

Darkness 761

Chapter 761 The Mythical Boss

3 Weeks Later.

The exit door opened and a total of 10 people were flung on the other side, crashing onto the sandy ground like ragdolls.

Huff!

Huff!

Legolas and the group took deep breaths and tried to get up.

Thud!

Dante tried to stand up but dropped on the ground halfway.

"Fuck this! I feel like we should quit and leave the dungeon using our passes.

We barely made out alive from the last one." spoke Legolas as his face was buried in the black sand of this floor.

"Finally, I can feel world energy again. We should be able to recover within half a day." spoke Edmund whose clothes were tattered in many places at this point.

Unlike the rest, his gear wasn't made of Invimarak skin and had very few defensive properties. So the alchemist basically looked like a dirty street beggar at this moment.

"Imagine if this is happening to our group... then millions of people from the alliance must have suffered greatly.

I wonder how many died at this point." said Legolas, gathering every iota of strength as he spoke up.

To his words... even someone as prideful and strong as Rudra had a gloomy expression.

The past three weeks felt like a nightmare to them. So far, every floor they had traversed through was a unique and peculiar setting where they couldn't take advantage of being Saints at all.

Their journey was too hard and even with their sheer will and freakishly strong bodies, they barely escaped death too many times.

One of the floors had a -50 degree celsius temperature and an unending blizzard that froze half of their group midway.

But thanks to high-grade Ice Resistance potions brought by Edmund, they managed to pass it without dying in a couple of days.

Although Kahn, Jugram and Rudra wouldn't be affected by it, it was not the case for the rest of their crew.

On a different floor, everything was made out of the ethereal fire that could even melt boulders easily. Since none of Kahn's subordinates excelled in Ice Element, Ceril who was a magician became the only being who could protect the rest.

Even though the previous 3 people weren't affected, the rest felt like their bodies were burning every second.

They managed to cross that floor because Kahn was constantly supplying Ceril with world energy that he borrowed from Rathnaar's core.

One of the floors was another mind-boggling experience for them as this floor had a twisted gravity.

This place had no ground but flying blocks of stones that hovered in the sky like a belt of meteors surrounding a planet.

One step, you're moving forwards but in the next step, you're flying upwards.

If you walked right, you'd be falling and when walking left, you'd go back as gravity would relocate your entire body based on these movements.

If this was for a short distance, one could get familiar with the pattern and then follow particular criteria. However, the Immortal Dungeon wasn't so kind to them.

Because the stone platform they all stood on divided themselves into different blocks and sent everyone in random directions while making unpredictable movements themselves.

The only way to leave these was to step on another block of the platform that touched their footing from any random direction at any moment.

Even if you changed the perception of your mind, you couldn't anticipate where or when the next platform to step on would come from.

And the entire group had to travel 100 kilometers of space to find the exit door like this.

During those times, everyone wished that the supreme dungeon would be very kind just to send them a horde of monsters to kill and clear the floor because that was easier than getting your mind fucked over and over, again and again for every single second.

And finally, they came to Floor 61 where they fought a legendary rank boss which was comparable to 3rd stage saint.

Thankfully, this floor did not limit their mana and world energy.

The floor boss was a spectral creature that affected their souls and restricted their ability to fight as soon as they got within 10 kilometer radius.

However, it couldn't have imagined that two of his natural enemies were part of Mithios guild's team.

Oliver used Soul Distortion skill which was a Legendary Rank skill he got from Caladrius monster, the one that nearly killed Kahn and also took Cassandra's life back in Verlassen.

Thanks to Shu Armor and Neith Bow, Oliver was able to use it without turning into his true Thunderbird legendary rank form.

With Soul Distortion skill, he managed to overthrow the boss' ability to oppress their souls.

A soul for a soul.

Oliver took away its ability and Ronin finally managed to land the killing blow using Existence Concealment and Phase Shift skill.

The former was his upgraded ability which he got after ranking up to Mythical Rank and made him undetectable even by a 7th stage saint.

They kept the body and the core for later use and kept their journey filled with dread and torture awaiting on every floor.

And finally, they reached floor 71 after another week of travel.

"Phew! I guess this is it. We should get some time to rest" said Edmund.

But as if jinxing their luck... all of them lost the ability to use mana and world energy again.

At this moment, all of them could feel that none of their detection skills worked either.

[WARNING!! THE HOST IS IN EXTREME DANGER!] suddenly, the system notification rang.

ROARRR!!

"Ah fuck..." said Legolas as immense killing intent, far stronger and denser than anything they felt till this point targeter every single one of them.

Thud!

Thud!

A massive 7 headed being roared 40 kilometers away as soon as they all appeared on this floor. Just the roars alone would be enough to destroy an entire city from its shockwaves alone.

[Boy, it's comparable to a 5th stage saint!

And it's not 5 but 7 headed, each with different elements of nature. So it must be a mythical rank as well.] suddenly, even Rathnaar warned Kahn as soon as their gazes landed on the massive 1 kilometer tall creature that stood far away.

[Give me its details.] ordered Kahn.

System informed in Kahn's mind and the latter's expression turned extremely ugly and a bit terrified.

[Looks like my bad luck from the previous life is back.] thought Kahn as soon as he heard the details.

"With our ability to use mana and world energy sealed... only our physical strength can be of use.

Looks like all of us are screwed big time." he spoke openly after sharing the details with his subordinates.

"Yes. At this rate... Some of us are definitely going to die." said Omega.

