Bryant gave up.

...

Mage Tower

Link's group was watching Bryant. When he started enjoying himself, Eliard said, "He's no longer a threat to us."

"Who would have thought of this ending?" Evelina scoffed.

Celine only had one word. "Karma!"

Bryant's matter was over now. Next, they had to deal with the High Elves' crazy plan.

“Judging from Bryant’s memories,” Link said, “the confluence between the two realms is unavoidable. What we must do now is accumulate power for the new challenge.”

The High Elves used the World Tree to fuse the realms. They were crazy and should be stopped if it was possible. Unfortunately, the World Tree was too big. Not only was it at Level-19, its scope was unimaginable. Even a Legendary Magician was as insignificant as an ant before it.

Once this plan was activated, it would be like a mortal facing an avalanche. They could only watch as it moved forward and then follow the current. If they tried to stop it, they would be pulverized.

Anyway, judging from Bryant’s memory of the World Tree, Link couldn’t think of any ways to stop the confluence. Even if there was, it would be extremely risky. In that case, he could only prepare for self-defense.

As for how exactly to respond, they had to discuss it.

While Ferde was having a critical meeting, the other forces in Ferde also felt the giant shake.

Dragon Valley, the Golden Plains, the northern Black Forest, the southern Syndicate, and some hermits were all alerted. While they were shocked, they also tried finding the source.

The second day after Ferde started acting, two unexpected guests came to Link. They were familiar—Light Magician Halino and Dark Magician Eugene.

They’d fought and seemed to have gotten back together. Their relationship was really confusing. When they saw Link, Magician Halino’s first words were, “The High Elves have gone crazy. We must stop them!”

# Chapter 582

## The World Tree's Administrator

Link was adjusting his body's Realm Essence power when Halino and Eugene came to him.

With Evelina's own blood as a model and Bryant's aid and knowledge, Link now had a better understanding of Royal High Elf blood.

Of course, he still did not possess the actual thing, but his Realm Essence power was able to mimic certain properties of Royal High Elf blood.

At this stage, Link's Realm Essence power was now able to pass for the real thing. Even Evelina could not tell the difference, though it was in part due to the fact that her blood was impure. However, as a Magician, Link was obsessed with detail. He had personally experienced the power of pure Royal High Elf blood through his clashes with Milda, Ariel, and the High Elf Queen. Whenever he found a flaw in his replication of Royal High Elf blood, it was as if something would gnaw on him until he smoothed it out completely. Link even felt that he would not be able to sleep well for nights if the matter remained unresolved.

Three seconds after Halino saw Link, his expression changed. He then said, "What's wrong with you? When did you become a member of the Royal High Elf family? Have you gone mad?"

Eugene was even more observant. "Lord of Ferde, your power's grown purer. Why, you could even pass yourself off as an actual Royal High Elf! This is amazing!"

Hearing this, Link frowned. "What tipped you off? Did you sense a flaw in it?"

Eugene shook his head. "No, there's no flaw. That's the thing. It's too perfect. There's always a flaw or two in everything, even a Royal High Elf's power. You simply tried too hard."

"I see. It would seem that my powers of imitation aren't quite up to your level yet," said Link with a faint smile. Putting aside the matter of the Royal High Elf blood, he then

said, "I need to know how you intend to disrupt the High Elves' machinations. Do you plan on destroying the World Tree?"

According to Bryant's memories, the World Tree was not a High Elf creation. It had existed since time immemorial. The High Elves had simply settled under its shade.

In order to occupy the area around the World Tree, the High Elves were forced to pay a huge price. They had to adjust their own power and lifestyle in order to adapt to the World Tree's power. For 3000 years, the High Elves had coexisted with the World Tree, gradually forming the symbiotic relationship between the two that existed today.

This relationship was akin to that of a lion and the fleas sucking blood off its body. The World Tree was the lion, and the High Elves were the blood-sucking fleas. But these fleas had been sucking blood off this gigantic lion for a long time. They knew how to steer it in a more favorable direction.

On the other hand, it was simply impossible for other fleas outside the Isle of Dawn to turn this lion around.

At least, Link did not know how to do such a thing.

Halino shook his head. "The World Tree is indestructible. Its power is limitless. Its roots are planted directly into the core of Firuman. Destroying it would mean destroying all of Firuman."

"Then what should we do?" Link was now even more curious.

Before, he had assumed that Halino had no idea just how terrible the World Tree's power was. Judging from his explanation, the Light Magician seemed to know a lot more about it than Link himself. Since he knew something that Link did not, he must have some sort of inkling to stop the High Elves. This was all the more reason for Link to listen to what Halino had to say next.

Link pricked his ears up, listening attentively to Halino now.

Eugene, the Dark Magician, added, "The World Tree is a magical relic passed down from ancient times. In a way, it's like a huge tree-shaped magical puppet, which isn't all that different from the tower spirit Lily that you had developed recently. The World Tree implements a user authority system similar to your Mage Tower's, which also offers supreme administrative authority over the tree itself. As far as we knew, none

of the High Elves were given such an honor. According to legend, this authority was carved on a stone tablet.”

“Supreme administrative authority? On a stone tablet?” Link grew even more curious. There was no mention of this in the game. He had always assumed that the World Tree was simply an ancient tree whose existence was similar to a guardian deity. He never knew that the tree was a magical creation.

If such a stone tablet existed, wouldn't it automatically grant anyone wielding it the power to destroy the whole world? thought Link.

This piece of information had come as a surprise to him. The fate of the world could literally be in anyone's hands. Link would not have minded if the stone tablet was in the hands of someone he could trust to keep the world in one piece. However, it would be a different story if it fell in a demon's hands.

The Light Magician Halino was thinking the same thing. He shot a sideways look at Eugene and said, “Also, according to legend, this tablet was called the Book of Creation. It was torn to shreds by the Storm Lord during a great war in the past. As a result, no one in this world has had complete administrative authority over the World Tree for a long time.”

“The Book of Creation was destroyed?” Link jolted. Halino had mentioned the Storm Lord. Incidentally, Link's Ode of a Full Moon sword had once belonged to the Storm Lord in its previous life. It should know something about this.

Ignorant of the origin of Link's sword, Halino continued, “The original Book of Creation was lost forever, never to resurface in this world. However, its fragments were found. At the moment, there are three known fragments of the Book that still exist in this world. One is in the hands of the High Elves, another one is in the dragon's possession, and the third one is somewhere in the far north. Any one of these fragments would be enough to give you some power over the World Tree. Maybe this will put an end to the High Elves' madness.”

“Sounds hard.” Link was now extremely fascinated by this. Still, he managed to keep his face expressionless. His voice also remained impassive as he spoke.

Seeing Link's expressionless face, Halino assumed that Link was still not aware of the gravity of their situation. He continued, “Lord of Ferde, you must understand, the High



Elves' plan to reunite the two realms will set off a magical disruption across the entire continent. At that moment, ordinary folk may not feel a thing, but without the World Tree's protection, more powerful Magicians will be severely affected by the disruption. If nothing is done to stop this from happening, our powers will go out of control, and we'll all perish!"

Realization came over Link's face. That was the reason why both Eugene and Halino had come to him for his help together. It seemed that Link would not be spared by the effects of this magical disruption as well.

However, he was no longer that young Magician who would be easily swayed by the words of others. He had power and influence of his own. He could decide what to do based on his own judgment.

Though the matter was indeed serious, Link and his companions had already considered the possibility of a magical disruption and devised a proper countermeasure against it.

Noticing that Link's face was still inert, Eugene said, "If you think you can weather this storm safely, then I think you should know about the second effect of the two realms' reunification."

"Tell me," said Link.

"The second most terrifying thing about it is that there is a world crack in the Korora Mountain range. Once the two realms are reunited, the stabilizing runestones around the crack will lose its effect, and the crack will then open up. Not saying that the world will end immediately at that point, but the God of Destruction will definitely take advantage of this opening to slip back into our world and bring about its end!

"This is certainly worrying." Link nodded, but he and the others had also already thought of this problem. According to Bryant's memories, the reunification process would not be immediate. Its early stages would take at least two years. Also, Link had already collected 224 Jogu pieces at the moment. He was close to reaching 300 Jogu pieces, which was the amount he had agreed to compensate Aisenis the Traveling Magician with for his services.

Two years was more than enough time to repair the crack. It was not as serious as Eugene made it out to be.

Though he acknowledged the seriousness of what the two Legendary Magicians had told him, Link decided still to remain impassive to all this. Halino and Eugene looked at each other, visibly even more troubled than before.

How could the lord not be concerned over the dangers a magical disruption and the world crack posed? Could it be that he already had some sort of countermeasure to deal with both threats? Could it be that Link planned to take refuge in the Isle of Dawn by replicating Royal High Elf blood in his veins?

Finally, the Light Magician said, "My lord, are these two things not enough for you to step in and stop the High Elves' madness?"

Link shook his head, "No, you misunderstand me. I don't really think that the situation is as bad as you claimed. Maybe I'm just being optimistic, but I think the two of you may be exaggerating things a bit. I'll need to look into this personally if I'm going to decide on anything."

"Alright then." Halino did not know what else to say. Link spoke the truth. Both of them might have gotten carried away when they came to him with their problems. This young man was different from them. He held power over a huge territory. He had a terrifyingly powerful Mage Tower and countless fearsome subordinates under him. Basically, Link was more powerful and wiser than the two of them. It would not be an easy task to persuade him to see their way.

Deep down, Halino was disappointed. The lord of Ferde was someone he had wanted as an ally. It was a shame that things did not go his way. He sighed and said, "But I'm sure that you'll arrive at the same conclusion as us after seeing things for yourself."

"You're wasting your breath, Halino," said Eugene the Dark Magician cynically.

Link was not offended by Eugene's words. He smiled and said, "The two of you have come a long way just to see me. There's no need to get all upset, just because we don't see things the same way. Come, it's already lunchtime. Why don't we have lunch together?"

Halino shook his head. "No thanks, we need to find other potential allies. We'll be paying Dragon Valley a visit, and then maybe the Mountain Sage later."

"Alright, enough talk, Halino. Let's go, we don't have much time!" said Eugene. His body was already starting to dissipate. He then leaped out of a window and soared a few

thousand feet into the sky. Before long, he vanished into the distance.

Halino shrugged his shoulders. "Lord of Ferde, don't pay him any mind. Eugene's always had a nasty temper, though he's been in a fouler mood than usual these days."

"Of course. Have a safe journey," said Link, smiling.

Halino nodded, then turned around and left the place.

When the two of them were gone, Link placed his hand on the handle of his sword. He then asked it telepathically, "Did he Storm Lord really shatter the Book of Creation?"

The Ode of a Full Moon sword replied, "I think he did break some stone tablet before. Or maybe it was me. It's been too long. My memory's a bit fuzzy, let me think about it for a moment."

# Chapter 583

## Book of Creation's Pieces

When the Storm Lord was still alive, the World Tree already existed. It had a manager at that time, and we all called him Heim. That means 'highest sovereign. At first, the lords and Heim lived in harmony. Then one day, a lord made a mistake while testing a new spell, leading to a horrible spatial change. Heim spent three years trying to revert this change. During these three years, countless people died... Finally, Heim realized the danger of magic, and he decided to ban everyone from using it... Then, the War of Domination erupted.

Link sat quietly in his Mage Tower's library, listening to the sword spirit recount the War of Domination from millenniums ago.

It was too long ago, and the sword spirit often had to stop, but his memory was still quite clear.

"What happened next?" Link asked.

What happened next? Let me think, let me think.

The sword spirit's voice was close to a murmur. He didn't continue until a long while later.

Heim was too powerful. The lords weren't his match at all. Using the World Tree's power, he easily defeated them all... Until one day, someone discovered his secret.

Here, the sword spirit stopped again. Link couldn't help but urge in his mind, "And then?"

Don't worry, don't worry. It's been too long... Oh, right. There was some unknown thief who somehow climbed onto Heim's World Tree. He discovered the secret of the Book of Creation. Heim destroyed the thief, but the secret still spread. The Storm Lord, Fire King, Iron Dragon and more all went forth. Finally, my old master, the Storm Lord, found the chance. He used turbid lightning to shatter the Book of Creation into pieces... Ah, I was so powerful back then. I shattered the tablet with one hit, scattering

the pieces on the ground... After that, I became famous...

“Alright, alright,” Link quickly cut the sword spirit off so it wouldn’t drown in its past glory. “What about the pieces? Was it really broken into three big pieces with one in the Dragon Valley, one in the Isle of Dawn, and one in the North?”

Let me think.

The sword spirit sank into deep thought again. Link had to wait patiently. This time, it took a long while to think. Just as Link was about to give up, it spoke again.

It was too chaotic at that time. I don’t remember how many pieces it broke into, but one was really big. It was the main portion. When it broke, the Storm Lord grabbed it... He’d checked it carefully and then said it was useless. He was about to throw it away, but someone stopped him...

“And then?” Listening to the sword spirit’s memories made Link feel constipated. He had to push it out bit by bit. It even made his stomach hurt.

This time, the sword spirit didn’t reply. More than ten minutes later, it said in confusion, I can’t remember, for some reason.

Link sighed deeply and composed himself. “Then tell me what you can remember,” he said.

Okay. I’m sorry. It’s been too long, and I can’t remember. Its voice was apologetic.

Link couldn’t do anything except comfort it. “It’s okay. Anything you say now will become my unique advantage. I don’t need to know everything. I just have to know more than other people.”

The sword spirit seemed to feel better, and it continued.

I have some impression of where the large piece went. I think... the Storm Lord still threw it to the north. He threw it really, really far away. He even used a wind spell. Perhaps that’s the one in the North.

“Oh... So you’re saying that the one furthest up north may be the biggest one and the main portion at that?” Link suddenly wanted to go north immediately and search for the piece.

However, he quickly calmed down. It had been millenniums since the war. Throughout these years, there must have been countless ambitious people who went to find it. The High Elves must have had some information too. They wouldn't let go of a chance to control the World Tree.

After all these years, either someone found it secretly, or it was very difficult to find. Anyway, it couldn't be rushed. It depended on pure luck to find it.

Probably. I remember that the main portion had many more times the content than the other pieces.

Link was intrigued. He continued asking, "Is there more information?"

Let me think.

The sword spirit fell silent. After that, it managed to say some more, but they were mostly unreliable rumors. Link could only remember them and use them for reference.

While he was communicating with the sword spirit, Celine came over. "Link, that mouse surrendered."

Ever since that day, the mouse had been stuck in the basement. In order to not damage the Mage Tower, the Magicians just used the most powerful seal to keep the thing in a corner instead of capturing it.

It had been more than a week now. The thing hadn't had any food or water and had less than 30 feet to move in. It probably couldn't keep going anymore.

Since the sword spirit couldn't think of other valuable things, Link stood up. "Let's go take a look."

The two got to the basement. Eliard and Evelina were there too, observing the cage.

Eliard looked as if he'd seen something new and special. "Link, you came at the right time. Come look at this thing. We thought it was a magic pet, but it's actually a demon. It has such great transformation skills!"

Transformation? Link was quite curious. The game had transformations. For example, dragonification was the most typical one. However, a dragon couldn't hide their power

after transforming. They were still a dragon.

But this demon didn't have any demonic aura after transforming. It looked just like a mouse. This was quite interesting.

He walked inside the seal but didn't see a mouse anywhere. There was just a demon girl around 13 or 14 years old.

She couldn't be over four feet tall. She wore a pure white fur dress and was barefoot. Her face looked just like a human's with pink cheeks. There were only two inhuman characteristics. First, her black eyes had faint purple veins. There were also two curled horns near her ears. The horns were also black with the same purple veins. They were beautiful and looked harmless.

Perhaps due to being watched by everyone, the "little girl" looked shy. She hugged her knees in the corner, peering outside cautiously. Her expression, paired with her lovely features, made her look pitiful. There was none of the chaotic murderous intent a demon should have.

Seeing Link come, she curled up even tighter, hiding her face behind her knees. Only her eyes were revealed.

"Will you kill me?" She finally spoke. Her voice was bright and young like a little girl's.

However, this was just the surface. To Link, he saw a Level-10 demon. She looked pitiful now because the Magicians present were all more powerful than her. If she faced regular people, she would be a horrific demon... The souls lost due to the explosion outside the city hadn't been laid to rest yet.

Link didn't answer the demon's question. Instead, he asked, "So you must be Nozama's daughter. Tell me your name."

"I'm Merna." The "little girl" still looked pitiful.

"Merna?" Link thought back. This name was foreign... No, he might have seen this girl before. Oh, right. She might have been in the game's demon fortress.

With this clue, Link's memory sharpened. Yes, after Avatar used his life to injure Nozama, he'd returned to the demon fortress. In the game, it was actually a storyline game. Naturally, countless players swarmed over to watch. Link went too, of course.

While they killed one boss after another, there would be a non-player character who wouldn't attack voluntarily. Her name was Merna, and she wasn't eye-catching. She wasn't brave either and would run away after a player came. They wouldn't be able to find her afterward.

Thinking now, she'd faced many players in the mid-Legendary Level and must have been terrified. She had escaped without caring about her poor dad at all. Of course, that didn't mean that Merna wasn't dangerous. It just meant that she didn't feel anything towards Nozama. They were merely using each other.

Thinking of this, Link said, "I want to know everything about Nozama. If you tell me, I'll let you go."

Merna shook her head. "No, it doesn't matter if you forgive me. If I betray my father, he can easily use a dark curse to kill me. I can't."

"Oh, then I'll just have to take you to the city's church to be baptized," Link said with a smile. He studied Merna's reaction while talking.

When he mentioned baptism, he saw Merna shudder clearly. To a demon, a baptism was like getting sliced by thousands of knives. It was the most horrible torture. Their souls would disappear completely after it.

Merna gulped. Instead of begging him, she turned to Celine and wiped at her tears. "Sister, you're my sister. Father told me about you many times. Save me, Sister, I don't want to die."

Her tears rolled down like pearls, and her voice was so sad. She looked very pitiful. Celine opened her mouth to say something, but nothing came out. She looked to Link. It was clear from her eyes that she had softened a bit.

It wasn't because of Merna's overly-dramatic performance. Instead, it was because of their similar pasts. If not for Link, Celine would probably have a fate like Merna and become a puppet too. Merna looked to only be a teenager. She was curled up in the enemy's Mage Tower and tried so hard to save herself.

Celine couldn't do it.

Link understood Celine and knew her thoughts with that one look. He sighed inwardly and said to her, "Merna is still useful. In the future, she can help us defeat Nozama. You



will be in charge of her, but know that if she does anything, you're responsible."

Gentleness appeared in Celine's eyes. She knew that Link always respected his own rules and was strict on himself. Today, he broke the rules for her. Clearly, she was very important to him.

"I will watch her carefully, Lord," she said seriously.

"Yes." Link nodded and turned to Eliard and Evelina. "The single annual forgiveness right of the Lord has been used up."

The lord's forgiveness was the only special right Link gave to himself.

Eliard and Evelina nodded to show that they'd recorded it. This was the supervision system between the core Magicians. Even the lord wasn't exempted from it. Of course, Link could break it if he really wanted. However, his image that he'd built up would be destroyed instantly. He had to choose between these two options.

Merna had Legendary power while Celine was only at the pinnacle of Level-8. Thus, Link tapped the magic seal. Countless runes appeared in the air and easily passed through the seal, burying into Merna's body.

At the same time, other runes flew into Celine's body.

Three seconds later, Link tapped the seal again to cancel it. Merna pouted, but she stood up obediently and walked to Celine.

She had no choice. Not only did Link seal up most of her power, but she also had a curse planted in her for Celine. Celine could torture her with one thought. She had no way to fight back.

Celine patted her head and murmured, "Alright, Merna. It's much better than baptism."

Merna's matter would temporarily stop here. "I wish to go north. I need some helpers," Link said to Eliard.

The north had the main piece of the Book of Creation. He had to at least try his luck. If he really got the piece, the High Elf threat would vanish.