Because the being that they were all afraid of at the moment... the mythical rank boss which killed half of the Hero's Party and even made Ervalen, the Hero of Life sacrifice himself, was not some pesky monster but a powerful existence only below Dragons and Basilisks.

It was a being only heard of in myths and was greatly feared among my cultural lore even on earth, namely...

The Elder Hydra.

Chapter 762 Limited Options

Right now, all the newcomers on this floor looked at the 7-headed Elder Hydra with incredulous expressions after seeing its presence and rank.

"What the hell? Wasn't this supposed to be only a 5-headed Hydra and only at the legendary rank that was supposed to be comparable to a 3rd stage saint?"

Why is it an Elder Hydra at Mythical Rank and possesses strength comparable to a 5th stage saint?" asked Legolas with a bamboozled expression.

Obviously, they had prior information about this boss because it was noted to be one of the hardest bosses and this floor was cleared only a few times in the past thousand years.

Kahn and the group also didn't know that the Hero's Party also cleared this floor few weeks ago, albeit at a great cost.

Nonetheless, the last time a group reached here was 30 years ago and back then, those people fought a 5 headed hydra, unlike the one that stood in front of them.

"When did it evolve? Is it normal for dungeon bosses to evolve?" asked Edmund, his heart filled with trepidations as he felt the immense threat because of the killing intent released by the boss.

[Boy, a supreme dungeon can indeed evolve itself and the floor bosses after centuries and over saturation of world energy as per legends.

But those are extremely rare cases and even in my time, I never heard of a supreme dungeon doing so.

There must be a big reason for it to happen.] informed Rathnaar inside Kahn's mind.

[What does it matter? Our situation isn't going to turn out any good even if we find the reason.

Should we abort and use our passes? It's been more than a month and half at this point so we are eligible to leave.] thought Kahn in his mind.

ROARR!!

Just then, the elder hydra, whose most of the body was submerged in the deep waters of this poisonous swamp lair, raised its heads a bit higher.

All of its 20-meter-tall heads had different elements and properties.

Gray head had Venom, Green head Corrosion, Red had Fire, Blue had Ice, Yellow head had Lightning, the White head possessed Light element and finally, the pitch Black head had Darkness element.

All of these elements of nature could be sensed from the 7 heads respectively.

"It's like an amalgamation of all the lethal elements. No wonder it's the boss that has been cleared only 5 times in the past thousand years." spoke Raiden as he took both Raijin and Kojin out of their sheaths.

Venom from a mythical rank creature could easily kill even a saint of the same strength levels. Thankfully, Kahn and his subordinates had Legendary rank poison and venom immunity.

The Corrosion breath would erode their armors and weapons easily. Only Rudra among their group would be unaffected by it because of his Magma element and Physique which itself had corrosive resistance after the Basilisk subordinate absorbed Bjormngandur's bloodline.

Fire was very good for AoE damage, Ice could halt the movements of the target when hit, Lightning would simply destroy everything in its way, Light element had great piercing strength and finally, the darkness element which was enough to obliterate everything no matter what it was.

[Boy, if a mythical rank Elder Hydra is just the 71st floor boss, then imagine how strong the 81st floor boss would be.

And then there are the last 2 bosses of this dungeon.] spoke Rathnaar.

[We'll think about it later. First... we need to find a way to get rid of it while preserving our mana and world energy that's in our bodies.

Physical strength alone won't be enough.

At best, I can use Dimensional Cut 6 times given my current rank and Space Force reserves. But there will still be another head left.

On top of it, it still has the terrain advantage, has a lot of range and I sense a very strong physical defense.

Even our group won't be able to one-shot this boss just with weapons and techniques alone since mana and world energy basically runs all of our fighting skills.] he said, his voice resounding in the minds of all of his subordinates.

[That's still useless, boy.

An Elder Hydra can regrow its heads very quickly. So cutting them off won't make a difference at all.] informed Rathnaar again.

[What? It's supposed to be a Hydra... not the goddamn King Ghidorah!

Looks like I didn't read enough about Hydra's abilities in my past life.

System, tell me the weaknesses of this monster.] complained and ordered Kahn.

[An Elder Hydra's only weakness is its heart.] reported the system.

[Great. If I use Phase Shift skill and pass through its internal organs, I can destroy its heart using Dimensional Cut.] thought Kahn as he came up with a battle strategy.

[The system would like to inform the host that if the heart is destroyed, at least 10 kilometers of the radius will be pulverized after its destruction.] informed the system in its usual lifeless tone.

[Then I'll just use the Dimensional Void and enter True Dimension to avoid getting killed by the explosion.] he revealed an insidious smirk.

But to throw water on his face, the system quickly informed...

[The system detects that because mana and world energy is sealed in this environment, the space is also sealed and the host would be unable to use Dimensional Domain or Dimensional Void skill.

Only the Dimensional Cut skill can be used due to Space Force stored inside the host's body.

Also, the other subordinates would be unable to use their Domains as well.] reported the system.

[Seriously... I envy those Time Regressor novel protagonists now.

Those fuckers know everything from the future and have key information on how to kill these OP bosses easily.

Wish my story was something like that.] Kahn cursed in his mind.

At this moment, the boss started moving towards their direction on its own accord.

Additionally, as if some sadistic bastard was writing Kahn's story while laughing maniacally... the system gave another bad news.

[An Elder Hydra can relocate its heart at will and its regeneration abilities are second only to Dragons and the 5 Godbeasts. If the core is left intact, it can regenerate the heart as well.] reported the system again.

[What the fuck?! Stop telling me reasons why I can't kill this boss and give me actually helpful information, would ya?!] complained Kahn, his countenance turning ugly.