# Chapter 584

## Winds of War from All Sides

Dragon Valley, outside the mist maze

“No, Halino, the Dragon Valley will no longer be a party to any wars in the continent,” said the Red Dragon Queen’s illusion. In the illusion, her dragon body lay coiled up on the ground. She was gazing at the Light Magician, her golden gleaming eyes half-closed.

Still, Halino did not give up. “Your Highness, you don’t look too good. Did something happen in the Dragon Valley?”

“There’s been no other incident since the opening of the crack. We already have our hands full with it. It was our mistake to begin with, so naturally, it falls to us dragons to keep the crack closed. I’m sorry, but it is beyond our power to intervene in anything else right now.”

The Red Dragon Queen’s voice was deadpan as if she could not be bothered with anything else in the world. When she finished, her eyes swiveled towards Eugene and then said, “Halino, do you really intend to find the Book of Creation’s fragments with Eugene? Are you not worried that he has other plans for them?”

“Of course I’m worried, but it’s a risk I’m willing to take. It would be better if you could join us in our search. It’s a shame, really...” Halino shrugged, visibly disappointed by the queen’s refusal.

“I’m truly sorry,” said the Red Dragon Queen again, sighing.

Seeing her in such a state, The Dark Magician Eugene cackled. “Just give up, Halino. Your words won’t move her. She was the one who got dumped after all, and now look at her. You’re better off seeking a dog’s help instead of hers.”

“Eugene!” Halino was aware of Eugene’s sharp tongue, but he did not think that he would go this far!

As soon as Eugene said those words, the Red Dragon Queen's illusion trembled violently. It was probably due to a sudden surge of emotion on her side. After a few seconds, the illusion vanished.

Eugene shrugged his shoulders and chuckled. "See, I told you. I don't really know the specifics, but the fact that the lord of Ferde abandoned Dragon Power completely, and the dragon race in Ferde has withdrawn from the place meant that things did not end well between the two. But you should know, Link was a Dragon Duke before. So isn't it reasonable to assume that he was the one who dumped the Red Dragon Queen?"

Despite their differences, Halino could not help but admit that Eugene's words sounded reasonable. He let out a sigh. "Alright, I guess the only Emerald Council member we could go to now is the Mountain Sage himself."

He turned around, ready to leave. But just then, there was a stir in the Mist Maze. After a while, a gigantic form burst out of the maze. It was the Red Dragon Queen Gretel.

With a loud thud, she landed on the ground, and the earth trembled. Eugene immediately took on a defensive posture. If there was one thing he had learned from his long life, it was that hell indeed hath no fury like a woman scorned.

But he thought wrong.

Gretel lowered her head and widened her eyes at Eugene. Her voice was still flat when she said, "Though you could have worded it nicely, you are right, Dark Magician. I've been dwelling in the past for far too long. Everyone experiences failures and setbacks. Link has also been no more than the child of a noble family once. If he can move forward, so can I!"

Hearing this, Eugene raised a brow. "Your Highness, you still haven't let go of your little duke, have you? But no matter, we all have our little fixations. As long as you don't hamper our plans, I'm fine with you tagging along."

Gretel let out a humph. "You're mistaken. I never said I would work with you. I'm only proposing my alliance with Halino. I couldn't care any less about what happens to you."

Eugene shrugged, but he muttered under his breath, "Such a vindictive dragon!"

Halino did not expect such a turn of events. He was happy. The Red Dragon Queen's power level was not as high as theirs, but the extent of her power was vast, and she

was also able to travel through dangerous places like the Sea of Void. She would make a valuable ally.

Feeling more optimistic, Halino said, "Great, then let's go find Mountain Sage Heroto. I'm sure he'll agree to join us."

"Let's hope so." Eugene did not share his companion's optimism.

...

North of the Black Forest, Skeletal Fortress

In the deepest depths of Skeletal Fortress, there was a secret room. In the middle of this room was an obsidian altar, and a blinding, red light was radiating from it. Beneath it, Molina the priest was kneeling on the ground, motionless.

This went on for an hour. Suddenly, a voice rang out from the red light.

"Katyusha's soul is lost to us. We can no longer bring it back. However, our greatest concern now is not Katyusha, but those pointy-eared elves. The actions of those elves will bring destruction upon the Firuman realm. Go help them, and make sure their plans do not fail. Hehehe..."

"But Master, Katyusha..." Molina still could not come to terms with what happened to her sister.

"Katyusha was weak. She has failed me twice. There won't be a third time! Molina, she's gone forever. Do you understand?" said the cold voice from the red light.

Molina felt a sudden chill. "I understand, Master."

"Good. Now go. Let the pathetic creatures of this realm see for themselves how these elves came to destroy their own world. Hahaha, idiots, the lot of them."

The voice gradually faded away. Finally, the room once again fell into silence.

Molina was still kneeling on the ground. Five minutes later, she wiped the tears from her eyes and whispered, "Goodbye, Katyusha."

She stood up and walked out of the room. There were three Legendary Nagas already

waiting outside the room.

Molina had regained her authoritative demeanor as a Naga Priest. She said with a low voice, "Alright, Master has given us his orders..."

...

The High Elves were not wasting any time on the Isle of Dawn as well. They were already in the midst of the realm reunification's preparations.

...

The High Elf royal palace, Andwar

The High Elf Queen was listening to her subordinates' reports on their progress.

"Your Highness, we've already begun the reunification runestone's construction. With our current rate of progress, we'll have it ready in approximately 14 months."

"Very good. Has contact been made with Princess Milda on the other side?" asked the queen.

The one who answered her was King Mordena. He stepped forward, frowning. "We've made contact, but Milda did not agree with what we're doing. No matter how I tried explaining it to her, she still strongly objected to it."

"Uhm?" The queen was confused. "Did you not explain to her the current state of the Firuman continent?"

"I did, but she said that the risks of reuniting the two realms are huge and that there is a better solution to our problem. She has even proposed an alternative."

"What alternative?" The queen was troubled. She would not have been as upset if it had been the elders who objected to her wishes. But this was her own daughter they were talking about. In the past, Milda had always been the respectful and compliant daughter. Now, she seemed to think that she now stood on equal footing with her own mother. Was this still the same obedient Milda she had raised?

"She said that her power had reached Level-16. She's also now a priest of the Blazing Fire sect. With your consent, she could send two Level-14 Inferno Warriors to help us

out.”

In truth, King Mordena thought that her daughter’s plan was excellent. Deep down, he felt that the reunification of the two realms was just too risky. One mistake was enough to set off a catastrophe of a magnitude that surpassed even the Mana Disaster.

But as soon as he finished speaking, the queen immediately waved a dismissive hand. “The realm reunification will proceed as planned. There’s no turning back now. What we should be discussing now is how best to reduce the risks we’re running instead of switching plans halfway through!”

Seeing that her husband still had second thoughts, she said even more assertively, “King Mordena, two Level-14 Inferno Warriors are certainly powerful, but can they take on Ferde’s Mage Tower themselves? The power of that Mage Tower is not to be taken lightly. Not even a hundred Inferno Warriors would be enough to resist its attacks, let alone two. And so what if we manage to kill Link? The humans remain numerous. Who’s to say another Link won’t rise up against us in the future? After reuniting the two realms, our forces will be in the millions. At that point, we’ll have both the all-powerful World Tree capable of fending off even gods and ten thousand years of magical knowledge on our side. Even if the humans are able to find allies of their own from the Aragu realm, they won’t stand a chance against us!”

Finally, she said, “Have you forgotten Ariel? She’s your daughter, and she’s also the first royal family member to be killed by a human. This affront will be paid in human blood!”

At this point, King Mordena could not say anything else to change the queen’s mind.

Though Milda had objected to this, the fact remained that she was still in another realm and did not fully understand Firuman’s current state. Her plan would only serve as a temporary solution to the High Elves’ troubles. On the other hand, the queen’s plan would completely turn the situation to their advantage. They would also finally be able to avenge Ariel’s death. King Mordena nodded and said, “I’ll contact Milda and have her full support on this matter.”

“Go then. Tell her that her sister was slain by the humans!”

King Mordena nodded, “As you wish.”

He turned to leave. Just then, a High Elf elder stepped forth and said, “Your Highness,

we received word from one of our sentries that the Emerald Council will not support our plan and that they intend to stop us. They also seem to have known about the existence of the Book of Creation.”

He handed a letter over to the queen.

The queen gave it a glance, then fell silent for a few seconds. Finally, she said, “Take this to King Mordena. Tell him to ask Princess Milda to send over her two Inferno Warriors.”

At the moment, the High Elves were running short on powerful Warriors. There was no way they could oppose the Emerald Council’s Magicians on their own. They needed outside help right now.

“As you wish, Your Highness.” The elder immediately left the palace to carry out his order.

The rest of the High Elves then continued reporting their progress on different aspects of the realm reunification plan to the queen. As an ancient race, they had never done anything like this before, but there had been many scholars in the past who had explored the possibility of reuniting two realms and had even conducted large-scale experiments on the subject. Right now, aided by the wisdom of these scholars, the High Elves carried out every step of their plan steadily and without any trace of disorder.

As the winds of war began to blow across the continent, the Magicians of Ferde had also begun making their own preparations.

# Chapter 585

## A Strange Person

Trot, trot, trot.

The sounds of organized hooves came from the training field in the north of Ferde. The Sunlight Warriors were gathering.

There were many soldiers here—more than 150,000. Looking down from the tall stand on the side of field, one would see a sea of people. It was practically boundless. With all the people and horses, it was extremely noisy as well. Looking closely, one would see that the soldiers all shone as if they were covered in a layer of sunlight.

An indescribable vitality radiated from each of them. It spread in all directions and, from the distance, it seemed that this land was loved by the sun. It was very warm and abnormally bright.

To the outside world, these soldiers were gathering to help reinforce the Orida Fortress in the north.

In the near distance, Link and his Magicians were watching this. General Jacker was also in the stands. He was now a Sunlight Warrior at the pinnacle of Level-9, one step away from the Legendary Level. He was still the most powerful Warrior in the territory.

However, there were many new stars behind him. For example, Warrior Thoreau had risen two levels in a row. He was now Level-8 already. There were more than 700 soldiers in Level-8. There were also many in Level-9—more than 90. They were all chasing close to Jacker.

Though these newbies wouldn't replace him as general even if their power surpassed him, Jacker still felt pressured. He practiced like crazy whenever he had time, not daring to relax for even a bit.

"Lord, with our speed, we should finish preparing tomorrow and can depart the next day," Jacker reported the specific developments.



Link nodded. "This trip north is to deal with the Army of Destruction if they come southward and also to build a sturdy foundation there. We will also establish defensive sentries along the way to reinforce our actions whenever needed. Go back and keep observing. Choose enough elites for this mission."

"Understood, Lord." Jacker nodded.

After that, Link gave some more detailed instructions that Jacker recorded. Then he left to get to work.

After Jacker left, Eliard said, "Link, let me go with you this time. I feel that it only takes a bit more for a breakthrough, but I still lack something. I think I need the opportunity."

Link glanced at Evelina who said, "Lord, don't look at me. I don't care... as long as this guy doesn't die in the north."

Eliard huffed. "How would I die there? You're cursing me!"

"Alright, alright, just come with me," Link agreed quickly.

Beside him, Celine had some thoughts, but Link sensed them and spoke before she could.

"Celine, you're at Level-9, but you're still far from a breakthrough. All the enemies we'll meet in the North will most likely be in the Legendary level. Stay in Ferde and train patiently."

"Fine," Celine had to answer.

Beside her, Merna giggled at this. "Sister, the north isn't fun at all. It's filled with Father's underlings, and it's too dangerous. Ferde is more fun."

This girl was a demon, but she wasn't very demonic. Her personality was only a bit more mature than a regular little girl's. After staying in Ferde with Celine for these days, she was mesmerized by the colorful world. It would be hard to kick her away now.

Celine chuckled wryly. She knew that Merna couldn't understand her worries now, so she didn't say anything. She just smiled and patted her sister's head.

On the other hand, Link was discussing with Evelina, Vance, Alloa, and Eleanor about the arrangements after he left.

The Mage Tower was getting bigger and bigger with more sub-towers nearby. There was also the Gold Rune Workshop, and alchemy shops were getting built. There were many tasks, even with Lily's help. Link discussed with them for more than an hour before settling everything.

Finally, it was decided that the three who would go to the Orida Fortress were Link, Eliard, and Milose. Elován had wanted to go, but he was, unfortunately, a flesh magic puppet now. He couldn't travel quickly and would hold them back, so he decided not to go.

Of the three, Eliard was almost at the Legendary Level, Link had successfully reached Level-12, and Milose was in the middle of Level-10. Because they had the support of a rich territory, the three were covered in the best magic equipment, all types of potions, and runes.

This way, even if they ran into forces much stronger than them, they could still put up a fight. The trio was now the top force in Firuman.

The Sunlight Army would depart the day after tomorrow. Link's group obviously couldn't wait for that. After settling everything, Link took Eliard and Milose and used a transmission spell.

After the flash of light, the three appeared in the sky miles away. The increase in distance was a benefit to Link's leveling up. After that, Link used the Void Walk and sped northward.

After a while, Eliard felt a change. He watched as clusters of runes flashed by like flowers and exclaimed, "Link, I feel that you're using a new magic technique. It's different from before, and it's 50% faster!"

Milose didn't say anything, but his eyes were filled with shock. Link's speed was honestly too fast. He was at least twice as fast as before. With this extreme speed, Milose couldn't even feel any wind. His surroundings were calm as if they were in a nonexistent illusion and were flying through the air.

Even more shocking was that Link wasn't alone. He was flying with two others. This spell was too incredible.

Link chuckled. He didn't keep it a secret. "Indeed, I changed it, but the general theory didn't change. I'm still using the force from spatial distortions to move forward. I just greatly increased the curvature of the spatial distortions and added some auxiliary forces. For example, all the currents are behind us now. Look behind. The air is distorted, right?"

Eliard and Milose turned to look and found it was so. The air before and beside them was calm, but the air behind them was shaken. Everything they could see was twisted.

Technically, such intense spatial ripples would create horrible noises. However, they were going so fast that the speed of sound couldn't catch up. Thus, they couldn't hear anything at all.

Eliard studied carefully for five or six minutes. Then he shook his head. "Oh, your methods are getting better and better... This requires very strong magic control. I'm too far from this."

Hearing this, Milose smiled wryly. It wasn't just far—it was impossible.

Eliard wasn't at the Legendary level yet, so he couldn't feel how terrifying Link's tactics were. However, Milose could clearly feel the precision in Link's control. It was inhuman.

Link's power seemed to be his soul. He could use his power according to his whim without any delay. It was magic, but he made it seem like a martial arts attack. This kind of Magician was too terrifying. Even if Milose stood behind him, he didn't have the courage to attack.

Link didn't know what Milose was thinking, of course. After that, he helped the two fly while discussing the Void Walk spell with Eliard. He was fast at comprehending and could understand everything before Milose could. He could even draw his own inferences later on.

Both Link and Eliard displayed inhuman thought operations during this trip. In Milose's opinion, Link was a strange beast. Eliard was too.

It was understandable. In the game, Eliard was a total genius. He was the star of the stars and all players called him the prince of the realm. The fact that Link could be one step ahead of him this entire time was mostly due to his strong soul.

Now, as Eliard grew stronger, his soul was awakening and strengthening too. He could gradually catch up to Link. Many times, Link could feel the pressure coming from Eliard, so he didn't allow himself to relax.

As for Milose, he was just a regular genius. He could reach the Legendary Level thanks to his talent, but also because of the complete training he'd received in the Isle of Dawn since childhood. If he lived in the human world where there weren't many magic academies, he would at most be at Level-6 now.

This was an astronomic difference. No wonder he was so dazed.

Link was honestly too fast. Half an hour later, the Orida Fortress appeared before them. Here, Link had planned on crossing over it and continuing northward.

However, after glancing at the fortress, he changed his mind. Inside the Orida Fortress... No, more specifically, it was in the forest outside the fortress that he felt a strange aura. It was familiar, but he couldn't pinpoint who it was.

# Chapter 586

## It Really Was Her

Slowing down, Link cast an invisibility spell on all three of them. He then began to slowly let his altitude drop as he flew straight for the aura that he just felt.

“What is it?” asked Eliard when he saw the grave expression on Link’s face.

“There’s someone in the woods. His aura is extraordinarily powerful. It may even be at Level-13. What’s strange is that I seem to have felt it somewhere before.”

“A Level-13 master?” said Milose, aghast.

Milose was a High Elf. Before the Mana Disaster, numerous masters had existed when there was still a high Mana concentration in all of Firuman. The High Elves had a complete record of their own history and lineages; as such, they knew more about Legendary masters than the humans did.

For most professions across the continent, Level-10 was a huge bottleneck. This meant that subsequent promotions after Level-10 would become progressively harder.

For instance, a hundred years ago, the former High Elf prophet Bryant had reached Level-12. A hundred years later, though his power was still increasing, he still had yet to reach Level-13.

Despite the difficulties of a promotion, its payoff was huge. After reaching a new level, the extent of one’s power would increase drastically. His or her body would also be one step closer to perfection.

Of course, this was what normally would happen for most races. Legendary races like the dragons who were blessed by their ancestors’ wisdom were a different story.

Though power did not necessarily equate to combat power, if someone had actually attained such power, they would most certainly not be a pushover.

As far as Milose knew, among the natives of Firuman, only two Level-13 masters existed. One was the Light Magician; the other was the Dark Magician. Next was the Level-12 High Elf prophet Bryant. After him was the Lord of Ferde himself, the Red Dragon Queen and the Dwarf Mountain Sage, who were all Level-11 masters.

Last but not least were the High Elf Legendary prodigies who had only recently reached Level-10 at the bottom of this hierarchy.

Right now, Milose's heart was thumping in apprehension at this sudden appearance of another Level-13 master.

"My lord, should we prepare for battle?" asked Milose. A master of such caliber would not be hanging around near Orida Fortress without any reason. He must have come all the way here to fulfill a mission. If all three of them blindly rushed in, there might be trouble.

Link thought for a while, then nodded. "Alright, prepare yourselves then."

Saying this, he slightly made some adjustments to their formation, placing Eliard in a position where he could do the most damage.

Half a minute later, the three of them landed on a clearing in the middle of the woods. Link narrowed his eyes and felt for the enemy's aura. It was extremely weak. He probably would not be able to sense it if he only had Dragon Power at his disposal like before.

"He's approximately 300 feet in front of us. I think he's resting." Link was troubled by this. He sensed that the person was weak as if wounded.

What on earth would be able to injure a master like him? Was he injured by someone? If so, who was his assailant?

Things had become complicated.

Link raised a hand for the other two to stop. He then mouthed out silently to them what he had sensed from the other person. When he was done, he then said, "This does not look too good. If this Level-13 master was really injured by someone, that means that there's an even more dangerous being lurking in the vicinity. What's worse is that I can't even feel this other being's presence."

The fact that he could not sense the presence of this assailant could only mean that either such a person did not exist, or that the person had used a technique to camouflage his or her own presence that surpassed even Link's current level. If it was the latter, this unseen enemy would be able to easily to flatten all three of them like ants.

Eliard did not know much about the masters in the continent. He looked at Milose.

Milose looked even more apprehensive. "There was no way such a powerful being existed on the Firuman continent. It's just impossible. The World Tree would be able to pick up his or her presence right away. Unless..."

"Unless what?" asked Eliard.

Link already had the answer. "Unless this person was from another realm. The Aragu Realm, perhaps?"

Milose nodded. "When Princess Ariel brought us to the plains, the High Elf Queen had revealed her intention to seek help from Aragu. She had also contacted Princess Milda in Aragu numerous times, asking her to send over masters there to assist the Isle of Dawn, but the princess refused her mother's requests each time. However, with Princess Ariel gone, I fear that..."

This seemed possible.

Link knew Aragu's state all too well.

There were countless masters in the Aragu realm. Masters above Level-13 were no more than a lord there. For instance, the Bloody Butcher Balha back then was a Tier-3 master, whose power was only Level-12 in Firuman terms.