[Boy, it's extremely hard to kill by normal means. But I have a plan.] said Rathnaar in a stern voice.

Compared to Kahn, Rathnaar was a war veteran who was feared by the entire world at one point.

He had been in thousands of battles and many unfavorable situations whether it was against a monster, a saint, or even the chosen Heroes with Divine Abilities.

[Did you ever fight one?] queried Kahn.

[I did. But it was only a legendary rank 5 headed Hydra. And we lost many of my capable allies back then.

On top of it... you guys are short on attack skills because the world energy is inaccessible here.

Let's not forget that the swamp itself is poisonous. It will not only restrict your movements but also kill you slowly.] he iterated in a somber voice.

[All of us have a legendary rank poison immunity and I have complete Darkness and Fire element immunity now.

So we have 3 less things to worry about.] replied Kahn instantly.

[But you can still be killed with lightning and light elemental attacks easily. Those two elements are your weaknesses, am I right?] asked the Emperor's soul to Kahn.

[Yes. We're greatly restricted on plans and approaches we can take here.

Even sacrificing some of my subordinates won't ensure a confirmed kill if I can't destroy the heart and escape at the right time.] responded Kahn.

To his words, Rathnaar spoke in a thoughtful voice.

[I guess then we can't have a battle of attrition here.

All of you will need to finish this fight as quickly as you can.

Going All-Out from the start is your only option before you lot run out of your own mana and world energy.] said Rathnaar and then revealed his plan to all of them.

Kahn himself heard it and couldn't help but approve of this strategy.

It wasn't like he couldn't come up with this plan... the problem was that he had no prior experience in fighting with a Hydra before.

This world wasn't some typical light novel where Hydra were barely 5 meters tall and could be killed by Level 10 Protagonists just because they had the almighty plot armor.

Even with the plethora of skills Kahn and his group had, there were very few tactics they could use at this moment.

[This plan could work. But the problem is...

Edmund.] thought Kahn and looked at the useless and helpless ally of theirs who didn't have any redeeming qualities that could help them in this faceoff.

[We will have to reveal many of our secrets but him being here as a witness is a huge risk.] said Kahn and made a quick decision.

Just then...

[Do it!] commanded Kahn.

Whoosh!

Just then, Ronin suddenly appeared behind Edmund and attacked the human saint's head from behind.

Bang!

He knocked down the alchemist before the saint could even sense him, making him unconscious in the next second.

Armin checked his state and confirmed that the saint was done in and wouldn't wake up for a long time.

"Alright boys... it's time." spoke Kahn as all of them revealed their full killing intent.

"To bully the Mythical Boss!"

Chapter 763 Overwhelming Numbers

After a battle strategy was finalized and Edmund was left unconscious, Kahn and the group decided to go all out right from the very start as planned by Rathnaar.

One after another, Kahn's subordinates created a distance of 5 kilometers away from each and revealed their true forms.

BOOM!

BOOM!!

One after another, 8 different auras revealed by massive monstrous beings came into sight. Their overwhelming and dreadful pressure destroyed nearly 40 kilometers of the region in different directions as they encircled the Elder Hydra.

For the first time, every single one of Kahn's subordinates had taken their true legendary and mythical rank forms all at the same time.

As for Kahn himself... he activated the recently upgraded Asura Mode using all the powerful bloodlines he had after nearly a year.

The last time he took this form was when they fought Axel Lobethrox aka the Hero of Fire. And now, he was using it against this incredibly powerful floor boss.

"Let's fight this floor boss... with overwhelming power." spoke Kahn to his group.

Was their battle tactics to fight one enemy using 9 of them honorable and chivalrous conduct?

Hell no!

But the current Kahn was not the one to follow any code of honor. It was a Kill or be Killed situation. Morals and Ethics didn't mean shit if you were dead and your corpse was rotting inside a swamp.

With subordinates who are no different than dungeon bosses themselves, they charged at the Elder Hydra.

"Be careful. All of you must stall for enough time and create an opening." he commanded and dashed, because of his current form, Kahn was the smallest, comparable to an ant against the enormous sizes of his subordinates but he was the fastest at this moment.

BOOM!!

Jugram in his Diablos form leaped high in the air and faced the head of the elder hydra with Ice element.

Blackwall in his Kronos primordial titan form plunged his hands inside the deep waters and soon, he created a canal while surrounding the nearby 10 kilometers of radius using the earth at the bottom of the swamp.

His part was to clear terrain and restrict the Hydra as it was a sea creature with extreme agility inside water. The more water he got out through the canal, the more agility this boss would lose while he blocked all escape routes.

Oliver in his massive Thunderbird form flew high in the sky, spreading his 500 meters wide wings on each side while summoning dozens of typhoons as he targeted the head with Fire element.

Contrary to how one would think, extremely condensed and high pressure was capable of easily cutting through the most destructive fire attacks if used correctly. Thus, Oliver was tasked to face this head on his own.

Omega in his Hrodvitnir form, who was now the 2nd biggest subordinate in Kahn's troop after Blackwall, faced the head with Light element because he had Lightning element.

Kahn and Ceril were weak against the Light element and the only element to overpower Light was Lightning element in this world.

Armin had taken his Erdtree form, turning into a 4 legged massive green monster who exuded enormous life force.

He engaged the Hydra's head which let out Corrosion breath that could rot everything.

The reason why he was tasked with facing this head was because he had a lot of life force and can regenerate easily in a matter of seconds.

Ronin in his new Mythical rank form faced the head with Venom that would instantly melt even another legendary rank monster. Because not only did he have immunity against it but also his movement and ability to pass through attacks was extremely useful in the current scenario.

Ceril in his Legendary Rank form which was an undead with Scythe of the Reaper as weapon and 6 black wings on his back which helped him fly even without the use of world energy engaged the head with Lightning element.

He had plenty of darkness elemental long-range attacks such as Darkness Mirage Blade Barrage skill that allowed him to attack with thousands of curved blades made with darkness element.

He was one of the 3 people capable to face lightning element in the group since both darkness and lightning were equally matched in terms of strength and also called as the 2 strongest elements of nature.

Now that the 6 heads had their respective counter-opponents engaged in a battle with them, only Kahn and Rudra, both of whom had a considerable part to play as well.

Kahn in his Asura form left shockwaves after shockwaves as he sprinted on the surface of swamp water as if he was using his Chakra to run on it.

His target was the head taking on the head with Darkness element. Because not only was he impervious to the darkness element, but he also had a very useful skill to fight against creatures of this element.

Swoosh!

He summoned Lucifer in his hands and blue lightning ran across its blade wildly as Kahn himself leaped close to 500 meters high in the air.

Although he was a 3rd stage saint, his body was as strong as a legitimate 4th stage saint. This much distance in a single leap was like taking a normal step on the ground for him.

ROARR!!

At this moment, the Elder Hydra was enraged as it saw all of its heads being targeted on all fronts, yet it felt no sense of danger, but rather an excitement that told him to trample on these enemies.

Soon, it rose high, revealing its full 1 kilometer tall body with snake-like heads that were 300 meters long each.

HISSSS!!!

All the heads shot out a beam of their respective elements and targeted their opponents that were charging from few kilometers away.

BOOM!

BANG!

Extremely dangerous elemental attacks crashed against their respective targets and destroyed the nearby terrains while wounding their opponents. Each breath was strong and wide enough to kill 10 thousand enemies at once when faced directly.

However, during this faceoff, the Elder Hydra felt fear for the first time.

A massively oppressive aura with terrifying killing intent bombarded its body, trying to set its dominance and supremacy over it. And the source of his majestic and domineering aura was...

Rudra!

Chapter 764 Bullying The Boss

The Elder Hydra, an existence which was far stronger than the other legendary rank beings, felt a sense of dread for the first time as Rudra suddenly released his full killing intent.

In the present moment, Rudra used the Dominator's Aura skill, which was exclusive to himself and brought out the terrifying auras of his own Dragon and Basilisk bloodline combined.

Compared to other subordinates including Omega who had Godbeast bloodlines, Rudra's was much more powerful and terrifying since others only had the bloodline from the descendant species and became variants of the said bloodlines. None of them were true Godbeast in the end.

In his case, Basilisks were one of the Godbeasts while Dragons were beings who stood above the godbeasts in the hierarchy of powerful species in this world, only below the Demi-Gods. Hence, his Dominator's Aura was the culmination of the best of the best.

If Rudra was of the same level as the elder hydra, a being comparable to a 5th stage saint, then this effect would be even more powerful.

Nonetheless, this was currently more than enough.

ROARRR!!

All the heads of the hydra roared loudly and frantically started attacking their targets, launching massive beams after beams of highly condensed elemental attacks that could even overpower another 5th stage saint like those from the Hero's Party.

BOOM!!

Jugram was hit with a massive and quick frost breath that instantly froze his entire body, forming a 500 meter tall pillar of ice while freezing the nearby 3 kilometers radius.

The aim was extremely fast and accurate despite being a 5 kilometer range gap between them.

And now that it stood up with its full body revealed, everyone saw its massive claws on the four legs and the 2 kilometers long tail at the back. The Elder Hydra was 5 kilometers long in total despite being already so big.

RAWWRR!!

This time, Jugram let out a massive burst of hellfire and broke through the gigantic ice pillar.

Even though he was only 2nd stage saint and couldn't use his buffs because they were fighting a single enemy, he was fairly capable to stall and protect himself against the ice elemental head.

Similarly, all the subordinates faced their respective opponents while using many of their attack and defense skills. Other than Omega and Rudra, everyone was having a hard time because although it looked like the 7 heads would be weak... their attack power, range and overall destructive capabilities were on par with 4th stages on their own.

Even Kahn, who was using Asura Mode was barely able to match the one he was fighting.

[Now, go for the central head.] ordered Rathnaar, the main tactician of the battle.

This time, Rudra's serpentine yellow eyes glowed brightly as he targeted the middle head from afar.

Crack!

Shatter!

Crumble!

And suddenly, the world around the Hydra started changing at a visible rate. In just a dozen seconds, the Elder Hydra felt like he was no longer on the dungeon floor but in a completely different world where there was nothing but lava and barren lands with black soil, boulders and dozens of tall mountains.

Slither!

Slither!

The distracted central head look around and felt like a black figure was slithering amongst the gaps in these mountains.

But soon...

HISSSS!!

An ear-deafening hissing reached its ears and the elder hydra was horrified for the first time.

A massive two-horned Basilisk that was 10 times bigger than itself arose amidst these mountains and glared at the hydra. Threatening its entire existence and revealing a disdainful aura as if it was looking down on this mythical rank floor boss.

In reality... this was just one of Rudra's illusions.

Rudra's Lucid Reality skill was even stronger than the one Kahn could use. And unlike the latter, it worked even on the beings who were stronger than him.

Just like Rathnaar suggested, the central head seemed to be the main CPU of the elder hydra which also commanded and attacked through the other heads in real time. So when Rudra put it under hypnosis, the other heads also stopped attacking.