Time worked differently in Aragu. A hundred years had probably passed there ever since Link came back to Firuman. No one knew what had changed during that time. If Milda was still alive and also knew that Link had killed her sister Ariel, then her sending over a master to assist the High Elves was just a matter of time.

Teleporting a Legendary master across the two realms would only cause a tiny splash, which would not be enough to trigger Link's Eye of the Realm.

Link still could not grasp the situation they were in at the moment.

Finally, Link said, “Things have gotten out of control. Let’s retreat for now. We’ll go back to Orida Fortress and convince Marshal Kanorse to dispatch a squadron to investigate the woods... Wait, something’s changed. The injured master’s spotted me. He’s heading towards us!”

Milose was stunned. “He’ll draw the attention of his attacker to us! My lord, let us retreat, quick!”

Eliard had also sensed how serious things had become. Though he was already panicking on the inside, he did not dare interrupt Link’s thoughts. Eliard immediately waved a hand at Milose, stopping him from saying another word.

Eliard might not understand the state of the world as much as Milose, but he was a hundred times more familiar with Link’s ways than the latter. He had known Link for almost four years and had personally witnessed his strength and powers of judgment. He deeply believed that Link would be able to lead the two of them out of there safely.

However, Link did not move a muscle.

He silently stood there, feeling the other master’s aura closely. The other master seemed to be hesitating, his movements tentative. He was making his way towards them inch by inch. As he got closer and closer, Link had an even clearer sense of his aura.

Everything about this master was extremely familiar to Link. The person’s aura, the frequency of his footsteps, the heft of each step he took, and even the soft sound the wind made as it grazed past the person’s body were all coming together to form a familiar image in Link’s memory.

Though these characteristics gave Link an indescribable sense of familiarity, there was still a stark difference between the approaching master and the person he remembered. In the end, he could not come to a final conclusion as to who the mysterious master was.

He decided not to make any further judgments and waited patiently for the other party to arrive.

As Link waited, he placed a hand on the Ode of a Full Moon sword hanging from his waist. This way, he would be able to lash out first at the first sign of trouble.



Milose and Eliard too readied themselves for a confrontation. Their eyes were fixed on Link the whole time.

In front of them was a dense forest. The cold air in the North was unable to fly down south due to the iron wall blocking off the region. The climate here resembled the South's. As a result, the woods were thicker, and all kinds of plant life grew uninhibited in every corner of the forest.

Five minutes later, footsteps sounded from the woods up front. All three had heard them. Link was now able to gather more information on their mystery guest.

A woman. She doesn't seem tall, perhaps 4 feet. She has a slim physique, but she feels heavier than her body's supposed weight. Is it due to the armor that she's wearing?

Her footsteps seem to be in disorder. Even if her body had been considerably weakened, judging by her current power level, she should still be able to retain some control over her movements... No, she's lost control of her own emotions.

Who is it? Link now had a clearer image of who he was dealing with. He slowly let his hand slide off the pommel of his sword.

When the other party exited the woods and revealed her face and pair of huge eyes to everyone, Link let out a sigh.

It really was her!

# Chapter 587

## Time Passes, Magic Puppet Heart

Forest

The figure behind the trees was just as how Link had estimated. She was around five feet tall and was slim. There were a clean ponytail and a pair of pure eyes with complicated emotions in them. There was confusion but also the fatigue of having seen too much.

She wore simple leather armor. Its style and color were very strange. It didn't look like the Firuman style or the Araguan style that Link had once experienced. There was a sword at her waist. The hilt was old, and the handguard had many small nicks.

Link had great vision. He could see instantly that the sword had gone through countless battles. The nicks had resulted from collisions with enemy weapons. He could see from the runes that this was the main weapon he'd once made for Nana—the Last Nightmare.

“Master,” the girl said while walking forward and lowering onto one knee before Link.

“Master?” Milose was very shocked. The change was a bit drastic, and he couldn't process it.

Eliard recognized Nana and explained softly, “She's Nana, the first Legendary Magician and had once killed a dark divine gear.”

“Ah.” Milose was even more shocked after hearing this name. Wasn't Nana in the Aragu Realm? Why did she appear in Firuman?

Link ignored his surprise. Through his contract with Nana, he was sure that this was still his Nana. He walked up and hunched to help Nana up. “Why did you return?” he asked.

Nana rose and pouted in a human-like way. “Princess Milda knew about Ariel. In the end, she agreed to fuse the two realms. At the same time, she had sent two Tier-5... or

Level-14 Inferno Warriors to the Isle of Dawn. She's now the priestess of the Fire Sect and has many Inferno Warriors around her. She doesn't need Nana's protection anymore, so Nana came back."

Her voice was still a bit mechanic, but it was very faint, and most people wouldn't be able to tell. She didn't look like a magic puppet at all.

Link looked at Nana's arm and then the sword at her waist. His eyebrow quirked. "You're hurt. Who injured your waist?"

Nana's armor wasn't damaged, but Link was extremely sensitive. He was also a martial artist himself. Especially after practicing the battle technique from Avatar, he became even more sensitive.

Link saw a flaw in the power circulation in Nana's waist when she had knelt and later when he helped her up.

Nana lowered her head and didn't speak.

Link didn't need her to speak. Using his thoughts, pure Realm Essence surged and formed a dot of light in the air. It circled Nana. Three seconds later, it brought the information it gathered back to Link.

Now, he knew Nana's situation. She was at the pinnacle of Level-13. This wasn't very powerful in Aragu, but her power was very pure. It was only a bit weaker than Link's Realm Essence.

The pureness meant high control. Nana's battle techniques must be intimidating. However, there was a bit of foreign power at her waist.

"It's a sword injury with a bit of Fire elemental power. It's very powerful, at Level-19, but it's faint. Did an Inferno Warrior of the Fire Sect hurt you?"

"Yes." Nana nodded.

Link's thoughts whirred; he'd guessed most of it.

"You and Milda had an argument... No, you wouldn't do that. She didn't want you to return, but she couldn't convince you, so she sent people to kill you. Is that right?"

Nana's expression turned a bit sad. She sighed and nodded lightly. "I can't fool Master. She... she's not like before. After 113 years, she's completely into the Fire Sect now, becoming the ambassador of the god in the mortal world. She... is drunk on the ultimate power. She's completely forgotten Master."

"Oh." Link nodded. This change was expected. If he left Celine for more than 100 years, he would probably forget her too, let alone Milda. This was how people were.

Since Milda was now the ambassador of the Fire Sect and had ruled it for more than a century, she must be a mature politician now. It would be laughable to talk about romance with someone like that.

It wasn't hard to understand her actions towards Nana.

Thinking of this, Link asked, "You went between the realms. Did people pursue you here?"

Nana shook her head. "No. Nana killed all pursuers... Nana's weakness now is from passing through the realms. Fighting against the chaotic currents in the Sea of Void used up much of Nana's power... After entering Firuman, Nana appeared in the Hengduan Mountain Range and traveled quickly. Nana didn't expect to meet Master here."

Link now completely understood Nana's situation.

After spending a century in Aragu, Milda had changed, and Nana had changed. Both had changed a lot, but the one thing that remained unchanged was that Nana belonged to Link. To her, Link was always her master. Thus, when Milda sent Inferno Warriors against Link, she was willing to end the relationship with Milda and hurry back to Firuman.

Judging from her actions, Milda was also important to her. Unfortunately, Milda had betrayed the thing most important to Nana. Thinking of this, Link sighed inwardly. Everything changed with time, and people's hearts couldn't be trusted. The only thing he could trust was the magic puppet he'd created.

Patting Nana's shoulder, Link smiled. "It's great that you're back. Your protection mission is over. Come with me now."

"Nana understands." Nana went behind Link. Her position was exactly the same as 100

years ago.

Nana was a great helper, but her power hadn't recovered completely. Link prepared to rest for a bit. Since the Orida Fortress happened to be nearby, he said, "Let's go to the Orida Fortress now."

Eliard and Milose had no objections. Nana obviously didn't either. The group turned and hurried toward the Orida Fortress.

Because Nana was weak, Link traveled slowly. Along the way, he learned about the Aragu Empire from her. Nana obviously told him everything she knew, telling him about what had happened over the century.

The Aragu Realm hadn't been quiet for the hundred years. It had changed drastically too. The once-powerful Aragu Empire collapsed 15 years after Link had left and split into two. In one, the Araguans, Laguans, dwarves, and other races that believed in the Fire Sect formed a new empire—Yan. The other group of Araguans inherited the empire and continued the Aragu Empire.

The two empires were in the state of civil war and constantly had battles. The longest period of peace was less than two years. Both sides put their all into the war, even going past their bottom line at times. Not only were the people tormented by war, even the realm was hurt.

The injuries were caused by the curses of Magicians. The countless curses might have angered the realm's conscience or changed the laws. For whatever reason, the Mana density decreased greatly. It was less than one-fifth of what it had been!

The direct change was that the strong figures lessened. Their rate of strengthening decreased as well. Add to that the fact that many older ones had died in war, the strongest person in Aragu now was the Fire Archmage who was trying to become a god. After that was the Snow Mountain Archmage. These two were protectors at Level-19. Below that, there was a break, jumping from Level-19 to Level-16.

A hidden change was that time was flowing slower now. Of course, very few knew about this. Now, Aragu was only around 1.5 times faster than Firuman.

Milda was now at Level-16. Other than the two Level-19 Archmages, she was the strongest in the mortal world. The other was Saroviny. She was now completely following the Fire Sect. She was the Black Flame Envoy and the commander of the

Inferno Army.

For this century, more than 50,000,000 lives had died because of her and her army. In Aragu, she was also known as the Black Blood Rose.

Here, Eliard suddenly asked, “Nana, you didn’t talk about yourself. What was your status in the Yan Empire?”

“Nana’s status?” Nana chuckled wryly. “My power rose too slowly. At first, Nana was head of Milda’s guard. As Milda had more trusted people, Nana was pushed to the side. Before returning, Nana was only one of Milda’s 12 Holy Yan Warriors.”

“Really?” Milose felt something wrong. “If you were pushed to the side, why would she send people to kill you when you wanted to leave? That means that you’re still important to her.”

“Maybe she didn’t want Nana to notify Link?” Nana said.

This made sense; Milose and Eliard believed her. However, Link felt that Nana was hiding something. No, she wasn’t hiding it. Rather, she thought it wasn’t important, so she didn’t mention it.

Link felt that Nana’s position in the Fire Sect wasn’t as low as she said. Of course, this was just his gut feeling. He had no proof.

Thinking of this, Link didn’t continue asking. Since Nana was back, she had nothing to do with the Fire Sect anymore. She was his own Nana.

“The Orida Fortress is before us,” he said. “We can go see General Kanorse... Nana, your power is recovery a bit slow.”

Nana nodded. “That is Nana’s biggest flaw. I am not living flesh, and my body isn’t perfect. I need a long time to recover after using up my energy.”

Link thought a bit and said, “That’s okay. I’ll check your body. Maybe I can find a way to improve you.”

Eliard laughed at this. “Be careful of Celine if she finds out...” Link glared at him before he could finish and he quickly changed the topic. Chuckling, he said, “Nana, you’re lucky. Link’s magic improved tremendously these years. He can probably even use

magic to create a person. He can definitely fix your problem.”

Nana smiled. “Nana’s owner has always been the most powerful Magician!”

# Chapter 588

## Creation of Life

Half an hour later, Link finally saw Kanorse.

It had been half a year since Link saw him. Kanorse was no longer the naive young knight he once was. He now exuded an air of authority that befitted his place as the army's marshal.

When Eliard and Milose saw Kanorse, they could feel a sudden pressure weighing on them. The two of them stood behind Link nervously. Despite being a master of the same level as Kanorse, Milorse still did not dare speak out of turn for fear of offending him.

Of course, this did not affect Link and Nana.

This was due to the training both of them had undergone and also the fact that Ferde was a main supporter of Orida Fortress. Ferde provided 70% of the fortress' resources and had a monopoly on the provision of all kinds of magical equipment for the soldiers there.

Given the fact that Link had also saved his life once, it seemed that this was a debt Kanorse would not be able to fully repay in his lifetime.

In a study on the second floor of the fortress, Kanorse personally poured a cup of hot tea for every one of them. He then sat down and smiled. "My lord, why haven't you come with your army?"

Kanorse was already made aware of the news that the Sunlight Army of Ferde was going to back up Orida Fortress.

Link smiled back. "I'm heading towards the North on a secret mission, so I thought I would drop by here first. My army should reach Orida Fortress in half a month's time. You know Nana here. She's injured, and I'll need to borrow the fortress' enchantment workshop for a bit."



“Oh, I see.” Kanorse did not even bother asking what Link intended to do up north. Since it was a secret mission, even if he asked, Link probably would not be willing to give him the details. “I’ll order the military Magicians to vacate the workshop immediately.”

“Thank you.”

“It’s no problem at all. Actually, my lord, there is something I was hoping you could help me with. There’s something off about my sword. I was wondering if you could fix it a bit for me.” Kanorse handed the Lion’s Fury sword over to Link.

Link smiled and asked, “What would you like me to change, then?”

It was Link who had given this sword its current form. Back then, Link’s combat skills were excellent, but his combat sensitivity was nowhere near his current level. Despite his attempts to forge the perfect sword for Kanorse, it might not have suited him. Hearing what Kanorse said, Link thought that he did not forge the sword right in the first place.

Kanorse scratched his head, confused.

I don’t really know. At first, it felt right in my hand. But recently, it’s become a bit unwieldy.”

Link understood what was going on. Kanorse’s skills had improved tremendously, but the weapon just could not keep up with them.

After thinking for a moment, he said, “Why don’t you perform a basic sword form here in the study? I may be able to see what is wrong with your sword.”

“Alright.” Kanorse knew that Link was now a combat master and should be able to see what the problem was with it. He then began to brandish his sword about in the tiny room.

The study was extremely tiny. There were bookshelves and paperwork around him. He started slow, holding his movements back. After giving his sword two swings, Link said, “Now you’re just dancing. I can’t see what your problem is from a dance number. The sword that I’ve forged for you is meant for murder, so use actual killing techniques with it!”

Kanorse immediately understood what Link meant. There was now a drastic change

in his form as he swung his sword a third time. Killing intent flowed out from every stroke of his sword, rocking the whole room like a tidal wave.

With a gentle wave of his hand, Link set up a barrier around the room in order to shield everything in it from Kanorse's sword. At the same time, an illusion of himself surfaced from his body with a sword ready in its hand.

Link's illusion held nothing back as its sword stabbed straight at Kanorse's back. The attack came slow, giving Kanorse ample time to react.

The illusion accelerated its attack as soon as Kanorse sensed it behind him. He immediately turned around and managed to block the attack in time.

In the span of a few moments, Link's illusion and Kanorse exchanged flurries of stabs and slices with each other in the cramped, 100-square-foot space of the study. Each stroke of their swords was calculated to slay the other on the spot.

Though Eliard and Milose were Magicians, the two of them could feel just how terrifying Kanorse's swordsmanship was. Eliard still had a grip on himself. On the other hand, cold sweat dripped from Milose's forehead profusely. His eyes were wide with awe and terror as he watched the two masters cross swords.

The only other person who was not affected by this was Nana.

Her eyes were locked tightly on the two duelists' movements. When the duel reached a high point, her hands began swinging about in an attempt to imitate their movements. She was completely captivated by the spectacle before her.

Such a reaction was understandable. Both Link and Kanorse were masters of the combat arts. A duel between two masters of their caliber was guaranteed to be worth watching. One would be hard-pressed to find such high-level displays of swordsmanship from masters of the Aragu realm.

The duel went on for ten minutes. Then, Link's illusion took a step back and faded into specks of light. Kanorse chased after it, still intent on continuing the fight. He then turned to Link, somewhat disappointed. "That was fun. My lord, we could still continue our duel for a few more minutes if you like."

It had been a while since Kanorse had fought someone to a standstill even with his full strength. It was an exhilarating experience.

Link shook his head. "Another time, perhaps. I now know what your sword needs. Give it to me."

"Alright." Still not completely satisfied, Kanorse handed Link the Lion's Fury and then wrote a mandate for him.

As soon as Link received the document, a white light enveloped his body, and he vanished from the study. An instant later, he reappeared in front of the fortress' Mage Tower.

Milose reappeared behind him. He let out a sigh, looking at Link with renewed admiration.

"My lord, I never knew you were this good with the sword."

He had only known about Link's swordsmanship through hearsay. Even back on the Golden Plains, Link had only ambushed them with a few strikes from his sword. Milose finally witnessed the true extent of Link's swordsmanship with his own eyes today.

"I dabbled with it from time to time," said Link, smiling. "Come, I'll need all your help on the next item of our agenda."

Eliard and Milose nodded. Both of them followed Link into the Mage Tower.

Inside the tower, without even looking at Kanorse's mandate, the Magicians instantly knew who Link was and nearly went down on all fours before him. They were more than willing to provide him with everything he needed. Link probably would have the whole tower for himself if he asked for it.

A few minutes later, Link and the others were now in a fully furnished enchantment workshop.

"Nana, lie down on that platform, please," said Link.

"Oh, alright." After lying down, Nana asked, "Should I take off my clothing?"

"No need. Wait there for a bit," said Link. He then placed Kanorse's Lion's Fury sword on an enchantment workbench in a corner and proceeded to mend it into a new shape for no more than five minutes. When he was done, he stroked the blade with a finger, and it flashed with white light.

Seeing this, Eliard asked, "That's it?"

"Of course. Just wait and see, Kanorse will personally come and thank me..."

Before he could finish, a figure appeared in the workshop's doorway. It was Kanorse. When he received the newly mended Lion's Fury sword from Link, his face flushed with excitement.

"That's it, my lord. It's perfect. There's no reason for such a perfect sword to exist in this world. Oh, it's basically a divine weapon made only for my hands!"

Eliard and Milose were speechless as well. Both of them had always felt that there was something divine about Link's enchantments.

"Alright, alright, I still have work to do. I'm sure you have lots of work to do as well." Link dismissed an excited Kanorse out of the room with a wave of his hand.

Link was in no rush to repair Nana. He walked over to where Nana lay and laid out all sorts of alchemical materials on a nearby workbench. As he began preparing a medicinal concoction, he explained, "Nana's body was once infused with Dragon essence. It's undergone all kinds of changes ever since. She's also probably encountered much in the Aragu realm. I already gave her a look. She's now evolved into something resembling actual life, but it still lacks a certain spark."

"How so?" Eliard walked over to Link's side, watching him picking and choosing his ingredients carefully. Link's words had piqued his curiosity.

Though Milose did not say a word, he was stunned by what Link had just said. Link basically meant that he was able to turn a magic puppet like Nana into an actual living being.

( Updated by NovelFull.Com )

How was this possible?

No matter how powerful a Legendary master might be, Link was still a normal human being. There was no way a normal human being could create sentient life!

# Chapter 589

## Water of Miracles

In the World of Firuman, the High Elves were the best at creating life. Using the World Tree, they could create seeds of magical plants. They'd also created various types of tree spirits, flower spirits, and tree people.

But despite their efforts throughout the generations, they could only create lifelike flesh bodies for animals. They had many attainments in creating lives and even intelligent lives, but there was still a long way to go before truly succeeding.

Thus, Milose also walked over after hearing what Link had said. He wanted to see what Link could do.

Nana also turned around curiously to watch Link make the potion.

Link was extremely busy. Occasionally, there would be mysterious flashes of light. At the same time, he explained, "You're all wrong. I can't create a true life. I'm not even close to that. Nana's level is mostly due to her experiences which can't be copied. All I can do is perfect her a bit more, but I still can't give her a true life. I recently figured out the improvement method too. I added alchemy and enchantments. I call this... Automatic Enchantment Magic Potion."

"That name is so simple. It doesn't match the miraculous potion." Eliard wanted to stand up for the potion. After thinking for a bit, he said, "I think we should call it Water of Miracles."

Link chuckled. "It's not a miracle, but that's a nice name. We can call it that."