This was an advantage Hero's Party didn't have because they were small-sized High Elves and not gigantic monsters with unique powers like Kahn's group.

Crackle!

BOOM!

In the real world however, Kahn and his group of Kaijus took this opportunity to kill the other heads in quick succession.

Kahn used the Dark Lightning Strike and obliterated the head he faced in a single shot.

However, the heads regenerated in matter of seconds.

[Human, it won't last for long. Isn't he done yet?] asked Rudra who was maintaining the illusion with great focus.

Suddenly, the Hydra broke free from the illusion and regained its senses. In the end, it was a powerful being on its own. Rudra's hypnosis wasn't going to affect it for long.

[Master, I'm done!] a stoic voice resounded in Kahn's head.

SHRILL!!

The Elder Hydra started rampantly attacking all the opponents as it felt great dancing, its mind telling it that something was amiss.

And as part of its instinct, it tried to retreat backward.

"Too late!" shouted Armin in his Erdtree form, his thousands of vines each being few hundred meters long and sturdy at the same time restricting the elder hydra from moving.

Omega also activated Gravity Imprisonment skill to stop the floor boss from moving.

All in all, this entire exchange was nothing but a pure distraction. The real objective was something else.

And now it was time for their gang... To land the finishing blow.

BOOM!!

BOOM!!

Dozens of Sonic booms resonated in the surroundings as the elder hydra tried to use its world energy to break free. Still, as Kahn said... it was already too late.

And finally, the Elder Hydra felt a sense of impending doom as a massive shadow was cast on its own body and it found where the life-threatening attack was coming from.

A loud and majestic voice resounded from the general who hadn't engaged in direct combat with the hydra even till this point, his words reverberated in the 10 kilometers radius as he announced the name of the finishing skill.

"Planetary Devastation!"

Chapter 765 Meticulous Planning

The almighty Elder Hydra was undergoing immense pressure because of the constant attacks and barely managed to come out of Rudra's hypnosis gaze. However, right when it regained consciousness, a ginormous moon-like boulder dropped from the sky.

BOOM!!

10 kilometers of region shook and the ground shuddered from the impact. Thousands of cracks and crevices formed as high tidal waves of swamp water rose high like a tsunami.

In the end, because of Rudra's hypnosis, the Elder Hydra failed to sense that while it was fighting their group... Blackwall, who stood at the back of this enemy group despite being the biggest and tallest of them all, had been excavating the nearby region quietly and created a massive 1 kilometer tall round orb similar to the shape of the moon in the sky using the Terrain Manipulation skill.

As a result, the hydra was caught off guard by the Planetary Devastation attack the Kronos general created for the first time.

ROARRR!!

HISSSS!!

All the heads of the floor boss roared frantically and wailed in pain as this massive and incredibly leaden orb was hammered down on its body, basically squashing most of it in a single strike.

To add to the pressure, Kahn also used War Dominance and Dragon's Sovereignty. Making the enemy lose its rationality because of its enraged and endangered state.

At this moment, the nearby terrain had been cleared of water because of the impact through the canals Blackwall created previously while he had surrounded the boss. Due to which, the boss also lost its mobility since it was a water creature with limited maneuverability on open ground.

Every single step was planned from the very beginning.

The boss was now stomped by the massive boulder, screaming and screeching in agonizing pain. It could no longer move because of losing the terrain advantage as well as destroyed internal organs.

All the heads attacked the ginormous mini-planet with their elemental breaths despite in being pain. But it was simply too big to destroy in a single wave.

"Now!" shouted Kahn and all the subordinates attacked with their physical bodies from all sides, this time, their goals were not the heads but something else.

Rip!

Tear!

Omega, Jugram, Armin, Ceril and Ronin attacked all at once and started tearing apart its massive 5 kilometers long body while evading the attacks from its heads.

Rudra also slithered quickly, approaching the enemy from behind and he bit off the entire tail while spewing his Corrosive Magma, making it unable to regenerate in that part.

But since both of them were creatures with venom and poison immunity, the Elder Hydra wasn't dying. Yet the injuries were still lethal.

Even though most of the body was regenerating at an extremely fast pace, the Elder Hydra couldn't move and Kahn's group of walking world calamities kept tearing apart its flesh and bones before the healing could even complete.

[Now is your chance, boy.] spoke Rathnaar in a kingly manner.

This was an opportunity they needed as orchestrated by Rathnaar, the first emperor of Rakos.

The biggest key factor which dictated the result of this battle was whether they could destroy the Elder Hydra's heart or not.

Nonetheless, the available space for it to move the heart was simply too big.

So all these steps were taken in order to force their enemy to act according to their needs instead.

And now, there were only a few places where the heart could be shifted because its central body parts such as the spine, rib cage and tail were crushed and other parts were being torn apart by the Kahn's subordinates.

Since there was no way for them to easily find the heart without losing all their mana and world energy stored in their bodies during the battle.

Hence, they forced the hydra to move the heart to a safe place... a place where they wanted it to be.

"Got it!" said Kahn after he used Hunter's Domain which expended half of his world energy reserves because of the restrictions placed by this floor.

[All of you, inside!] he ordered at the same time as Lucifer was instantly covered under space force.

Everyone else was already waiting for this command and quickly entered his shadow without wasting a single moment.

Slash!!

Kahn used the Dimensional Cut skill and slashed apart the 20 meter wide heart of the hydra in a single swing.

SHING!!

As soon as the heart was cut, a massive surge of golden aura erupted.

BOOM!!

And Kahn, who was still present just half a kilometer away was obliterated into ash as the entire ten kilometers of radius was pulverized from this nuclear bomb-like explosion.

Destroying the core of a mythical rank being comparable to a 5th stage saint was no joke.

Millions of soldiers in this perimeter would die even if they successfully managed to kill the Elder Hydra. This was also the reason why nobody could easily kill this boss in a thousand years.

5 seconds later.

"Phew! Barely survived."

Spoke Kahn as he stood besides Edmund's unconscious body which was located 20 kilometers away.

Before the battle even began, he had created 2 Doppelgangers, stationed and hidden perfectly using Invisibility skill at set distances.

As soon as he destroyed the heart, he switched places with them one after another in milliseconds at a distance of 10 kilometers each, making his escape in time using the Shadow Swap skill while sacrificing his fake bodies.

Swoosh!

All the subordinates came out of his shadow and heaved a sigh of relief.

If there was even a single second's delay... all of them would've died with Kahn.

This was a very risky plan. But as a result, only blood, chunks of flesh and crumbs of shattered bones were spread across 30 kilometers radius, none of which was theirs.

"Man... I could've gotten a lot of useful abilities."

The entire body and core of the Elder Hydra were gone.

Sadly, harvesting it was not an option for them otherwise Kahn would've used it for his rank up to a 5th stage saint later.

But wanting everything without sacrifices didn't always happen in the real world.

Little did he know...

What Ervalen, the Hero of Life achieved with the death of half of their party members and sacrificing himself...

Kahn and the gang achieved that without a single casualty.

Although it seemed like everything was taken care of very easily with no mishaps and great struggle...

All of it was possible because they planned each step very meticulously with their limited abilities and restrictions on their bodies while avoiding all the possible mistakes that could happen and get themselves killed as a result.

Once again, Rathnaar proved why he was superior in terms of experience and war tactics compared to Kahn.

Having a Genius mind didn't mean you could always outsmart people with great Experience. This was something the current Kahn still needed to work on and accumulate over time.

And finally... they passed one of the biggest hurdles that even millions of soldiers and dozens of saints couldn't accomplish... with just 9 fighters.

Two Hours Later.

Edmund finally woke up from his slumber and had a groggy expression. In the end, he was a human, someone without natural or innate regeneration abilities, so it took him time to recover despite being a saint.

"What the hell happened?! Did I die?"

And where is the boss?" he questioned loudly.

Kahn who had turned back into Legolas again gave a benign look as he responded with a charming smile.

"Gone. Reduced to atoms."

Chapter 766 Price For Salvation

Legolas informed Edmund, their ally in this expedition that they had killed the boss and not even its body was left.

But in reality... Armin had gathered all the chunks of flesh, extracted the blood and bones under Kahn's orders. To remove the evidence of the fight and how they killed the boss.

Legolas also told Edmund that the boss had a mental attack skill that targeted him, the weakest of the group, and made him faint. Thus, he was knocked out during the whole battle.

As for how they killed it?

He iterated a fake battle strategy with some truth to it such as surrounding and overwhelming the boss with numbers.

Because in the end, killing a mythical rank boss was a great feat so they didn't want the alchemist to ask unnecessary questions that could unravel their secrets.

The more oblivious Edmund was about their true battle prowess, the better.

All in all, they were now free to leave this floor and progress further.

Now, only 10 floors were left and they'd be able to leave this hellish dungeon after completing their main objective of gathering the resources on the 81st floor.

All of them took deep breaths and finally entered the exit door, hoping for smooth sailing from here on.

Two Days Later.

Huff!

Huff!

Over 500 people passed through the entrance door and appeared on the 71st floor, all of them being battle-worn and vigilant towards each other.

In this group, not a single person was below Grandmaster Rank and they had close to a hundred Semi-Saints and 25 Saints.

Two of these powerful beings were 5th stage saints, 3 were 4th stage saints while the rest were 3rd and below.

However, none of them had any joyful expression but grimness in their eyes.

Lagertha Skjoldottir, the guildmaster of the 12 Valkyries arrived with her group of saints. By now, the number of combatants still progressing through the Immortal Dungeon had greatly diminished.

"Dammit!! Only if we had prepared more." she spoke with a constricted expression.

At least half of her guild members had died during their journey so far. Although they had come with ample preparations, a supreme dungeon was not a place where everything went according to their plan.

Sometimes, unprecedented and unpredictable factors arose and caused numerous casualties.

Although saints were powerful combatants, not all of them were proficient when it came to protecting thousands of people at once.

So recently, they had no choice but to let most of their guild members return to the outside world as only the strongest of their forces kept traversing these dangerous floors by themselves.

This was the same case for the majority of the forces whether they were mercenaries, noble house envoys or adventurer guilds. So only the strong-willed and powerful individuals gathered and traveled together at this point.

The previous alliance no longer existed. It was everybody for themselves and half the group held animosity towards the other half for various reasons.

Yet, they could always settle the score outside so no one had openly attacked the other party.

"Guildmaster, both mana and world energy is sealed on this floor." spoke the white-haired vice-guildmaster of the 12 Valkyries who was a magician.

Lagertha then revealed a curious gaze as she looked around.

"Where's the Hydra?" asked one of the saints from the other groups.

"Wait... looks like the floor is cleared. The hydra must be respawning now." said an Enchanter class saint.

"Does it mean someone killed it within a week?" asked a berserker class saint.

"Don't tell me... the Misthios guild cleared it already?"

They were the ones who had a lead for half a month." said Rose Hightower of the 12 Valkyries.