As he spoke, his hands stopped. There was a new bottle in his hands. The potion looked like white fog. At closer inspection, one would discover that it was a type of sol. Countless glowing dots floated in the sticky substance.

Looking even more closely, one would discover that each glowing dot was actually the glow of a detailed rune. There was a subtle force between each rune's glow, keeping them equidistant.

“Is it ready?” Eliard asked.

“No, this is only the foundation potion. If the entire Water of Miracles is a ship filled with cargo, this bottle is that ship. Next, we have to make the cargo to fill it with.”

With that, Link took out various enchantment materials and laid them out. There were around 100 types. “Come help me process these,” he said. “It’s tiresome work. It’ll take a long while if I do it alone.”

“Understood.”

The two Magicians walked up while Link instructed them.

“That is replenishment gold. Grind it into powder with the Gritz grinding method. Eliard, you’re familiar with this, so you do it.”

Eliard nodded. He took the precious metal covered in light purple haze. Walking to the enchantment table nearby, he started working carefully.

“This is suppression silver wood. I need it turned into liquid. When the particles are in their natural positions, it should have the effect of a Tier-3 mirror surface. It’s wood, so Milose, you do it with the Marshal Fractal method.”

“Yes, Lord.”

Milose took the dark silver material that looked like the withered root of a tree. Faint green light surged from his hand, and the wood gradually started transforming.

Link himself took a piece of metal with a faint red light and started refining it. He also ground it into powder with high requirements for the size of each particle.

The enchantment room instantly fell silent, the three Magicians all busy with their own work. Whenever Eliard and Milose finished their task, Link would take out new material for them. He didn’t let them rest at all. Of course, it was the same for him. He wouldn’t waste a single second.

A day and night passed in the business. To a Legendary Magician, this kind of work only made them a bit tired. They could recover with some rest. Link and Eliard especially had types of power with great endurance. They weren’t affected at all.

During this time, Link took out 125 types of material in total and used various enchantment methods to turn them into 210 types of materials of different physical properties.

It was far from the end though. This was only the preparatory stage.

After all this, Link finally started to use his actual enchantment technique. He took each material and used enchantment spells or the tools to refine them. Magical light never stopped flashing from his hands. The various materials quickly changed in his hands, either mixing, dissolving, or transforming.

Occasionally, he would give Eliard and Milose some missions. Most of the time, he did everything alone while the other two just watched on the side.

After a long while, Milose whispered to Eliard, "Lord's Mana output hasn't decreased at all. It's been five hours and the Mana he uses every three seconds is equivalent to a Level-7 spell. How can he have so much energy?"

"You wouldn't know, but Ferde's Sunlight Power's strongest characteristic is its recovery rate," Eliard replied quietly. "It practically surpasses dragon power. Link is the main creator, so his recovery rate means that he basically will never run out of energy."

"Oh," Milose said. After a while, he asked again, "Do you understand the lord's techniques? It seems to be like Isle of Dawn enchantments, but after looking closer, it seems different. There are occasionally dragon techniques, and I even saw the melting techniques of dwarves. It's so strange."

"I can understand some but not most." Eliard's eyes never left Link's hands; his eyes were practically shining. "Link created many more intricate enchantment techniques. After a while, he'll probably write a book with them. If you have the authority and enough Magic Points, you can read it."

"Really? He'll share it?" Milose couldn't believe it. In his opinion, these were probably Link's most secret tricks. He should treasure them. For example, in the Isle of Dawn, many families treated their Magician's ultimate techniques as treasures. Like the royalty wouldn't pass many powerful spells to non-royalty, or even to those not directly in line to the throne."

Eliard guessed Milose's thoughts and smiled faintly. "Every new idea is like a brick.

After some time, the bricks will form a small magic house. The small house will turn into a big house, and then a tower and a palace. After centuries, perhaps Ferde will become the most brilliant magic temple in Firuman. The Isle of Dawn... might be stronger now, but who knows in the future?"

"But if people learn the lord's abilities..." Milose mumbled. He understood the logic, but he was still conflicted about sharing. If someone learned his tricks and surpassed him, he would have nothing.

Eliard sighed and glanced at Milose with pity. "That depends on what kind of person you want to become. If you want to stop improving, keep all your good stuff. If you want to improve, you should share your accomplishments. If you do that, you'll naturally receive the fruits of others. You can only improve by mixing different thoughts... You should know that in Ferde, the Magic Point reward for sharing any unique spell is 1000 times more than creating a potion of the same level. Buying someone else's wisdom also costs 1000 times more than magical items of the same level. This is the reward for wisdom."

Milose was affected by Eliard's eyes. He wanted to refute him but couldn't find anything and gave up in the end. He still wasn't entirely convinced, but the idea of sharing wisdom was carved into his soul.

At that time, Link stopped.

He'd used up all the refined magic equipment at that time too. A fist-sized ball was now in his hands. It was brown and completely dull. No magic aura seeped out of it. If he tossed it on the ground, it would be like any small rock.

"That's it?" Eliard glanced at the "rock." He knew that it was filled with boundless wisdom, so his eyes were reverent.

"Getting close."

There was some fatigue in his eyes, and his hand twitched. The white foggy sol flew out of the bottle and spread equally in the air. At the same time, the brown "rock" in Link's hand broke into a mist with a soft sound. The mist and sol mixed together under the invisible force of magic.

After around half an hour, the brown mist was gone. The originally white sol was now dark red. It looked a bit like blood.



The liquid formed a circle. Though it contained the brown mist, its size hadn't changed. It was only around two centimeters in diameter. Hovering in the air, it floated towards Nana.

"Open your mouth and swallow it. It will fix your body's last flaw, Link said.

Nana did so without hesitation. The round liquid entered her mouth and automatically "rolled" down her throat. Around three seconds later, Nana's body shook. She gripped the enchantment table, and the sturdy table cracked, turning to powder.

But the next moment, Nana stood up with a confused expression. She clenched her fist and then touched her face. Her expression grew more confused. "Master, Nana doesn't feel any change."

Link smiled. "That's right. Life is the most complicated structure in the world, so all changes happen gradually. Wait patiently, and you'll feel the power of the Water of Miracles."

"Oh." Nana was still confused, but she accepted Link's explanation.

Eliard found it strange too. He'd thought that a potion of this level should cause some things like a giant flash or Nana's power multiplying. But the ending was so anticlimactic. He just felt like something was missing.

"It seems too simple," Eliard said.

Link chuckled. "Don't just look at Nana now. You have to see what's growing inside her now. Just wait and see."

"Alright, so what do we do now?" Eliard asked.

Link asked Nana, "Your injuries should be all good now, right?"

Nana moved her hands and feet and then felt her body. Immediately, she said confusedly, "It's weird. Why don't I feel anything?"

Earlier, her injury seemed okay on the surface but would subtly affect her movements. Now, it was as if she wasn't injured at all. She even forgot how it had been.

Eliard laughed and clapped. "Amazing. This must be the first effect of the miraculous

potion. It reminds me of a seed sprouting in the spring. It's soundless but keeps changing. One day, it will grow into a big tree."

Link also smiled. "Since it's okay now, we can continue northward... Oh, I almost forgot. Let me see your sword. Perhaps I can strengthen it."

So Nana gave Link the sword and sheath.

Link slowly pulled the sword out. As soon as he did so, he felt a blazing aura radiate from it. At the same time, his heart turned cold as if someone stabbed him.

"Ah!" A cry came from Milose. He was staring at the sword in Link's hand. When it was pulled out, he stumbled back and activated a defensive barrier subconsciously.

Eliard flinched as well. Big droplets of sweat beaded on his forehead. Wiping his sweat, he exclaimed, "Is that the Last Nightmare? What a great sword!"

Clang! Link sheathed the sword again and returned it to Nana. "This sword changed a lot. What happened to it?"

"Nothing? Nana has always been using it. Unfortunately, Whispers of the Forest broke in a battle." Nana found it strange. She took the sword and pulled it out casually. Weirdly enough, the sword was very different when she did that. There was no glow at all, and its surface was covered in marks. There were even many nicks on the blade. It was extremely old and ragged.

At this time, the sword spirit of Ode of a Full Moon spoke in Link's mind.

This sword has killed at least 1000 Legendary figures. A bit of every victim's soul wraps around the sword. Those souls are filled with hatred and anger. The only one who can control them is Nana. Thus, only Nana can use this sword.

One thousand? No wonder, this is a weapon of mass destruction! Link sighed inwardly.

He walked over with magic materials in his hands. "Nana, hold it, and I'll fix it up."

"Yes, Master."

It was just a quick fix up, and Link finished within an hour. He also added some very resilient hardening seal to upgrade the sword. It was now at Level-11 and counted as

a Legendary weapon too.

“Okay, that’s done. We can go north now.”

# Chapter 590

## Visitors from Another Realm

“Four people passed by here recently. One of them was a human, and the other two were half-elves. What’s even stranger is that they all seem to be heading north,” said a human male with a full mat of fiery red hair. He was standing in front of a pile of ashes that had once been a campfire in the Black Forest. His red glowing eyes were narrowed as he observed his surroundings.

Beside him stood someone else. The person was also human. The only difference was that it was a woman.

Her eyes also shone with the same red light. Like the man beside her, the woman was wearing an elegant set of magical armor. A pair of scimitars hung from her waist. Her hair was also a brilliant red and even more luxuriant than the man’s hair. At a glance, it looked like the woman’s head had been set ablaze.

She squatted down and wiped a hand that was wearing a dark red leather glove across a tree stump. She then raised a finger to her eyes, closely observing whatever she had wiped off from the stump. She even took a whiff from it. Five seconds later, she whispered, “Hamilton, I sense a familiar hint of coldness in the aura of one of them. There’s also a slight warmth in it... Do you think it’s her?”

“It is possible. The saint told us that she was the Lord of Ferde’s magic puppet. She has crossed realms to return to Firuman. The first thing she’d probably do would be to go back to the Lord of Ferde. Noa, we’ll need to tread carefully from now on.”

Noa grinned. “She’s the only one who poses a threat to us. Everyone else isn’t even worth our time. The saint was right. This realm’s power level is just too weak.”

“Don’t underestimate them,” said Hamilton. He then began walking northward as he continued, “Forget what the saint said about keeping them alive. Kill them on sight with all your might. We’ll just have to see if they’re lucky enough to survive our attacks.”

Noa caught up to him, giggling. “Of course I won’t show them mercy. But I would rather

we not come across them too soon. It's probably better to let them find the Book of Creation first. Saves us a lot of time finding it ourselves."

Hamilton shrugged. "That certainly would be convenient."

After taking a few steps, Noa suddenly said, "But really, those High Elves are a bunch of idiots, especially their queen. She thinks she can boss us around and even belittle our bloodline just because she's the saint's mother. I just really want to chop her head off with my sword!"

"Alright now, you've been saying that ever since we got here. Let her have her way for now. She'll get what she deserves later."

"I just can't stand her!"

"But you can't deny that her World Tree holds considerable power."

The two of them were now heading north. They strolled through the Black Forest without an air of concern as if they were simply taking a walk in their own backyard.

After walking for two hours, another group of four arrived at the remnants of the campfire. This time, it was the Red Dragon Queen's party. When they got there, the Light Magician Halino pointed at the pile of ashes with his wand and cast a high-level detection spell: Time Reverse. A gold shower of light fell from his wand, forming a couple of vague silhouettes around the pile of ashes. The silhouettes then began to move.

There were four silhouettes sitting around the campfire. A huge tent had been set up in a corner. A freshly skinned wild boar was roasting above the campfire. Through the silhouettes, they could see drops of oil dripping from the wild boar.

Halino's spell had vividly conjured three of the silhouettes. Two of them looked like half-elves. Their features were handsome. They were sitting around the fire, discussing something. From their get-up and mannerisms, they were probably Magicians.

The third silhouette belonged to a girl who was wearing a full set of armor. She seemed to be around sixteen to seventeen years old. She was sitting near the fire as well, enthusiastically turning the skewer that was holding the wild boar above the fire.

However, the fourth silhouette stood out from the rest. Its entire form was a blur. The figure was basically a condensed ball of light sitting quietly near the fire. It was easy to miss if one was not looking properly at it.

No one could see what the figure looked like or even what it was doing at the time.

Just then, the four of them saw that the human blur waved a hand. An instant later, the figures conjured by Halino's Time Reverse spell shook violently. Tried as he might, Halino could not maintain the integrity of the silhouettes any longer. In the end, they all faded back into a shower of light.

Seeing this, the Dark Magician Eugene let out a humph. "That's definitely the lord of Ferde. No one else could pull off such a trick."

The other party must have disrupted the flow of Time power. In Firuman, aside from a couple of the High Elves who had spent a long time studying Time Magic, only the lord of Ferde could do such a thing.

The Mountain Sage Heroto sighed, stroking his white beard. "I had seen the lord of Ferde back in Dragon Valley. He was still such an innocent little thing back then, like a sprout that had just poked its head out from the soil. Who would have thought that he would become so powerful in less than a year? It's incredible."

Gretel did not say a word. She was still gazing absently at where Link's silhouette had been.

Noticing Gretel's current state, Eugene said, "Your Highness, Link's most likely heading north to search for the Book of Creation's fragment there. Try not to let your heartstrings be pulled by a few words from Link when we catch up to him. If you can't even do this, I suggest that you go back to Dragon Valley right now."

Gretel let out a long sigh and looked sideways at Eugene, smiling bitterly. "I'm fine, thanks. Just worry about yourself. I'm not the one making life difficult for everyone in Firuman, anyway."

"Alright, alright, point made." Eugene raised his hands in defeat. He then turned to Halino. "Link's a handful by himself. Now that he's involved in this, what should we do now?"

Halino thought for a moment, then said, "I don't think we need to worry about him too

much. The lord of Ferde is a reasonable man. We'll try to come to an agreement with him if we see him. He'll probably accept our terms as long as Ferde stands to profit from them."

Just then, Heroto burst out angrily, "Well sure, he's a bloody businessman who only thinks about profiting off everyone he meets. Heck, he's probably hoarded all the gold in Firuman for himself in Ferde by now."

"That's enough! Let's continue our journey, shall we?" said Gretel.

The four of them fell silent. They then activated their spells and continued their journey towards the far North.

Ten minutes later, Halino suddenly said, "Stop, something's not right. There are two people up ahead. I can sense that they're extremely powerful!"

Eugene had sensed them too. He emerged from a black ball of mist. "Strange, I've never felt such powerful Warriors in Firuman before. They also seem to be no more than 30 years old. Has something changed in the world?"

He was shaken by this. All this time, Halino was the only person who had stood on equal footing with him in terms of power. Now came along these two youngsters whose power surpassed even his. This was just not possible.

Gretel stopped. She pricked her ears and then closely felt the two youngsters' power levels. Ten seconds later, she spoke, "These two are not from Firuman. I heard them mentioning something about a saint, the Aragu Kingdom, and a Black Blood Rose. They probably came from the Aragu realm. Link once told me about that place. The Mana there is extremely saturated. It's probably five times that of Firuman."

Eugene was stunned upon hearing this. He was now even more curious. "So that's why those two possess such power. They've been living in a Mana haven. From the looks of things, those two don't seem to be up to anything good. Why don't we take them on now?"

"Why would you want to pick a fight with them right now?" The Mountain Sage Heroto did not agree with Eugene's suggestion.

Eugene immediately replied, "I highly doubt those two come all the way here from their native realm with good intentions. Heroto, would you have minded if I barged

into the dwarves' underground capital one day without even saying hi to you?"

Heroto glared at him. "I would have you escorted out of the city in a coffin if you so much as came near the place!"

"Hahaha, that's my point. Those two fellows didn't even bother introducing themselves to us, the rightful inhabitants of this realm. Halino, you up to it or what?"

After thinking for a bit, Halino said, "You do have a point. We'll need to at least ask what they had come here for. It's just two Warriors anyway. Though they may be more powerful than us individually, we could set up a trap for them. Subduing them shouldn't be a problem."

"Hehe, it's not every day you would agree with one of my ideas. Then let's do it."



# Chapter 591

## First Challenge in the Tundra

Link stood on the snowy peak and asked the sword spirit, “Is this direction right?”

An icy wind blew around him while the boundless icy plain was before him. The air was abnormally clean. Looking down from the peak with his excellent vision, Link could see hundreds of miles.

All of this land was the same tundra. What was different was that in the distance, it became darker; it was nighttime at the end. There was a clear difference between night and day in different parts of the north and south. This was a sight unique to the extreme north.

The general direction is right, but too much time has passed. I don’t know if the land has changed.

The sword spirit’s voice was full of uncertainty. The Storm Lord was from the ancient times and millenniums had passed. This was enough time for seas to turn into land.

Link had no choice but to continue searching in the general direction. Whether or not he could find the piece of the so-called Book of Creation depended on his luck.

I’ll search for three months at most. If there aren’t any clues after three months, I’ll give up. Link set a deadline for himself. He still had many things to do and couldn’t waste too much time on this.

Pulling his clothes tighter, Link said to the other three, “Alright, let’s continue.”

The three nodded. Nana took the lead and jumped down from the mountaintop. Then she ran down the slope. She looked as light as a floating leaf with perfect control of her strength.

She couldn’t do this before. In the past, Nana had perfect battle experience, but her fighting style depended on extreme speed and strength. If anyone could deal with those two, she would be in trouble.

Now, she was in a whole new state. Her techniques mixed with her perfect experience, and she had indescribable agility. This was the subtle effect of the Water of Miracles.

Eliard and Milose both cast flight spells to descend from the mountaintop. Though they were flying, they had to use all their might to catch up with Nana.

Link followed slowly behind them to erase their marks. They could be a bit careless in the Black Forest, but this was the extreme north. They were very close to the piece. If they didn't hide themselves, it would be annoying if people came to cause trouble.

The four traveled more than 150 miles like this. The sky darkened gradually. After around 50 more miles, night fell completely.

Thankfully, the sky was still covered in stars. There was also ice and snow everywhere, so their vision wasn't affected.

This place was not inhabitable and very few people stepped into this world of ice during the millenniums. Even the courageous adventurers wouldn't come here. In many legends, this was even known as the end of the world.

No one knew what they would run into. For safety reasons, Link and the others slowed down. To avoid surprising some unknown existences, they didn't even use spells and just walked on foot.

Though they were Magicians, all three had strong bodies. Nana went without saying. It was a bit cold, but they could handle it.

After a while, the cold wind stopped.

Crunch, crunch. Other than the sound of stepping in snow, the world was silent.

"It's as quiet as a cemetery here." Eliard hugged himself, feeling a bit anxious.

Milose looked side to side, hands gripping his wand tightly in preparation. "I just feel strange, like something's watching us."

Nana continued forward as before. She didn't feel anything abnormal.

Link felt something strange too. This place was too quiet. His Magician instincts told him that if he continued walking, something would happen. However, this feeling was

fuzzy. Like a spider web in the breeze, it was hard to grasp. All Link could do was compose himself and walk on in full alert.

As he walked, Link's heart suddenly jumped. The surroundings had suddenly fallen silent. He couldn't even hear footsteps anymore. Turning around hurriedly, he saw that Eliard, Milose, and Nana had all disappeared from the boundless tundra. Other than the white snow, there was nothing else around him.

Strange. How did they disappear? Link furrowed his brows. He hadn't felt the surroundings change during this process. There were no Mana ripples, spatial ripples, or anything else. The three just vanished.

Link wouldn't believe it. He walked to where their footprints had disappeared to check. He cast many detection spells but to no avail.

This was a bit strange.

Link stood in place to think. A few seconds later, he decided to retreat. What had happened was outside his range. Going forward wasn't wise.

He turned to walk back, but then it felt even more wrong.

Deep in the extreme north, white snow was everything. Paired with the fact that it was night and even the wind had stopped, it was difficult to find one's direction. Link could still tell north from south though. The southern sky was slightly brighter than the north. He also had a compass. Relying on the magnetic field, he could precisely distinguish north and south.

But now, Link discovered that the sky before and behind him was still the same sky. He looked down at the compass. It stayed frozen; it couldn't distinguish the direction.