One after another, hundreds of these new arrivals revealed amazed expressions.

Because this floor was the 2nd most feared boss in Immortal Dungeon that was cleared only 5 times in history.

And this was also one of the main reasons why all of them had decided to stick around and kill it by joining hands despite their grievances with each other.

Yet, the Misthios guild which had only 10 saints and only 8 combat class individuals among them somehow killed the boss on their own.

Not a single person here could help but feel a sense of mental oppression, thinking how strong this guild was to achieve such a feat while they had no access to their most powerful skills.

Even Lagertha, who was 4th stage saint herself couldn't help but feel overwhelmed and wonder...

"Misthios guild... just who are you people?"

At this very moment, a different scenario came into sight on the 81st floor.

A land colored in red and a massive body of a ginormous monster came into sight.

Blergh!

A high elf saint spat a mouthful of blood as he adjusted his breathing and gathered all the strength in his body to stand up.

He looked around the battlefield and used his senses to detect his allies.

Huff!

Huff!

Ervalen was barely able to stand as he used his staff to support his body while revealing a disheartened expression.

Myrienne, the Priestess of this group, stood a few hundred meters away, her forehead full of sweat and her breathing inconsistent.

The 5th stage saint slowly walked and stopped near a body on the ground.

"Farewell, my friend." he spoke and closed the eyes of a corpse.

This individual was none other than the Knight saint who was also a 5th stage saint like the former. But now... he had lost his life after this arduous and intense battle.

The Hero's Party had killed the 81st floor boss. Achieving a feat no one had managed to do in the past thousand years and becoming the first people to clear this floor.

However... this victory didn't bring any of them joy at the moment.

During the battle, the blue-skinned elf and the blonde archer elf, both of whom were 3rd stage saints, had lost their lives.

And they barely managed to achieve their goal after the 5th stage saint knight chose to sacrifice himself for the sake of saving his allies and creating an opportunity to kill the boss.

Their group originally had 12 members. But the Elder Hydra had killed 6 of them already.

And now, they lost 3 more of their comrades on this floor.

Who would've thought that the overbearing Hero's Party that was all prideful and acted almighty in front of Kahn's group would be killed off not by Rudra or Kahn, whom they offended publicly but by the Immortal Dungeon floor bosses instead.

Now, only Ervalen, Myrienne and the elf swordsman remained.

This was victory without a great price to pay.

What did it cost?

Everything.

Chapter 767 The Resolve

3 Days Later.

On the 91st floor of the Immortal Dungeon, a long-drawn battle had come to an end.

Thud!

Eralen Baslaark, the Hero of Life dropped to his knees and gasped. His figure was drenched in blue blood and every inch of his body was running out of strength.

At this moment, they had killed a ginormous creature that existed only in myths and even made the Elder Hydra look like a weak monster that couldn't even hold a candle to it.

After 15 hours of constant battle, they finally managed to kill the boss. But just like before... his face was full of helplessness and grimace.

"No! Uncle!

Please wake up!" shouted Myrienne, trying her best to heal the body of the fallen comrade with whatever world energy she had left in her body as she cradled a middle-aged high elf swordsman in her arms.

This was the remaining 5th stage saint of their party who fell in this battle after playing a vital role.

Myrienne was crying loudly, her expression filled with pain because this swordsman was her blood relative whom she had a strong bond with all her life.

It was because he tried to save her from the dungeon boss, the saint acted like a meat shield despite his sorry state.

Step!

Step!

"Eralen! Do something!" she pleaded with teary eyes.

But Eralen apologetically shook his head.

"Myrienne... You should use the pass and leave." he spoke with a disgruntled expression.

"But..."

"No buts."

"Your lives were entrusted to me.

Sadly... I have no way of bringing back the dead to life." he said with an indignant countenance.

"In the end, a divine ability can work only for the Hero and can't resurrect his allies." he iterated.

"And now... there are only 10 floors left.

We don't know how hard they will be since nobody came this far before.

Even I'm not sure if we'd be able to survive from now on." he spoke and placed his hands on the shoulder of the fallen elf.

"Although my divine abilities helped us get this far and protected many of you from time to time... this is as far as they can take us.

Other than me and you, there's nobody left." he said and pulled the corpse into his space ring.

"You're princess Eleanor's best friend.

What kind of a man would I be if I let the closest friend of the woman I love to die on my watch?" he spoke with a guilty expression.

"Listen to me Myrienne. Your uncle and all of our friends have sacrificed their lives for the sake of this mission and our empire." he spoke and pulled out the space ring from his finger.

This was a ring where they stored the corpses of all their fallen allies till this point. To give them a proper funeral with dignity.

Next, Ervalen handed this ring to Myrienne and continued...

"You should tell the outside world about what happened here.

Their houses and clans should know of their sacrifice and chivalry regardless." he said and got up.

"And what about you?" she asked while wiping off her tears.

"I will continue." he responded in an emotionless voice.

"Ervalen, you'll die!

This is no longer possible for us to progress furthermore. And there's no one left to fight with you." spoke Myrienne, her voice was still hoarse because of her exhausted state.

"And there's still the last Dungeon Boss we know nothing about."

To her words, the Hero of Life replied calmly.

"You don't understand, Myrienne.

Now... it's my responsibility to complete the mission and make sure that their lives didn't go in vain.

So going back is no longer an option." he spoke while tightly clenching his fist.

"It will take me a lot of time and we might lose our last chance.

But to succeed and use that rumored power in order to become the strongest Hero, to protect the Elven empire and then face the Demon God in the war that's to come...