Link spun around and discovered something even more shocking.

The four sides are the same. They're all going northward. No matter how I move, I'll get closer to the northernmost point... The space must have been distorted, but I've never seen this technique before.

At this time, the sword spirit said, Link, for some reason, I suddenly thought of something.

Link really wanted to drag the sword spirit out of the sword and beat it up. Why did it have to wait until something had happened to tell him? Was it playing with Link?

He sighed and asked, "What is it? Tell me."

I think it's about that person. The one who'd stopped the Storm Lord from carelessly throwing the piece away. I suddenly remembered what he'd said. No, I didn't remember it. It just jumped out by itself.

Hearing this, Link's heart twitched. He felt that things weren't as simple as he'd thought. There seemed to be something existing in the sword spirit's memory that planned this.

"What did he say?"

He said that this is the first step. It's a solo challenge.

"Oh?" Link fell into deep thought and came up with two points. First, everyone who came here probably had to face this test alone. Thus, Eliard, Milose, and Nana were separated from him. Second, he wasn't the only who could pass this test, so there must be a second and third step until there was a final winner.

Here, Link stopped thinking. He continued walking deep into the icy plain.

Soon after he entered the test, two fiery-red figures arrived. They were Hamilton and Noa, Inferno Warriors from Aragu.

They didn't have the calmness as when they'd first arrived in Firuman. They were in a panic as if a beast was chasing after them. Their glamorous leather armor had become tattered, and they were wounded too. Hamilton especially had a still-bleeding injury under his ribs. His pallor was white, and his steps were unsteady.

Noa beside him wasn't any better. She'd had two curved fire swords but only had one now. There was a menacing wound on her right arm. The blood had frozen already, but more blood kept seeping from the ice. Her arm trembled.

"F\*ck, they're still chasing!" Hamilton gritted out. Speaking had pulled at his injury. He immediately clutched his chest and grunted.

"I didn't expect Magicians in this world to be so powerful." Noa's eyes were filled with

terror. These people were too frightening. They weren't as strong, but no matter how the two fought, they couldn't hit the enemy. And the enemy seemed able to predict their every move, always beating them to it.

If not for their power and the fear of the enemy, they wouldn't be able to escape here.

Hamilton still wouldn't admit defeat. "Hmph. They had four people and attacked secretly. Of course, we weren't their match. If it was one on one, I'd halve them with one strike!"

Noa didn't speak. She knew that this was just Hamilton's ego speaking. In reality, they might not be a match even in a one on one battle. The Dark and Light Magicians were especially terrifying!

The two continued running forward without caring about anything else. Without realizing, the wind stopped, and then Hamilton felt his surroundings empty. He turned around, but Noa was gone.

"Noa? Noa?" he called. There was no reply.

...

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh. The Red Dragon Queen's group also arrived. Eugene sniffed the air and cackled. "Those two aren't far from us. Go, we'll catch them soon."

The other three could feel this two and naturally started chasing. After a while, the four were all in the strange territory, separated by the strange force.

Suddenly, the icy tundra had nine Legendary figures and the legendary Eliard trapped. These ten were facing the test of a certain ancient figure.

# Chapter 592

## A Fragment Has Been Found!

“Am I back again?” Link looked at the footprints on the ground again and realized that it was the same place that he had passed by moments ago. It was also the place where Eliard, Milose, and Nana had vanished.

This was the third time Link had walked by the same place. He realized that he had been walking in an endless loop. Strictly speaking, it might even be a four-dimensional closed loop he was dealing with.

In this icy wasteland in the Far North, no matter which way he went, he would always return to the loop’s point of origin. Time in the outside world would also rewind back to the moment when Eliard and the others had disappeared without a trace.

It was easy to spot a spatial loop. On the other hand, no ordinary human being would be able to notice a loop in time, especially when he or she was trapped in an icy region where there was nothing but ice as far as the eye could see. The wind was silent, and nothing stood out as a point of reference for Link.

Link would not have been able to sense a time loop as well, had it not been for the fact that he had spent most of his time studying his time magic book recently. Though he still had a long way to go, his research had bore some fruit, such as the fact that he was able to sense a stagnation in time.

Link decided not to walk in circles any longer. He sat down on the snowy ground. With one hand on his forehead, he tried to remember what had happened before, hoping to find some clue for him to break out of this loop.

Though he sat there, motionless, his mind was working at a feverish pace trying to piece together an explanation for his situation. Not only was he going through his own thoughts, but he was also flipping through the time magic book in his mind in an attempt to corroborate his own theories.

After silently sitting there for a long time, Link suddenly jerked up from his thoughts. He finally discovered the secret behind the loop he was trapped in.

It may seem like an endless loop, but it still has a point of origin. Otherwise, I would not have ended up here in the first place. The loop's origin is its endpoint. It is also my way out of here!

He stood up and drew out his Ode of a Full Moon sword. Under the starry sky, he stabbed at six different points around him with his sword.

A runic wheel appeared from the sword's tip with each stab. There were countless smaller rings of runes within each runic wheel. At a glance, it looked like the interior of a clock, its gears rotating rapidly with each other inside it.

When Link was done, six exquisite hexagonal runic wheels now surrounded him.

As the wheels spun on for three seconds, Link heard the sound of ice breaking. Soon, his surroundings began changing drastically around him.

The silent, dark, icy wasteland was now fading away quickly before Link. Snow then whirled around him alongside the wind, which roared into Link's ears like a wild beast. The surrounding temperature had dropped to a few hundred degrees below zero in an instant.

The cold was now beyond bearable. Even Link's magic robe could not resist the freezing cold. His eyes felt like they were about to freeze up and fall out of their sockets. There was no way a human body would be able to withstand such temperatures. He needed to warm himself up as quickly as possible.

One of the most convenient methods for any Magician to keep warm would be magic itself. Before, Link would have cast a spell to do so without hesitation. However, at the moment, he decided not to use magic.

In order to magically keep oneself warm, a Magician would need to focus on maintaining the spell's effect on himself. This would not have been a problem to Link under any other circumstances. But given the erratic nature of his surroundings at the moment, he would not be able to react in time to any sudden changes if he had to focus on two things at the same time. This was not a risk he was willing to take.

Instead of magic, Link decided to use a new technique that he had acquired after practicing the Beastman King Avatar's Soul Furnace technique.

The energy in Link's body began to circulate at an accelerated pace as he willed it to.

As a result, he began to feel his body warming up more and more. The heat in him flowed through his every vein to every extremity of his body.

In a matter of seconds, the numbness in his body was gone. Link had regained the feeling in his limbs.

In truth, the technique that Link had just used was similar to the way a Warrior used his battle aura. This was an easy task for a Warrior, but to a Magician, it would have been extremely difficult.

A Magician was usually accustomed to drawing out Mana from within, forming magical constructs outside his body and then summoning the elements of his surroundings to fight his battles. In truth, Magicians had little to no mastery over their physical bodies. There had also never been a Magician bold enough to cast a spell on himself. Even casting a supplementary spell on oneself was a taboo in itself. This was due to the damage a Magician could cause to his own body by doing such a thing.

But now, Link had transcended the difference in power between Magicians and Warriors by using the Beastmen's Legendary battle technique, the Soul Furnace. This was only made possible by his mastery over his own power.

His body was now warming up. Link glared at the freezing wind as he pressed on towards the north.

The voice of his sword spirit echoed in his head, There's that voice again. It said that this is the second test.

"Understood," said Link, as he continued walking forward.

Soon, Link realized that the air was getting colder by the minute. As a result, he was losing body heat quickly. He needed to speed up the circulation of his energy in his body before he froze to death.

After walking a few hundred feet forward, a message popped up in Link's line of sight. Straining his eyes, he saw that it was a warning message from the game system.

Attention! Attention!

Player's current Realm Essence recovery rate is at 134 points per second, while current rate of power usage is at 135 points per second. Player's power reserve is



beginning to drop!

Link's current maximum power was 10365 Realm Essence points, which was more than what the Red Dragon Queen had by 30 percent if converted into Dragon Power. Also, his current recovery rate was 134 points per second, which meant that his power was virtually unlimited. However, in order to withstand the cold, his power recovery rate had taken a huge hit.

The first test was to test how much I understand about space and time. What's the second test about this time? Is it testing the level of mastery I have over my power?

As soon as the thought flashed across Link's mind, he heard the sound of ice breaking again amid the howling of the freezing wind.

He narrowed his eyes, trying to see what was up ahead, but the flying snow around him was so dense he could not see a thing. Just then, he felt a slight protrusion beneath his feet. He lowered his eyes and saw that a huge number of cracks had appeared on the ground that he was standing. The cracks were dark inside. Link could not see how deep they went. A piece of ice fell off the edge of a crack. Sounds of its collisions against the ice walls echoed from within the abyss as it fell. Link had no idea just how deep the crack was.

A moment later, the ice beneath Link's feet began to give way.

In a flash, Link tiptoed his way across the gradually collapsing ice layer. His body floated gracefully through the air and finally landed on a patch of ice in a corner.

Link could have used one of his spells throughout the whole thing. He chose not to, as he could sense that there was an unseen danger lurking beneath the ice layer. If he had cast a spell to help himself across the collapsing ice, he would be distracted by said danger and consequently fall to his doom.

This was why he chose to use a battle technique instead.

Before he could let out a sigh of relief, the layer of ice he had landed on suddenly began to collapse as well. Link sprang up, sailed lightly through the air and landed on a patch of ice that was still intact.

Without warning, the ice there began to break, and Link leaped into the air once more. This whole process went on without any danger of Link stumbling in midair.

An outside observer would probably notice that Link was stepping on falling pieces of ice throughout the whole ordeal. The layer of ice he landed on would collapse, and Link would leaped off fragments of it in the air as he moved forward. It seemed as if he was literally walking on air.

This went on for around ten minutes. In that time, Link had taken 1329 steps forward across ten miles of ice without missing a step or slowing down. It was as if he had rehearsed for such an occasion.

When he took his 1330th step, his foot finally hit solid ice which did not give way immediately.

This circular patch of ice was around a hundred square feet. In the middle of it stood a man completely covered in frost. Before Link even had time to plant both feet on the ground, the man came at him, appearing before Link in the blink of an eye. An ice sword materialized in his hand and was already less than a feet away from piercing through Link's chest.

No Magician or Warrior would have been able to react to such an attack in time, especially after experiencing what Link had gone through. They would be stabbed by the man's ice sword before they even knew what hit them!

Anyone on the wrong end of this sword would be killed in an instant!

However, Link was not just an ordinary Magician. As he was leaping off of falling ice, he had already spotted the ice man in the distance. His power had already flowed into his sword. When the ice man teleported before him, Link immediately stabbed at him with his Ode of a Full Moon sword.

He then activated the time sword technique, which had the effect of 1000 years squeezed into the span of a mere second.

As the Ode of a Full Moon sword lightly touched the tip of the ice sword, cracks began appearing across its blade. An instant later, the entire ice sword burst into a fine powder.

In this realm, nothing could withstand the destructive power of accelerated time.

After shattering the ice sword, Link swung his sword up and stabbed the ice man's forehead with it in one fluid motion. Power then flowed into the tip of his sword,

activating an incredibly destructive fire spell that belonged to the dragon race: Ball of Destruction.

Purple light flashed out from the ice man's head. Then, his body fell down limply and melted into a puddle of water. The puddle of water froze up immediately in the cold.

As the puddle of water turned into a new sheet of ice, Link's surroundings began to change again.

The blizzard was gone, and so was the biting cold. A full moon had appeared in the sky. Up ahead rose a towering mountain of ice. On the peak of the mountain was a platform, from which shone a faint light. Looking closely, Link realized that a broken stone fragment was the light's source.

The fragment of the Book of Creation! Excited by his discovery, Link began to climb up the mountain to retrieve his prize.

Just then, the sword spirit said, The third test has begun.

Five flashes of light appeared in quick succession not far away from Link. There were silhouettes standing in the light. One of them was no more than 300 feet away from him.

Link narrowed his eyes. "Eugene."

Eugene looked disheveled. His black robe was torn in certain places. His hair was in a mess, and there were even bloody wounds on his face. A look of surprise flitted across his face when he saw Link, but he quickly got a grip of himself and laughed out loud. "Hahaha, if it isn't the lord of Ferde himself. Never thought I would find you here, of all places."

# Chapter 593

## Moment of Testing One's Heart

The icy peaks loomed under the moonlight.

Under the mountain, six people appeared—Link, Dark Magician Eugene, Light Magician Halino, Eliard, Nana, and a Warrior with tattered red armor and a curved sword.

Wait, another beam of light appeared around 1500 feet to the left of Link. The light subsided, revealing Red Dragon Queen Gretel.

So there were seven people.

Gretel didn't seem to be in good shape. She was covered in wounds, and her fiery-red dress was torn at places. After she appeared, crystal red power surged, and her injuries started healing at a speed visible to the naked eye. Even her dress was mended.

Seeing Link, she flinched and then looked away. She didn't speak.

No one else appeared after that. Milose never came. Link guessed that he couldn't pass the test.

Now, the piece of the Book of Creation was not far from the seven. Gretel was 1500 feet to the left of Link. The Dark Magician Eugene was to his right. After that was the Light Magician and the Warrior before finally getting to Eliard and Nana.

Link's position was disadvantageous. He was right between three outsiders.

The treasure was before them, and the situation was unclear. Thus, everyone was on alert. No one wanted to be the first to go.

They couldn't keep at this stalemate though. Light Magician Halino spoke up first. "Ferde Lord, the piece isn't that useful. If you take it—"

Before he could finish, the voice rang out from the mountain again. “Younglings, I am very happy that you all passed the test. The fact that you are here means that you all have a talent that the others do not have. It may be power, wisdom, lineage, or even pure luck. You are the top-tier geniuses of the era. Now, you have come for the piece of the Book of Creation. Unfortunately, there is only one piece. That means only one person can receive it.”

“Who are you?” Eugene called.

“Me? I’m just the remnant of a soul left from the ancient times. I am the protector of the ancient sovereign wisdom.”

“What benefits does that piece have?” Eugene asked again.

“Benefits? Didn’t you come because you knew? It is the key that can open the authority of the World Tree. Because it is the biggest piece, it contains more than 50% of the Creation Runes in the book. With it, you can control the World Tree and become the most powerful of this realm. You can rule over the countless lives in Firuman.”

Control the World Tree? The most powerful who could rule over lives?

Other than Nana, everyone present stopped breathing for a moment. Even Link’s heart skipped a beat at this.

Link wasn’t greedy for the ultimate power of ruling all lives. His heart sped up because of what the piece represented. It could help someone become the ultimate ruler and control countless fates. The fact that it existed was terrifying.

Imagine if someone got it. If they really became the most powerful as this protector said, then Link, his loved ones, and his friends would all be ruled by them. If they didn’t like the new magic institution he’d established in Ferde, they could destroy it easily.

These thoughts flowed through his mind. Instantly, Link discovered that he only had one choice—fight for the piece.

Link didn’t lower his guard while thinking. He kept watching the people beside him from the corner of his vision, especially Eugene.

In his mind, he also asked the sword spirit, Is the piece truly that powerful?

It might not have been in the ancient times. When all Level-19 lords united, they could still defeat the sovereign. But now, there are barely any strong figures. Perhaps it's true?

The sword spirit made sense.

At this time, Link suddenly saw a message pop up in his vision. He checked and saw it was actually from the game system.

Activate Mission: The Piece That Shouldn't Exist

Mission Content: The piece of the Book of Creation is too powerful. Its existence will only push the Firuman Realm deeper into danger. Destroy it so no sovereign can appear in this world.

Mission Reward 1: Brilliant Starry Crown (Level-19)

Mission Reward 2: 1000 Omni Points

Punishment for Failure: Light Curse

Light Curse

Divine Technique

Effect: The punishment of the God of Light. The cursed will have their power forever sealed by the God of Light and die within three years.

(Note: God can instantly destroy a mortal's power and cause them to fall from the clouds, making them experience despair!)

This mission was very cruel. Link glanced at it and then ignored it. He wasn't that naive kid anymore. He knew what he wanted to do and didn't want anyone to interfere. Even if it was a god tempting him with Level-19 magic equipment, he would still be unmoved.

The Red Dragon Queen spoke now to everyone present, "This piece will cause a great imbalance in the world's power. I don't wish anyone to receive it, so I will do my best to destroy it! If I succeed, the world will be in luck. If not, I hope Firuman can be eternal!"

As she spoke, thick red light appeared on her body. They formed the illusion of a dragon. Half a second later, she transformed into dragon form.

Hearing this, Dark Magician Eugene yelled, "Gretel, what's wrong with you? Didn't you say that we'd use this to stop the High Elves? How come you've turned now?"

Light Magician Halino also said, "Your Majesty, I agree, but let's use it to stop the High Elves first and then destroy it."

The Red Dragon Queen shook her head resolutely. "No, once this piece arrives at the World Tree, no one will be able to resist its temptation, not even me. Thus, I must destroy it now!"

"You crazy woman!" Eugene yelled. Dark flames faded in and out around him as he berated, "Without it, we'll all die when the realms fuse and Mana explodes."

"So what? Life will pass. My race's mission to maintain the balance in the world is truly eternal!" Gretel's voice was calm. Her eyes were also calm; she'd seen everything in the world.

In the distance, Inferno Warrior Hamilton watched all this and burst into laughter. "It's laughable. It's truly laughable. You haven't even gotten the piece, and you have internal fights already. There'll be a great show next... Alright, don't look at me. I'm not your match. You guys take it while I get out of here. Seeing this was enough for me."

With that, he turned around and walked back. Soon, he was gone. Even his aura had disappeared. He really wasn't going to continue this fight.

Six people were left.

Eliard looked to Link. "What do you plan on doing?"

He wasn't interested in ruling. To him, the best thing in life was to quietly study magic and spend his time with his loved one. This had mostly come true in Ferde.

Now, this piece was threatening his happy life. His intent was the same as the Red Dragon Queen. He would do his best to destroy the piece. However, if Link wanted it, he would also try his best to get it for Link. He knew that the world wasn't as beautiful as he thought. He may not want it, but that didn't mean others didn't want it. Link getting the piece was better than others getting it.

As for Nana, she would do whatever Link said.

Halino looked at Link and hurriedly said, “Lord Morani, don’t forget the crazy plan of the High Elves. I believe the wisest choice is to take the piece, stop the High Elves, and then destroy it. If you agree to help us get it, I can take three astral meteorites from my personal archive as compensation.”

As soon as he finished, Eugene said, “Lord Morani, you have common sense. Halino’s plan doesn’t have any problems. If you agree, I’ll add three more astral meteorites.”

On the other side, the Red Dragon Queen didn’t say anything. She also looked at Link. She was clear that whether or not she could destroy this terrible piece depended on Link.

He already had a plan. Glancing at the piece on the mountain, he smiled. “Actually, I-”

Before he could finish, there was another flash. When the light subsided, a dwarf appeared. It was the Mountain Sage, Heroto.

This was another variable.



# Chapter 594

## I Don't Know What You're Thinking

Heroto was in a state of disorder when he appeared. His white beard had been sheared unevenly by some sharp object and stained by blood. His clothes were in tatters. He looked around. Feeling that something was not right, he asked, "Halino, what happened here? Did I miss anything?"

Halino chuckled. "No, you've arrived just in time, Heroto."

Eugene said, "Heroto, I'm telling you, the Red Dragon Queen's lost it. She's turned on us! She wants to destroy the Book of Creation's fragment!"

If Heroto had not appeared and Link had chosen to side with the Red Dragon Queen, both Eugene and Halino would have lost all hope of retrieving the Book of Creation's fragment.

But now, their overall strength had received a huge boost with the appearance of Heroto. They now had an advantage over the Red Dragon Queen. Even if Link allied himself with her, it would not have made a difference.

Also, Link was a reasonable person. He would definitely be able to see that he had no chance of winning against them. Not wanting to risk annihilation alongside the queen, Link would naturally choose to pull out from their dispute.

The Red Dragon Queen might even be thinking about taking all three of them on her own. If she was still intent on stopping them, it would only mean her death.

Gretel had also noticed the sudden change in her situation. She turned to Heroto.

"No, Great Sage, the Book of Creation's fragment is just too powerful. Whoever has it will... Eugene, you bastard! Are you looking to die so soon?"

Before she even finished, she realized that Eugene had already raced up the mountain ahead of them.

As he streaked up the mountain, he shouted back, “There’s nothing to be said between us, Gretel. Our opinions differ greatly. Trying to persuade the other to see one’s point of view would simply be an exercise in futility. Halino, Heroto, stop her!”

Gretel opened her mouth wide, and a huge fire pillar surged out from it towards the Dark Magician Eugene like a sharp sword.

It did not matter whether Link decided to side with her. It did not matter if she had to see this fight through on her own. Even if it meant risking death, she would do whatever it took to destroy the Book of Creation’s fragment.

And so, she did not hesitate to make the first move against Eugene.

Heroto was still unclear about the situation. The atmosphere was already tense when he appeared in their midst. Seeing that Gretel had struck out at Eugene, Heroto decided to join forces with Halino and Eugene.

He pointed his wand at the ground. “Mountain Surge!”

A rumbling sound came from the ground. In an instant, the ground rose up, forming a 500-foot tall, 1000-foot wide, 100-foot thick stone wall. It was as if a huge mountain had appeared out of thin air.

The five-foot thick dragon breath hit the stone wall. Streaks of fire and light flew off in all directions upon impact, and molten rock flowed from the wall, but the attack did not penetrate the thick stone wall.

“Gretel, what are you doing?!” Heroto could not grasp the Red Dragon Queen’s actions.

Halino said hurriedly, “Save your questions for later, Heroto. Our top priority now is to retrieve the Book of Creation’s fragment before anything happens to it!”

This sounded reasonable. Still unclear about the whole situation, Heroto decided not to think too much about it for now and pointed his wand at the Red Dragon Queen’s feet. “Earthquake!”

With another rumbling, the ground beneath the Red Dragon Queen began to roil like an ocean’s surface during a storm.

Gretel spread out her wings and rushed into the sky in a whoosh. She then spewed

dragon breath at Heroto as she flew up.

Another huge pillar of fire surged out from her mouth.

This was not all. A dark purple fireball was now taking shape in front of the Red Dragon Queen's massive body. It gradually expanded into a three-foot wide purple-black fireball.

"Ball of Destruction!"

Dragon breath surged towards Halino and Mountain Sage Heroto like an avalanche. On the other hand, the Ball of Destruction hurtled towards the Mountain Sage's huge stone barrier and collided into the huge hole that Gretel had managed to carve into it with her first burst of dragon fire.

In the next second, an explosion shook the earth. The Ball of Destruction had exploded, shattering the stone barrier into pieces. The stone that formed the barrier melted into hot molten lava, which burst out in all directions at incredible speed. In an instant, lava sprayed out as far as a few thousand feet around the point of impact.

From afar, it looked as if someone had set off a lava-filled firework!

This was an indiscriminate attack, covering everyone and everything within its area in an instant. It also had tremendous power. Each blob of lava that was sent flying into the air could reach Level-11 or above in terms of power. Only the Red Dragon Queen was able to unleash an attack of this magnitude with ease.

In the midst of this catastrophic display of fire and smoke, a flash of white light appeared. It was Link's spatial portal. Just as everyone else was busy taking cover, Link appeared beside Eliard and Nana and conjured a spatial barrier around them.

As soon as the barrier appeared, hot molten lava began falling from the sky and onto the spatial barrier. The barrage of lava was then suspended in midair by this transparent barrier before it hit the ground.

Through the spatial barrier, all three of them saw that Halino, Heroto and even Eugene stopped in their tracks in order to set up their magical defenses against this attack.

Seeing the raging Red Dragon Queen floating in the air, Eliard could not help but exclaim, "The dragons' queen really is powerful to be able to hold her own against

three Legendary masters!”

Nana thought otherwise. She was staring at Halino. She then whispered, “Two seconds.”

“Two seconds until what?” asked Eliard.

Link replied, “Two seconds from now, the Light Magician Halino will retaliate. Judging from the flow of energy within him, the attack he’s preparing will be lethal. She’ll die from it!”

Halino was a Level-13 master who had seen much in the world for the last hundred or so years. He was a peerless master whose power was second to none. The Red Dragon Queen was simply not a match for him.

Link’s hand was already holding up the Ode of a Full Moon sword as he said this. Though his choice differed slightly from the others, Link was still of the opinion that the Red Dragon Queen’s continued existence would benefit Link and Ferde more than her demise.

And so, if Gretel was really in trouble, he would have to step up and come to her aid.

As the terrifying shower of lava came to an end, Halino’s voice rang out. “Your Highness, this is getting ridiculous. I’ve always held you in the highest esteem. But now, you’ve gone too far. You seem to forget that I too have a temper!”

Halino was now holding a white crystal magic wand. He pointed at the sky, and a faint golden light flashed out from the tip of the wand into the air.

“Light’s Fury: Lightning Retribution!”

There was a rumble in the sky. Almost at the same time, a streak of lightning descended from the clouds like a golden electric serpent, striking the Red Dragon Queen squarely.

The golden lightning’s power was incredible. When it flashed out, the whole sky was lit up as bright as day. The ice plain was bathed in a golden light, holy and pure like an angel’s halo.

Though the Red Dragon Queen’s body was massive, her size was trivial in comparison

to the sheer force of Halino's lightning attack.

Eliard's eyes widened, unable to believe what he had just seen. He was at a loss for words, unable to comprehend the terrifying attack Halino had just unleashed.

If one had compared the Red Dragon Queen's Ball of Destruction attack to the earth's terrible fury, then the Light Magician Halino's Lightning Retribution attack was like a divine punishment meted out directly by a god. It had come straight from the heavens with enough power to bring all mortals down to their knees in reverential awe.

The earth might be powerful, but it was still inferior to the heavens. Anyone could see that the Red Dragon Queen would not be able to survive the attack.

Link was still gripping on the Ode of a Full Moon sword. However, a moment later, he loosened his grip. He knew that the Red Dragon Queen must have something up her sleeve. She would not be killed so easily by this.

The bolt of lightning pierced through the Red Dragon Queen's body as it descended from the heavens. It seemed to have hit her, but in the next second, her body began to fade until it finally vanished.

"Was she hit by the lightning?" Eliard asked, stunned.

"No, she's entered the Sea of Void," whispered Nana.

The golden lightning bolt was indeed powerful, but the Red Dragon Queen did not bother defending herself against it. Her dragon body was a vessel meant for crossing the Void. She must have realized that she was completely outmatched by Halino, and so chose to slip into the Void to avoid the attack.

"Uhm?" Halino was stunned by this as well. He had assumed that the queen had lost her mind completely. The fact that she still retained her combat sense had caught him by surprise.

"Eugene, stay alert! She could ambush you from anywhere!" Halino shouted at the Dark Magician, who was already halfway up the mountain.

"I know, just mind your own business... Ah, going after the fragment yourself, eh?" No longer caring where the queen might strike next, Eugene continued making his way up towards the mountain's peak.

Halino had also turned into a ball of golden light, which sped off towards the peak of the mountain. Though he and Eugene had formed a temporary alliance, Halino was not about to let Eugene lay his hands on the fragment.

Once Eugene had gotten hold of such a treasure, there was no way he would ever let it go again. Things would become even more troublesome at that point.

Both Light and Dark Magicians raced up the mountain towards its peak.

Mountain Sage Heroto remained confused, unsure of what was happening right now. Had they not all agreed to retrieve the fragment together? The lord of Ferde had been standing on the sidelines of this fight that had broken out among them. Was it not him they had all come to stop from wreaking havoc? Why did they all start fighting one another?

Seeing that the two Magicians were getting closer towards the peak, Eliard asked, "Should we move in, Link?"

The fate of Ferde should not be up to these two outsiders to decide. Eliard realized just then that wanting to live a peaceful life was an extremely tricky business. The world was filled with ambitious schemers vying for a huge piece of it. Their every action could easily upset the balance of the world if they were not careful enough.

The only surefire way of taking control of one's own fate was to become even stronger than these masters.

There were only two options available to Eliard and the others right now : either let the Book of Creation's fragment be destroyed, or let Ferde have it!

Link did not move. Still looking at both Light and Dark Magicians, he said in a low voice, "Things aren't as simple as they look. The Red Dragon Queen may reappear at any moment, and the Book of Creation's fragment is still protected by a defensive barrier and the will of a guardian. We'll see how things go."

A second after Link finished speaking, Halino and Eugene were basically near the mountaintop. Just then, ripples began to form near where they were.

A moment later, a faint purple light burst out from the Sea of Void. It was the Red Dragon Queen's Dragon Void Breath!

“I’ve been expecting, you red lizard!” said Eugene. He had completely dispensed with formalities at this point. He pointed his wand at where the dragon breath was coming from.

“Dark Canvas!” A glittering sheet of darkness before Eugene, blocking the Dragon Void Breath attack from Gretel.

“Your Highness, you’re outmatched!”

Halino had also joined in the counterattack against the Red Dragon Queen. Pointing his wand, he shouted, “Judgement of Light!”

It was another Level-13 light spell. A golden light surged into the depths of the Void, drilling into it like a cyclone.

The force of the attack was incredible. Eliard and Nana could not see what was going on, but Link was now ready to leap into the fray and put an end to the fight.

The Red Dragon Queen was up against two Legendary masters. As a Level-11 dragon queen, even with the advantage she had by hiding herself in the Sea of Void, she could not possibly defeat two Level-13 veteran masters by herself.

Link figured that the Red Dragon Queen would sustain heavy injuries from this fight at best.

Just when Link decided to step into the fight, something happened.

There was a hum. Light shot out from the mountain peak, hitting everyone present. At that point, all six of them were completely immobilized. Even the clashing spells were frozen in midair.

Then, the voice of the guardian sounded. “Alright, people, that’s enough. I’ve seen what you have chosen.”

A white silhouette appeared on the platform at the mountaintop. His gaze swept across everyone before finally coming to rest on Link. “Except you. I don’t really know what you’re thinking.”

# Chapter 595

## The True Ruthlessness Begins

When the white light enveloped everyone, no one could move. They could only stand dazedly in place.

It wasn't that they didn't struggle. In reality, everyone tried to escape from the restraints. However, the power was formless and insubstantial. It looked like faint white light, but no matter how the people tried, they couldn't budge—not even Link.

This horrible power was way above their abilities!

When the protector looked at Link, the Red Dragon Queen, Light and Dark Magicians, the Mountain Sage, and even Eliard also looked at Link. He had the strongest combat ability but hadn't done anything yet. Faced with a treasure that could help someone quickly take control of Firuman, his opinion was the most important.

Link had already confirmed he couldn't escape from the white light. It should be at Level-19. In the game, he'd reached this step too. A Level-19 Magician indeed could restrain a few Magicians who were at most Level-13. This wasn't difficult.

Faced with this absolute power, all struggles were in vain. Link stopped moving. Faced with the protector's question, he replied calmly, "I think that your idea is meaningless. An idea is just a strategy in my mind. It doesn't mean it'll really happen."

"Oh, you aren't willing to say it?" The protector was a bit surprised. "Your viewpoint is very realistic. However, to those who are blessed like you all, ideas are basically reality. Thus, your first idea is still very important."

He turned to Gretel and smiled. "Like you, Red Dragon Queen. You've always followed the tradition that the dragons had followed for thousands of years. It may pain you, but still, you will not change. This piece will indeed destroy the traditional balance for the dragons. You aren't wrong. As long as it exists, there will be someone who will try anything to possess it. The countless lives in Firuman will also be affected greatly. If someone who doesn't care for others takes control of it, countless of lives will be lost."



The Red Dragon Queen had already floated out from the Sea of Void. Her eyes focused on the Book of Creation piece at the mountaintop. "You're right," she said coldly. "That is what I think. I can die for it."

"Very honorable, but it has nothing to do with me." The protector was unmoved. He turned to Eugene. "And you, Dark Magician, are the one who wishes the most to get it. A voice deep inside tells you to get it and control the undefeatable force in Ferde. Turn Ferde into what you like. And what you like is a dark world where only dark magic exists... Am I right?"

Eugene laughed sinisterly. "You're right, but you don't have to guess my plan. Those who are familiar with me know that I'd definitely do that. If I get the piece and take control of the World Tree, the just and moral will have no excuse to banish me. I'd love to see the expressions of those hypocrites at that time."

"Hmph!" Halino looked down at him with extreme disdain.

But the protector's expression was still calm. There was no disgust at all. "No matter what, you are honest. That is one of your few good points."

"Thank you for the compliment. I'm flattered." Eugene leered.

The protector ignored him and turned towards Halino. "As for you, Light Magician, you say that you wish to take the piece and destroy it after stopping the High Elves and ensuring the safety of Firuman. But I see your hesitation. You aren't sure what you'll choose after getting it. Deep down, you know that you may take it for yourself... Your actions are different from what you say. Judging from this, it fits for the Dark Magician to call you a hypocrite."

"Haha, that's great! Well said!" Eugene clapped and laughed heartily.

Halino was annoyed. "Protector of the Book of Creation," he said coldly, "you must be bored. Why exactly are you imprisoning us and rating us all?"

The protector froze and then patted his forehead. Smiling, he said, "Oh, young man, you reminded me. I haven't talked to anyone in such a long time, and suddenly, so many people came today. I almost forgot."

He turned towards Link again. "Young man, the reason why you confuse me is simple. Your thoughts are always changing. Sometimes, you want to destroy the piece.

Sometimes, you want to take it. Do you not have a clear standpoint after getting to your current status?"

Link didn't know how to reply. However, he felt like this annoying protector wouldn't let them go if he didn't explain himself. After thinking, he said, "When I first saw it and especially after I listened to you introduce its powers. My first thought was to destroy that piece because of my fear... But then I discovered that you'd exaggerated its uses. It may let someone control the World Tree, but that person will definitely pay the price... Basically, I don't understand the power of this piece. I think it's best not to hurry and make a decision about something I don't understand."

Hearing this, the protector was silent for a few seconds before saying, "I think I've already introduced all the functions very clearly."

Link shrugged. "Indeed, but it was just your introduction, and it's our first meeting."

The protector was a stranger. Why should Link trust him? So what if he had a powerful background and was strong? This couldn't ensure that he wasn't lying.

The protector laughed. "You're brave, but in the end, you want the piece, right?"

Link nodded. "Judging from the current situation, yes."

"Very good." The protector looked to Heroto. "What about you, Mountain Sage? Do you want it?"

"I'm not interested but—"

The protector cut Heroto off before he could finish. "Okay, I understand."

Then he looked to Eliard and Nana. "You two have very simple thoughts. You either don't want it, or you aren't confident. People like you aren't qualified to possess it. In that case, you, you, and you are eliminated."

As soon as he finished, there were three buzzes. Nana, Eliard, and Heroto disappeared from the strange space.

"Now, there are only four people left. You four either want to get the Book of Creation or destroy it. Whether it can continue to exist or not depends on who wins in the end."

While he spoke, the light enveloping the four moved slightly. They teleported to somewhere ten miles away from the mountaintop. Looking down from here, the mountaintops that were thousands of feet tall were now little sticks of ice. The Book of Creation piece at the top was a tiny dot of light, almost invisible.

Link turned around. There was no one beside him; he couldn't even sense any auras. The other three seemed to have disappeared.

The protector's voice came from an unknown place and sounded in his ear, "All of you are ten miles away from the Book of Creation piece. You cannot use spatial transmissions or flight here. The restraint on your bodies will disappear at the same time. The mirages on this land will melt away too. If you want to get the piece, then use all your power. Remember, I will not interfere this time."

As the voice spoke, Link felt a thin layer of light fade from the boundless plain. It was like someone lifting a huge curtain from the land. Without it, the land's original appearance was revealed.

Link discovered that the ground before him had changed greatly. Various steep mountains rose from the ground. Each one was miles high. Compared to them, the one with the Book of Creation was like a little round podium. They'd completely blocked the way to the Book of Creation.

After the mountains consolidated, the protector's voice sounded again, "Now, begin!"

As soon as he finished, Link felt the white light around him vanish. He was standing before a ten-mile high wall.

He sighed inwardly. So the true ruthlessness is just starting.

The protector wouldn't interfere, and the four would chase in this maze-like mountain cluster. No one knew who would succeed, who would die, and who would receive the Book of Creation in the end.

# Chapter 596

## An Unjust Treatment

It was a 15,000-foot tall precipice. Its surface was as smooth as a mirror. There were little to no footholds on it. As neither Teleportation nor Levitation spells could be used at the moment, Link's only option now was to scale the ice wall.

The Guardian was clearly more powerful than any of them. Link had no choice but to play by his rules.

After trying to cast a spatial teleportation spell and making sure that what the Guardian said was true, Link began climbing up the ice wall.

The frozen wall was slippery. Each foothold was carved into it at intervals of 20 feet. With the aid of his magic and battle techniques, climbing the precipice would have been a breeze.

Link cast a spell on himself which gave himself an agility boost, Cheetah's Agility. The spell cost no more than one power point.

Normally, his body would have recovered this bit of power in an instant. However, after a few seconds, Link realized that his power reserve showed no sign of replenishing itself.

"Hmm? Has this so-called Guardian blocked off all the energy channels in my body?" He felt fine, which meant that no foreign power had infiltrated his body. The only other possible explanation to his current predicament was that the other party had erected a barrier around his body.

"Are the other three in the same situation as I am? Forget it; I don't have any proof to confirm my theory anyway. I'll need to expect the worst while dealing with this just to be on the safe side."

The worst case scenario would be his power being sealed off while the other three still retained their powers. This meant that Link would need to use his power sparingly. If a confrontation were to happen, he would need to be in a position where he could

strike first and fast in order to be efficient with his power reserve.

Link would also need to maintain a level of secrecy. In the case of climbing the ice wall, it would be better for him not to use any spells right now so as to avoid wasting his Mana and giving away his position.

After thinking for a while, Link placed a firm foot on one of the footholds on the precipice. He then extracted a piece of magic steel from his spatial ring and spent two points of power to activate a Higgs Force Field, which reshaped the magic steel into a pair of ice-axes. Link then deactivated the Cheetah's Agility spell that he had cast on himself just now.

When he dispelled the supplementary spell, the Realm Essence power keeping it active would be released into the air. Link was prepared for this. With a nudge of his will, he redirected it back into his own body.

He was also up against two Level-13 Legendary masters. They were one level above him and possessed a great deal of combat experience. He could not afford to waste even one point of power at this point if he were to stand a chance against any one of them.

Gripping the ice axes tightly in his hands, Link stopped looking for footholds and swung himself up across the ice wall by brute strength.

He had climbed no more than 15 feet when suddenly there was a sudden rumbling sound within the ice wall. A few seconds later, a dark aura issued violently out of it. This is Eugene's doing. Must be at least Level-9. The fact that he is able to use such a high-level spell meant that his power was not sealed off like mine was... Well, that's not fair!

Though he had no idea why the Guardian had targeted only him, there was no use crying foul and getting angry about it. If he wanted to get his hands on the fragment, he would need to process his current situation calmly and devise a countermeasure against any attack.

Things aren't looking too good. I'd better get past this wall of ice, quick!

He then continued climbing up the ice wall, even faster than before. As he climbed, he activated a battle technique: Soul Furnace. This technique not only allowed its practitioner to have perfect mastery over one's own power, but it could also speed up

the body's healing rate.

Link was putting enormous strain on both his arms as he climbed. He would have been able to withstand such a strain for a moment or two. But climbing 15,000 feet without rest would definitely present its problems soon. At that moment, he sensed that the strain would severely affect his swordsmanship.

However, if he sped up his body's healing rate as he climbed, with the aid of his Realm Essence power's naturally high recovery rate, he would probably be able to minimize the damage to his arms.

Composing himself, Link continued to climb up the wall. After climbing for a while, he began to feel his body heating up. His body temperature had increased to more than 50 degrees. At the same time, he could also feel that his power level had decreased by 50 points.

The 50-point loss was the result of his body mending the wear and tear in his arm muscles as soon as they appeared. At that point, Link's arms looked undamaged. Due to the continuous cycle of repair and damage that was taking place in his internal systems, they looked even sturdier than before.

Link decided to rest for a while on the precipice. He then continued climbing when his temperature returned to normal.

Throughout the whole process, Link could feel five distinct magical auras. One of them belonged to the Light Magician, the other two were the Dark Magician's, and the last two auras were the Red Dragon Queen's.

The three of them were using high-level spells as they pleased, not at all concerned about how much Magical Power they were spending. This proved Link's initial conjecture. All three of them were not hindered by the same power limitation that Link was shackled with. This unjust treatment was enough to make a man's blood boil.

If that's the case, I'll only have one chance for one single burst. If I fail, that would mean death. Eugene would also take the chance to shatter my soul into pieces, thought Link.

The risk was high, but there was no way Link would let the fragment fall in anyone else's hands, especially those belonging to the Dark Magician Eugene.

After calming himself and dousing the flames of righteous anger over the injustice of

his treatment in his head, Link then continued his climb.

Half an hour later, Link finally reached the top of the ice wall.

At the top of the ice wall, there was a small platform no wider than 20 feet. There was a steep hill behind it. Sharp icicles lined the hill's path. It looked like a sea of swords from afar. Pristine white clouds floated at the end of the path, blocking off Link's view. From where he stood, besides the white clouds in the distance, Link could not see anything else.

Link made a mental note of the circular platform's coordinates. After looking around, he began walking forward. The slope of the hill was at most 60 degrees. There were places which were as slippery as a mirror. One could easily slip and tumble towards one of the icicles in front.

Here, Link walked with extreme caution.

After walking 50 feet down the hill path, he finally entered the sea of clouds. He could only see no more than 100 feet in front of him. Link had no idea what awaited him up ahead. For now, he could only walk on through the thick mist with his head bowed low and find out for himself.

After traveling 1000 feet, he suddenly heard a distant rumble up ahead. He could also feel the clash of dragon and light auras. After a while, he heard the Red Dragon Queen's shriek.

There was a hint of desperation in the high-pitched shriek as if it had been made by someone on the verge of dying. This did not bode well for the Red Dragon Queen.

Aghast, Link picked up his pace. However, after taking ten steps, he slowed down. "Halino must have found Gretel. It's clear she's not his match. She may already be beyond saving at this point."

Link let out a sigh. "Goodbye, Queen of the Dragons."

The queen's death would be a lamentable outcome. After all, they were still friends. If there was still a chance to save her, Link would take it by any means necessary. However, they were now pitted against each other in an unusually brutal testing ground. He could not afford to be lax in the face of such powerful opponents.

There was nothing he could do.

After a few steps, Link felt that his emotions were still in turmoil. He decided to find someplace to rest for a bit. He then began practicing the Soul Furnace technique on the spot.

His movements were slow as he carried out every step of the form. Five minutes later, he let out a long breath. He finally managed to regain composure.

Then, he continued walking forward.

Another five minutes later, Link reached the bottom of the hill. Here, the mist had thinned considerably. Visibility had increased to at least 500 feet. From there, he could see mountains and towering precipices in the distance. There was a wide, flat path between the mountains.

The path was at least 80 feet wide and spread out in all directions. From where Link was standing, he could see at least three forks branching off the main path.

Link did not know which was the right path to take. The place was like a maze.

An ordinary person would resort to trial and error, blindly taking each path until he found the right one. However, Link was Magician. Naturally, he had his own way of finding the right path.

He stood at the intersection, his hand holding an exquisitely crafted compass.

This was the Compass of Ultimate Truth. A magical gear imbued with Secret magic, it was also an imitation made by Link. The real thing was in Eleanor's hands. Link instantly took a liking to it and made an imitation for himself. He had also added precognitive powers to it, making it even better than the original.

There were three adjustable wheels in the face of the compass. 64 symbols had been etched on each wheel. Calmly, Link set the outer wheel to the symbol of a tree, the middle wheel to "hand" and the inner wheel to "book." He then cleared his mind of all thoughts and slowly channeled his Magical Power into the compass.

This was to ensure that his own thoughts would not interfere with the compass' function. Unobstructed by his thoughts, his unconscious mind was able to ask the compass the question that Link wanted answers.



There was a needle in the middle of the compass. A few seconds later, it began to tremble violently until it pointed at the leftmost road.

The needle had been guided by the mysterious hand of fate. Link kept his compass and headed for the left fork without hesitation.

After walking 1000 feet, another intersection appeared in front of him. Sharp icicles had sprouted on both sides of the road. It was as if Link had entered a crystalline forest.

Suddenly, Link sensed that he was being watched by someone.

“I’ve been spotted.”

He stopped in his tracks. His hand now holding the Ode of a Full Moon sword, Link felt for the presence of his unseen enemy with his five senses spread out in all directions.

# Chapter 597

## Instant Battle of Life or Death

Pad, pad, pad. Link walked down the tunnel within the icy peaks. The constant soft footsteps hit the walls on either side and bounced back, creating overlapping echoes in his ears.

This was the only sound in the ice tunnel.

After around 50 steps, there was a cross-section. The place was quite wide. It was an open area of a few hundred feet wide. There were many sword-like stalagmites piercing into the sky. All of them overlapped and crisscrossed like a huge ice flower.

Suddenly, Link felt in his heart a strange aura coming from a huge ice flower on his left.

That moment, Link's senses sped up dramatically. He felt time slow down. Instantly, the basic information of this abnormal aura flashed past Link's mind.

Two hundred forty feet to the left, Level-13, dark, power is consolidating, about to erupt, danger!

Each fact was short, but they were indispensable in battle. As for other things, such as the attacker's identity, method, and more would need deduction to figure out. Link didn't have that in his mind. He didn't think either because that would cost additional reaction time.

In a battle like this, the faster he reacted, the more advantages he had!

After another instant, around one-thousandth of a second, a solution flashed past Link's mind. Give up defending and attack immediately!

The other was at Level-13, but Link had much magic equipment. Defending against this attack would be hard but not impossible. However, if he used a defense tactic, he would fall into an awkward disadvantage.

He would use up much Realm Essence to block a Level-13 spell, and he wouldn't be able to recover. Even if he won, he would have lost a lot. This was disadvantageous towards later battles.

And once he started defending, he would enter a stalemate even if he succeeded. Then that would cost even more power. So if he wanted to win and get the Book of Creation piece, in the end, he only had one option: fight to attack first!

During the instant decision, the Ode of a Full Moon was unsheathed at the same time. As the sword flashed, the consolidated Realm Essence flowed like a river. It seemed smooth, but there were undercurrents that rushed into the sword.

The entire sword glowed. The light didn't just come from its surface. It shone from deep inside, turning the sword translucent like crystal.

The glow was like moonlight. It poured into all directions, instantly washing the entire tunnel in frosty white.

At the same time, a rune halo appeared around the sword's tip. There were smaller halos inside this halo. The countless rings vibrated and turned at the same time. It was detailed and precise to the point of not being able to see it clearly.

The next moment, a black vortex appeared before the Ode of a Full Moon's halo. The sword tip buried into it and reappeared 240 feet to Link's left. That moment, countless runes flew at the tip. The silver moonlight was cold as frost. This was Link's strongest attack spell: Time.

As time flew by, seas could turn to land.

The sword soared for around one-thousandth of a second and moved 30 centimeters before hitting something soft.

There was a stalemate for around three-hundredth of a second.

In the first one-hundredth of a second, Link could clearly feel the powerful repulsion force from the soft object. It kept resisting the Ode of a Full Moon, wanting to push the sword out. This strength was impossibly powerful and completely surpassed Link's limit. He almost lost control of the sword.

But this only lasted for one-hundredth of a second. After that, the power of time came

into effect. Under the extreme passage of time, the soft object's power decreased rapidly. It entered the stalemate period. This lasted another one-hundredth of a second.

The opponent continued to weaken. The Ode of a Full Moon began to get the upper hand. During the last one-hundredth of a second, the other's power collapsed completely. The sword stabbed in.

Squelch. That familiar sound and feeling was of a sword piercing flesh.

In the Orida Fortress, Link had personally used his sword to kill more than 5000 people. He was very familiar with the feeling of a weapon entering flesh, so he felt it at once. Realm Essence flowed through the sword and rushed into the opponent's body.

It didn't simply rush in. When it flowed past the sword, it started forming Mana structures. Because of Realm Essence's perfect controllability, the speed was at the maximum speed.

Instantly, it formed a destruction spell: Ball of Destruction.

It entered the opponent's body next. Then, Link retracted his sword. During this process, he'd already started retreating at full force. His body flashed and then hid behind a thick stalagmite.

It wasn't enough to block the opponent's attack, but it could hide him, making the opponent lose their target momentarily. This was to prevent their last attack before death.

While Link did all this, less than one-tenth of a second had passed. Link couldn't do this before. He would have needed at least two-tenth of a second to perform it completely.

This was all thanks to the Beastman Legendary battle technique, Soul Furnace.

Just as Link hid behind the ice pillar, a tragic cry came from his near distance. Following it was an explosive boom. Then, a power aura with fire and darkness traveled over.

Link turned to take a glance. He saw a dark purple flame billow from behind a

stalagmite. Around the fire were pieces of blood and flesh. Amongst it, Link saw a bloody skull. Judging from the hair color, it was Dark Magician Eugene.

Now, Link realized belatedly that his sneak attacker was this Dark Magician. He'd taken care of it with one strike. Eugene was weaker than he'd imagined.

A semi-transparent shadow flew up from the ruins at an incredible speed, rushing into the sky. It should be Eugene's soul. If he'd flown a bit slower, Link wouldn't mind adding another strike to shatter the soul. He couldn't do that now though.

Eugene must be skilled in soul spells. After leaving this time, he will definitely use some method to be reincarnated. At that time, I'll have a new nemesis. I must be careful about this.

Of course, Link didn't have any regrets. In the previous situation, it was life or death. Since Link could kill Eugene once, he could do it a second time! He wouldn't underestimate Eugene's destructiveness because of this though. Eugene was a true Legendary Magician. Fighting face to face wasn't his strong point, but if Eugene chose to stay in the shadows and plotted, that would be truly horrible.

After composing himself behind the stalagmite, Link walked to Eugene's corpse. After looking around, he found an extraordinary dark wand and some magic items. This included a spatial ring. Opening the ring, Link couldn't help but shake his head.

So many good things. As expected of an old Legendary Magician.

Collecting all of them, Link checked his own state. That attack had seemed fast, but it had cost a lot too. In that instant, he'd used up more than 5000 Realm Essence points. This was close to 30% of his total power.

I still have more than 70%, and I should only have the Light Magician left. I can deal with him!

Link continued on with that in mind.

He walked for more than ten minutes along the tunnel. Then he suddenly saw someone leaning against a huge stalagmite up ahead. Looking, his heart jumped. It was none other than the Red Dragon Queen Gretel!

She'd transformed back into human form and was covered in blood. A crystal spear

that kept flashing with golden lightning was in her waist. Her head rested weakly against the stalagmite. Her fiery hair fell messily around her. Behind her, the pool of blood had flowed for more than three feet. The view was tragic.

Perhaps due to a dragon's strong vitality, Gretel hadn't died. Her chest was still rising slightly. Hearing the footsteps, she opened her eyes and saw Link. That moment, she smiled bitterly. She opened her mouth to say something but didn't in the end. She'd just sighed and closed her eyes again.

She knew that this human wasn't the human she'd imagined. He was a lord. Perhaps he looked warm on the outside, but inside, he was fierce, cold, and cruel. They may have been friends, but they had different paths. He wouldn't help her.

Though her logical mind told her this, Gretel still had some hope in her heart.

Tap, tap, tap. The footsteps got closer; they were about to reach her. Gretel couldn't help but open her eyes. But what she saw dashed all hope.

Link didn't seem to see her. He acted as if she was a cold corpse and walked past without even turning his head.

I was right, but that's alright. I have nothing to miss in life. Gretel's heart had given up. The lightning spear had destroyed her body. All she could do now was wait for death.

Tap, tap, tap. Link's footsteps faded into the distance... A teardrop rolled down from Gretel's closed eyes. This was the second time she'd shed tears for Link. It would be the last time too.

But then something happened.

Link's voice suddenly sounded. "Halino, I see you. Come out."

# Chapter 598

## Only One will Walk Out of Here Alive

There was a slight breeze blowing through the path between the ice walls. The breeze dispersed the white mist floating across the path as it blew towards Link.

A lone figure appeared from the mist. The man was wearing a flowing grey-white robe. His hair and beard were also a pristine white. It was Halino. He was holding a crystal magic wand in his right hand and a stone tablet which shone with an erratic light in his left hand. It was the fragment of the Book of Creation which had appeared on the platform at the ice cap of the mountain back then.

He had managed to retrieve it before anyone else.

“I didn’t think you would be able to make quick work of Eugene,” said Halino in a low voice.

“So you two formed an alliance?” Link lightly placed a hand on the handle of the Ode of the Full Moon sword, ready to strike out at the first opportunity.

Halino had the same idea as well. His power pulsated at the crystal tip of his magic wand, ready to conjure magical constructs around him at the first sign of trouble.

At that moment, both Halino and Link remained wary of each other. Neither one of them dared make the first move while the opportunity had yet to present itself to them.

“It wasn’t an alliance exactly, just an agreement that had benefited both sides under the current circumstances. I handle Gretel, Eugene handles you. Once I have the fragment, I’ll fight it out with him. I’ve figured out what the Guardian has in mind for all of us. Only one of us will walk out of this valley alive. There’s no point in reaching the fragment first while someone else is still alive.”

Saying this, Halino threw the glowing fragment to the ground. “I’ll just put this here. Now let us battle. Whoever wins will have it.”

Link chuckled coldly. “That sounds nice and all, but why would you pick this place as our battleground? Why didn’t you just kill Gretel immediately? Is leaving her barely alive your way of trying to distract me?”

Halino smiled faintly. “Eugene was clearly outmatched by you. There’s little to no difference in power level between me and him. Our methods are also the same. Our duels have always ended in a stalemate for years, so there’s no way to tell who’s stronger. I knew I needed to resort to less conventional means to defeat you. For the sake of all of Firuman, I will not let the High Elves destroy this world. I need the tablet, and this is the only way to make sure that I have it in the end.”

His words sounded righteous and filled with a sense of justice. Link could not find the words to rebuke him. He would have done the same thing if he was in Halino’s shoes.

To a true Magician, the ends always justified the means. For example, in order to further his own nefarious goals, a notorious Dark Magician like Eugene did not shy away from staining his hands with the blood of hundreds of thousands of lives. Link too had the blood of thousands on his hands. In order to aid Orida Fortress’ resistance against the Dark Army, he had conceived the Sunlight Seed through experiments using live subjects. Ordinary Magicians might not be able to stomach his actions, but Legendary Magicians like Halino would have understood why he had to do the things he did.

Link took a long breath. “Well, it worked. I was indeed worried about Gretel’s well-being. You were able to throw me off balance by torturing her.”

Link’s feelings for Gretel were complicated. They used to be close friends with something of a history behind them. Though their paths had split, Link’s heart was still haunted by Gretel’s shadow. He would never want her to die, not in front of him anyway.

More importantly, as the queen of the dragon race, she was more useful to Link and Ferde alive.

The Red Dragon Queen might have been stubborn and old-fashioned, but she was also a reliable person. Her personality was a constant. You never needed to guess when she would turn on you. Having her by your side was a boon in itself.

The dragon race was also incredibly powerful. Whenever something or someone



threatened to throw the world out of balance, the dragon race would rise up as self-proclaimed peacekeepers to tip the world back into balance.

Right now, the High Elves planned on merging the two realms. This would have far-reaching effects on the world. Though Halino and the others had been working desperately to stop the High Elves, things might not work in their favor.

As a lord, Link needed to devise a series of countermeasures for all possible contingencies. If they were unable to stop the realm reunification, the world would descend into chaos. The High Elves would be a common enemy shared by all other races in Firuman, and the dragons would naturally become allies of Ferde as a result.

Evidently, a dragon race with the stabilizing presence of the dragon queen was a hundred times better than one without her.

Whatever the case might be, Link needed Gretel alive.

Halino was surprised to hear Link's words. "You actually told me what your weakness is. You should know that I could send my Spear of Light flying through Gretel with a mere thought!"

"So it would seem," said Link, nodding in acknowledgment. He then continued, "However, this will leave you completely unguarded. You'll be risking your own life just to end hers."

If Halino were to be distracted for even a hundredth of a second, Link would not hesitate to kill him as he had killed Eugene.

Halino glared at Link.

This human stood quietly before him, his black battle robe billowing around him. He looked more like a hardened Warrior than a Magician with that magic sword he was holding in his hand. The human before Halino gave him the impression of a volcano that was about to erupt at any moment.

Though Link looked serene on the outside, Halino could feel that he would not be able to survive this volcano's eruption.

After standing in front of each other for half a minute, Halino began to sense his sense of inferiority growing in him. Realizing this, he sighed. "I'll admit, you may be the

strongest Battle Mage in all of Firuman I've ever seen. In one-on-one combat, your magic is the equivalent of an unstoppable tank. But it does not mean that I have no chance of beating you, Lord of Ferde. Unencumbered, no one is your equal. However, that is not the case right now. If I leave you now, you'll be able to take the fragment from and save Gretel as well. However, you will be at your weakest when you're burdened by both an injured person and an invaluable stone tablet."

Saying this, Halino began to step back slowly until his body slipped into the white mist behind him. A faint voice echoed out from it. "So choose wisely, Lord of Ferde."

There was a sudden bang beside Link. The Spear of Light embedded in Gretel's body exploded into specks of light.

The explosion managed to widen Gretel's wound even more, causing her extreme pain. However, it was not powerful enough to kill her immediately.

"Arghhh!!!" Gretel shrieked out in pain. Her entire body then collapsed on the ground. Blood flowed out of the gaping wound between her chest and abdomen in rivulets.

If Link did not cast a healing spell to stop the bleeding soon, the Red Dragon Queen would most certainly die before him.

Link turned around and was about to do something about the Red Dragon Queen's wound when suddenly he stopped. In an instant, he drew his sword out and stabbed it out to his side. A Despair Ball appeared before the sword tip, swallowing half of the sword as it extended outward.

In one fluid motion, Link had lashed out just as quickly as when he had delivered the final blow to Eugene.

A soft groan echoed from the white mist. It was the Light Magician Halino. Link's Ode of the Full Moon sword had pierced his heart.

From the sword, Realm Essence power flowed into Halino's body like a moonlit stream. Gradually, a Ball of Destruction began to form in his heart.

The Ball of Destruction did not explode immediately in him, which was the reason why Halino was still alive.

Halino grasped at his chest in pain. From a few hundred feet away, he asked, "How did

you know I was about to attack?”

Link pointed a finger at Gretel and cast a spatial sealing spell on her, sealing her body in a spatial bubble. He then slowly said, “On the Golden Plains, if a Beastman wished to become a Warlord, he would be required to overcome a series of challenges. Once a Beastman declared his candidacy for the title of Warlord, one of the trials he would be required to take on was to survive a series of assassination attempts. Powerful Assassins would try to kill him at every opportunity for a whole month, day and night. He would only be deemed fit to bear the title of Warlord after having survived this trial.”

The candidate could employ whatever means necessary to overcome this trial. If the new Warlord was not able to stay alert even in his sleep, this meant that he sorely lacked training and would probably have to stay up all night for a whole month on a lookout for Assassins. He would probably die from the exhaustion if no Assassin had managed to kill him at that point.

The only way any potential Warlord candidate could get through this trial was the Legendary battle technique, the Soul Furnace.

The perfect unification of soul, strength, and body would naturally sharpen one’s sensitivity to all forms of danger, allowing it to surpass even a wild beast’s instincts. A Beastman Warlord who had mastered the Soul Furnace technique would be able to sense an enemy’s presence even in his sleep. He would be ambush-proof.

This was the true strength of the Beastmen’s Soul Furnace technique.

Halino might not have lost to Link so easily if he had put up a fair fight. It was a shame that he had chosen to fight so dishonorably. When Link turned around, Halino thought that this was his chance to move in. However, it was then that he took a hit from Link’s sword.

In a fight between two equally powerful masters, whoever slipped up first would be instantly killed by the other. This was the cruel reality of any life-and-death battle.

Link then cast a soul barrier around Halino’s body, preventing his soul from escaping. Eugene’s soul was more than enough for Link. He wondered if he needed to keep another enemy’s soul.

Halino instantly knew what Link was up to. Panicking, he shouted, “I’m not like

Eugene. He's a banished Dark Magician. His soul will wander around the mortal plane if it's let loose. My soul, however, will ascend to the God of Light's kingdom!"

"You're right, but I won't make the same mistake twice. Even if you'll be ascending to heaven, that's not your call to make. It's mine!"

At that moment, the Ball of Destruction exploded inside Halino's body, blowing it up into pieces. The soul barrier that Link had set up immediately shrank around the explosion until a single Soul Crystal was all that was left of Halino.

Link beckoned at the Soul Crystal, and it flew into Link's hand.

"Don't worry, your soul isn't of much use to me anyway. I'll be sure to personally take it to a Church of Light and let an archbishop send you to heaven."

Keeping the crystal away, Link walked towards where the Book of Creation's fragment lay. He had defeated everyone. The fragment was his to keep.

However, as he reached for the fragment, there was a glimmer of light from it. The guardian's image appeared on the tablet. He looked at Link and pointed at the Red Dragon Queen. "Young man, you still haven't dealt with everyone. She's still alive," he said.

# Chapter 599

## Young Man, Wish You a Beautiful Life

The protector's words made Link stop. He glanced at Gretel. She was "frozen" in the spatial seal. A bloody gaping hole practically went straight through her. Her entire body was covered in blood. Flesh lay on the ground around her. Her frozen eyes were opened listlessly. Her pupils had started expanding, but her head was raised slightly. Her gaze was directed at Link's current position.

Her expression was complicated. There was some happiness but also bitterness. No one could pinpoint her thoughts.

Something was clear though. If Link removed the spatial seal and didn't receive any help, she would die within a few minutes.

"She doesn't have any power to fight back." Link didn't want to do it.

"She doesn't now, but you won't let her die. You have enough power to save her. As long as she's alive, she will try to destroy the Book of Creation piece. She will be your opponent... So, if you let her live, you won't be able to get the piece."

The protector's words were heartless. He'd given Link a very cruel choice. He could either choose the Book of Creation or choose to save Gretel. He could only choose one.

Judging from the performance earlier, the protector was abnormally strong, reaching Level-19. Link had no confidence to break through the obstacles set by something like that.

"People can change. She might not be that insistent," Link tried to persuade the protector.

The protector shook his head. "It seems that you don't know her well enough. Can you easily persuade a dragon queen who has lived for more than 2000 years and seen all the horrors of life? No, you can't. No one can change what she's already decided. You can't either... young man!"

He emphasized the last two words, pointing out Link's age.

He wasn't wrong. Link may possess great power now and experienced more than most humans, but he was still in his twenties. Even if he added his days from both worlds, he wouldn't be older than 50. His experiences and knowledge couldn't help him understand someone that had existed for 2000 years.

It was like how an innocent child couldn't understand an adult. They could live under the same roof but weren't living at the same level at all.

This was a fact. Link couldn't refute it.

Seeing that Link admitted it, the protector continued, "The Book of Creation contains unlimited power. Once you have it, you'll stand at the peak of Firuman and become the ultimate sovereign. At the peak, there is freezing wind. Countless people will have their eyes on your power, trying to steal your glory. Your closest friends will stab a dagger into your heart. Your most trusted will give you poisoned wine. Your lover will become the one who ends you. If a sovereign wishes to remain for eternity, you must be lonely... So, end her life!"

The protector's words were magical. When he spoke, different images appeared in Link's mind uncontrollably.

In the images, Eliard stared at him from a dark corner with hatred. When he was sleeping, Celine's hands gripped around a poisoned dagger. The reports Lucy gave him were all faked... They were images of all his friends betraying him.

Other images appeared too. They weren't about him anymore. Instead, they were historical events from Firuman and Earth that he'd read before. In these images, the kings and emperors were all alone. To get the throne, fathers killed sons, brothers killed each other, and mothers killed sons. There were endless tragedies and unspeakable darkness.

Whoosh, whoosh. Cold wind sounded in Link's ears. He thought back to the protector's words.

If a sovereign wishes to remain for eternity, you must be lonely. At the peak, there is freezing wind!

Yes, the wind was too bone-chilling. They were only hallucinations, but even with his

strong mind, Link still shuddered subconsciously.

The protector's shadow had a pair of glowing eyes. Those eyes seemed to see through everything. Looking at Link, he could see his soul. "Young man, what is your choice? Lonely glory or a mortal's happiness?"

Link looked at the bloodied and dying Gretel again. After a pause, he said, "I choose..."

To be honest, he didn't know what to choose. This was the first time he felt lost after coming to this world.

Before he could finish, his vision flashed quickly. He glanced and saw the mission from earlier—the Piece that Shouldn't Exist. The mission flashed with blinding red light. It wasn't just to show its existence but also to remind Link that the God of Light wanted him to destroy it.

At the same time, the sword spirit's voice rang in his mind again. Another voice appeared in my mind. It said one sentence: all existences in the world have hearts. If one's heart is blinded, the world will have no light.

The sentence was mysterious. After hearing it, Link's heart twitched. Something flashed past his mind. It was fleeting, like a rabbit sprinting in the grass, but he could see the blurry figure.

Experience told Link that if he couldn't decide, then he shouldn't get affected by the outside world and decide rashly. He should think carefully to prevent making an irrevocable mistake.

Thus, he shut his mouth and fell silent again.

"What is your choice, young man?" the protector urged.

Link shook his head. "I haven't decided. You've already waited for so long. You can wait a bit longer, right?"

"Indeed... I will wait for your decision."

Link thought back to the sword spirit's words. He composed himself and carefully sensed his surroundings. More than ten minutes later, a light flashed in Link's mind. He had a hypothesis.

Nothing is restricting my power recovery, and the space isn't sealed. I can still use spatial magic. Does that mean that the restrictions on transmissions and flight aren't real?

Thinking of that, Link ignored the protector and took out the Ode of the Full Moon. He started practicing the Soul Furnace battle technique.

He went through each move slowly. His thoughts were sinking too. After a long while, Link's heart suddenly jumped. There was something abnormal. It was in his soul rather than the environment.

With the help of the Soul Furnace, Link was able to focus completely. His soul entered an indescribably calm state. It was as smooth and flat as the surface of a mirror.

Right now, Link's heart had no disturbances. He didn't have any emotions. He was completely calm.

There were many reasons why he could reach this state. Firstly, there was the Soul Furnace, a Legendary battle technique. Secondly, Link had the pure Realm Essence. It was abnormally perfect and basically gave Link zero disturbances. More importantly, Link had high control over his soul.

In this calm, Link could sense the tiniest shred of abnormalities. Now, he could feel several strange thoughts in his soul. After sensing carefully, he found three. Two were clear. The first was that he couldn't use transmission spells while getting to the piece. The second was that he couldn't fly in the valley.

These were the requirements given by the protector.

Another thought was blurry. Link sensed it carefully and discovered it was very fuzzy evil intent. It came from the protector. It was hard to explain, but it activated Link's stress mechanism.

After this was activated, the changes in his soul influenced his entire body which affected his power. After this avalanche-like chain effect, Link's body thought that everything in the environment was harmful and subconsciously rejected absorbing the power.

All existences in the world have hearts. If one's heart is blinded, the world will have no light.



The sword spirit's voice rang in Link's mind again. This time, it dawned on him. A ray of sunlight appeared in his clouded soul.

Once the light appeared, it sliced apart the clouds like a sharp sword. The world in Link's eyes brightened too. At the same time, he discovered that the looming ice walls had changed too. They looked cloudy, like a white mist.

It suddenly dawned on Link.

The protector's illusion wasn't actually that powerful. Most of his tricks were on the aspect of one's soul. Most of his surroundings weren't real. Other than the outermost walls of this icy valley, everything was fake.

Exhaling, Link looked back at the protector's figure. He realized it was an illusion too. Looking closely, he saw that the air around it was wavering. Its power was actually quite weak. It was practically just air.

"You're just the remnant of an ancient lord's consciousness. Now, you can no longer stop me."

With that, Link walked towards the Book of Creation piece and picked it up. During this, the protector retreated automatically. He smiled faintly. When Link picked up the piece, he bowed slightly. "Young man, you passed the final test."

Link no longer had any doubts. Looking at the piece in his hands, he said, "It won't turn me into the ruler or even give me any power, right?"

"Of course. It's just a broken piece. If it really could turn someone into the sovereign, it wouldn't be abandoned here."

"Then why was it passed down through the millenniums?" Link asked.

"It is a key." Light appeared in the protector's hands. When it dissipated, all illusions in the ice valley disappeared.

The freezing wind, icy snow, and extreme frigidity appeared one by one, showing the true appearance of the extreme north.

Whoosh, whoosh. Freezing wind blew endlessly, scraping Link's face like knives. He was forced to cast a Level-5 spell to fight against the cold.

The protector's illusion wavered in the wind and snow. He pointed at the tall mountain behind him. "Do you see the mountain path covered by thick snow?"

Link looked. Through the heavy snow, he saw a mountain behind the protector. A path snaked across it, but it was covered with snow. If not for the fact that the snow piles were very smooth, he wouldn't be able to see the path at all.

"Follow the path up. At the peak, there is a cave with a Level-19 eternal seal. The key is in your hands... Young man, I wish you a beautiful life."

After that sentence, wind blew and the protector transformed into snow, melting into the tundra.

Link glanced at the corner again. The game system's mission was still there, but it didn't flash anymore. The blood-red color had turned gray too. Behind it, it said "discarded."

This surprised Link slightly. The God of Light... can be wrong too?

He'd always thought that the God of Light was very powerful and knew practically everything about Firuman. Apparently, he was wrong.

Thinking back, this wasn't the God of Light's first mistake. Back at the Yabba city, he'd been fooled by the God of Destruction.

It seems that the God of Light isn't as powerful as I thought. He can't control Level-19 strength in the mortal world.

This detail helped Link see the God of Light's bottom line. He was powerful but not impossibly so. He had many flaws in his control of Firuman.

Of course, Link was still too weak. It was too soon to think of this. Shaking his head, he tossed the thoughts to the back of his head. Activating a levitation spell and Void Walk, he followed the mountain path to the peak.

Seconds later, Link was before a ten-foot-tall ice crystal. At a glance, it was just a normal block of ice. At closer inspection, Link saw that it was covered in runes. They were innumerable and complicated. He felt like his head would crack apart at just a glance, so he gave up.

When he walked up to it, the piece in his hand brightened and buzzed. It started shaking, almost leaving his hands.

Link let go, and it immediately floated to the crystal door. Then, like water fusing into a river, it disappeared. A few seconds later, the crystal door shone too. Five seconds later, there was a soft poof, and the door disappeared. A tiny hidden chamber appeared.

Pale blue light came from it, as well as a lovely and ethereal sound. Link walked in, and his eyes widened.

He saw two people inside the room. No, more correctly, it was two dried corpses.

# Chapter 600

## Book of Revelation: Rosso's Book of Spirits

The interior of the ice cave looked like an ordinary living room.

It was approximately 100 square feet wide. There were two semicircular bookshelves hanging on the walls. In a corner of the room, there was a smaller room with an embroidered screen blocking its entrance. Through the screen, one could see a large bed in it. This must be the bedroom.

In the main room, there was a large circular table. Beside the table sat the bodies of a man and a woman. Their corpses were still intact, despite the fact that they had been desiccated thoroughly and now looked like a pair of withered branches.

The expressions on their faces remained the same as when they were still alive. The man was reading a magic book, while the woman was busy carving a golden bird figurine. Their faces were serene. The man even seemed to be talking.

There was a magic book which emitted a faint blue glow in the middle of the circular table. The empty sound that Link had heard just then was coming from it.

Lots of questions now popped up in Link's mind. Who are these people? Why did they come to live here in the far north? And why did they leave this magic book behind?

Prompted by a desire to resolve these questions, Link began walking into the room of ice. No sooner had he taken his third step than a subtle current of magical power suddenly filled the air.

Stunned, Link stopped. His hand instinctively flew to the Ode of a Full Moon sword's handle.

Two seconds later, a silhouette appeared in front of him. The silhouette swirled about in the room before coming to rest on the two corpses.

Strangely enough, when the silhouette wrapped itself around them, the two withered bodies began to swell up. Link could see that their skins were gradually regaining

moisture, while their glassy eyes cleared considerably, as if the two bodies had been brought back from the dead.

A drastic change swept across the entire room as well. Everything in the room, which was initially covered by a layer of dust, now shone with almost surreal cleanliness.

However, Link knew that this was all just an illusion. In truth, the bodies still remained lifeless. The magical power that Link felt just then had simply refracted the light in such a way that the bodies only seemed to have come back alive.

A moment later, the man started speaking.

“Lucia, my life’s coming to an end soon.” The man’s eyes did not leave the magic book he was holding as he said this. His face remained expressionless, as if his death was about as unusual as a neighbor coming by to borrow a cup of sugar.

The woman beside him laughed, not at all perturbed by what the man said. She did not stop carving the golden bird figurine. “I see. I guess we’ll need to start making arrangements for that now, won’t we?”

The man nodded. He stood up, walked to one of the bookcases and then took out a magic book. Link peeked at it and saw that the book the man was holding was similar to the one on the table, at least on the outside. The only difference was that it was not glowing, nor was it making any peculiar sound.

The man returned to his seat with the book and then placed it in the middle of the table.

Link noticed that there was a simple-looking magical rune etched in the middle of the table. When the magic book was placed on it, the runes on the rest of the table began to glow. Light then began flowing from the rune formation into the magic book.

Link also realized that the light did not actually come from the rune formation itself. It was flowing out from the man’s hand. The magic book grew brighter and brighter as it absorbed more and more of the light. It then began to emit an empty, trembling sound.

The man was shriveling up visibly. He now looked to be 100 years old when he finally stopped pouring the light into the book.

“Dear, we can live for close to a thousand years with this power if we want to. Will you be angry at me for doing this?” said the man ruefully to the woman sitting beside him.

“No, Rosso, there’s always a beginning and an end to all life. We’ve completed our respective journeys in life. Another thousand years would only be torment for our souls,” said the woman, shaking her head.

Link noticed that for some reason, the woman’s face had withered like the man as well.

This couple must have used some kind of spell to bind their life forces together, thought Link.

Just then, the man, who was still barely alive, took out a pencil and began writing slowly on the magic book before him. The woman, not at all concerned about death’s approach, continued carving the golden bird figurine.

The man began reading what he was writing. “I am Rosso Schneider. I started studying magic when I was 28 years old. However, the first three years of my studies had been uneventful. When I was 31 years old, I stumbled across a Soul Stone. For whatever reason, it chose me, granting me an incredible potential for the mystic arts. Ten years later, I was given the honorable title of Soul Dominator. Another ten years later, I began studying Prophecy Magic for five years, but without any noticeable progress. One night, when I was looking at the stars, I had a sudden epiphany. At that moment, I realized that one needs to receive the realm’s blessing in order to master Prophecy Magic. No amount of rigorous training was going to help me accomplish that...”

The man was writing his life’s story in the book. Link patiently listened in a corner, curious as to how the man’s story ended. Ten minutes later, the man stopped writing. He gave a sideways look at the magic book that was emitting a faint blue glow for three seconds. His eyes then returned to the book in front of him. After looking at it for ten seconds, he resumed his writing.

“The gift of clairvoyance had allowed me to see what the future holds. It was both a blessing and the most terrifying curse one could hope to receive in this realm. I had lost all hope in life. In order to recover the hope I had lost, I had struggled upstream against the river of time, peering into the future until at last, I saw a turning point, 120,000 years into the future.

“120,000 years later, the realm’s timeline had diverged into multiple branches. It was

like a tree that had begun to branch out, creating multitudes of possible futures. Some of these futures I had seen were bleak, some even completely annihilated. However, there were also some filled with light and hope. The possibilities were endless. 120,000 years was too long a time. Even if I ascended to godhood, I would not be able to live that long to see which future unfolded... I have seen my end. I have received the realm's blessing, and then I will fade from this world as quietly as I had entered it. And so, I have decided to leave the Book of Spirits behind for posterity.”

The man finally put down his pencil. He lifted his head up and looked at Link. He then spoke, his eyes seemingly focused on nothing in particular, “To the future possessors of this book, your identities are legion. Demons, Beastmen, servants of the God of Destruction, elves, or even humans. Whoever you may be, the fact that you have come this far means that you have passed the Guardian's test. You now have the right to possess this book. Take it. Finally, the wisdom I have accumulated for a lifetime has an heir.”

When the man finished speaking, the silhouette vanished. Everything was back to normal. Only the magic book remained humming on the table as if waiting for Link to pick it up.

Link was not in a rush to pick up the prophet's book. He stood in the entrance and bowed low before the bodies of the two ancient sages. Only then did he walk forward and picked the Book of Spirits up from the table.

As soon as the Book of Spirits left the table, the room began to sway gently. Cracks appeared on the table, the withered corpses, the bookshelves, and even the small bedroom. They began to crumble, bit by bit.

In the blink of an eye, the whole room of ice collapsed into a pile of ash. Only the magic book that Link was holding in his hand remained unscathed.

The surrounding walls in the ice cave also began to crack, threatening to collapse all around him. At that moment, Link cast a spell to keep the walls intact as long as he could.

The sword spirit's voice sounded in Link's head.

He's the Soul Dominator. He was the most powerful entity to ever exist in ancient times. He was the ancestor of Celine Flandre as well as a good friend of the Storm Lord.

He had even tried telling the Storm Lord to keep his temper in check, or there would be consequences. However, his words fell on deaf ears. Soon, the Soul Dominator stopped telling his friend off, which ultimately led to Storm Lord's downfall.

Link was moved by the sword spirit's tale. He recalled Rosso's life story and vividly felt the hopelessness that the prophet had felt due to being submerged in visions of possible futures. Link could only imagine what it must have felt like to bear such a curse throughout one's life.

He bowed again at the Soul Dominator's body before leaving the room. As he stepped out, the room lost the support of Link's spell and instantly came crashing down.

Outside the cave, the Book of Spirits in Link's hand stopped glowing. Link tried to put the magic book inside his spatial ring but failed. The book seemed to be resistant to spatial magic.

The book's cover was made of a leather specially forged through alchemy. Link decided to simply bind the book securely to his waist.

Suddenly, there was a flash of light in his vision. The game system had brought up some information regarding the magic book Link had just gotten.

Player has received the magic book titled Rosso's Book of Spirits.

Book of Revelation: Rosso's Book of Spirits

Level-19 Flawless Divine Gear.

Special effect 1: Contains all the magical wisdom Rosso has accumulated in his lifetime.

Special effect 2: The caster will be able to activate the Level-19 prophecy spell, Divination of the Fates, by channeling enough power into the book. This spell allows the caster to divine the fates of everything that exists in the Firuman realm. Higher-level targets will require more magical power. (This spell can be cast on any target, regardless of its level.)

Cooldown time: one year.

(Note: This world holds no secret from me.)



Reading the message, Link let out a sigh, before saying, “Such a terrifying spell. I guess that’s to be expected from a Level-19 master.”

Composing himself, Link headed towards the bottom of the ice mountain. Gretel was still frozen in stasis by his spatial spell. Her injuries were grave. Patching her up under these circumstances would be a difficult task, even for Link.

“What should I do?” said Link as he began thinking of ways to treat Gretel’s injuries.



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