It is absolutely necessary." stated the 10th Hero of Life.

"I'd rather die trying than give up at this point." he said as a chivalrous aura emanated from his body.

After giving some thought, Myrienne also spoke.

"I understand. I'll go." she replied.

Her state was currently the worst one in her entire life so far. And she had just also lost a family member who gave her the confidence to survive till now.

So she was inherently afraid for her life as well.

In the following moments, she activated a golden tabloid-like pass and her figure disappeared from the floor in mere seconds.

"I must succeed."

Eralen said after he was left alone as he walked toward the exit door to the next floor.

Continuing in a voice filled with unyielding resolve.

"For the sake of my beloved."

At this very moment on the 81st floor.

The entry door flashed white and 10 people appeared.

It was as expected, the Misthios guild.

After killing the Elder Hydra, luck had been on their side.

Because the previous 10 floors didn't pose too much trouble for them. Using the subordinates and their unique abilities which proved helpful in particular terrain and laws of reality, they managed to reach this floor very easily compared to previous floors where they were greatly restricted.

"What the hell?"

"Why isn't the boss here?" asked Rudra as he didn't sense a single living being in 50 kilometers radius.

"Then it can only mean that the boss was killed and it hasn't even been a week since it didn't respawn." said Ronin in his Scorpion appearance.

"Who could it be?" asked Edmund.

The only answer was...

"The Hero's Party." spoke Legolas.

Their main goal was to come to this floor made of natural resources spread over around 150 kilometers.

But miraculously, someone had gotten rid of their biggest headache for them.

"This is a great opportunity. We're truly blessed by the God Gyvenimas!"

We should get to work and gather these resources.

Darwin and the rest, take these artifacts and help me. We can't risk the boss reappearing before we're done." said the saint alchemist in an exhilarated voice.

The rest followed his orders and spread across the floor. But unknown to the human saint, all of them were talking telepathically through their mind link which now had a range of 200 kilometers after Kahn became a 3rd stage saint.

[Boy... the Hero was 4th stage saint Summoner.

And his group was also very strong for this dungeon's level of difficulty.

But if they passed this floor means that his group is the first one to cross this hurdle.

In a way... they have created a path for you.]. iterated Rathnaar.

To his words, Legolas aka Kahn responded with a suspicious voice...

"This place has no restrictions on mana and world energy. And given that they had two 5th stage saints, it is indeed plausible that they were strong enough to clear it.

But what I'm worried about is..." he said and asked in their group chat.

"Should we continue or not?"

[Human, If there's no restriction on mana and world energy, we are capable enough to progress from now on, aren't we?] queried Rudra, more like suggested that they should keep traveling.

[And if the Hero's Party is ahead... then it means that there's a chance that they have also gone to further floors.

What if we come across their way?

That's like taking unnecessary risks.] stated Omega aka Raiden from his end while he used the artifact that sucked all the resources such as minerals and plants and objects around him like a wormhole.

[Boy... Don't you think something is fishy?

Why would a chosen Hero, the one who should be protected and guarded by the empire's forces after your fight with the Hero of Fire, risk his life coming to a supreme tier dungeon?

He should be focusing on raising his rank while being surrounded by the strongest people of the empire instead.] said the peak saint.

[Yeah, you're right. Besides, it's been a year and they still haven't declared my identity or existence as well as what happened in the Vulcan empire to the public of Zivot Empire.

For some reason, they've done a thorough job hiding those events in this empire despite having no reason to.

Could it be related to the thing called Divine Key which the System told me about?] wondered Kahn on his own.

[Wait... I have my own doubts.

Do you remember that when we came here, we talked about how unnaturally large numbers of dungeons are in this place?] asked Rathnaar.

[Yeah, even your core which became active only 100 years ago after the seal weakened, formed over a dozen dungeons at best.] replied Kahn quickly.

[Yes. And then there's this Supreme Dungeon which has existed for a thousand years.

I bet on my guts that the Source of all this network of dungeons must be inside this Immortal dungeon.] he spoke with a smug tone as he revealed his hunch and made a proposal.

[Let's find the Dungeon Boss.]

Chapter 768 The Last Hurdle

Rathnaar suggested the group should keep moving forward to next floors despite their main objective being completed here. Yet, his proposition was met with silence.

[So what are you suggesting? That we should go just based on your hunch?

There could be many dangers that might as well kill us.] asked Kahn with a suspicious voice again.

[Eh? Since when did you start cowering from taking risks?

We even screwed over all the Noble Factions in my empire, an Imperial Prince, the Church of Hetrax and even killed a chosen Hero.

Compared to that, it's a walk in the park.

What's there to worry about?] asked Rathnaar unhappily.

[And let's say whatever it is and somehow we managed to get it... what's there to guarantee that we won't get caught into the crossfire?

I already established myself properly in this empire without raising suspicion. I'm not in the mood to risk it all.] responded Kahn in a lifeless tone.

[Don't forget, kid... the greater the risk, the greater the reward.

Who knows if you can get the treasure that even this Hero of Life is so diligently trying to acquire by risking his life?] he kept suggesting persistently.

[What if you find something that could instantly raise your rank or give you an absolutely amazing ability that could help you fight other heroes or protect yourselves from those people who are coming to hunt you?

You're a smart guy... you should know the benefits.] said the peak saint and finished his piece.

Kahn was perplexed after hearing this rebuttal and gave it a thought in his mind.

Because it wasn't even confirmed that they'd get caught or even get the so-called 'treasure' in the first place.

Suddenly, a wide grin formed on Kahn's face, the corner of his lips rising as high as they could be. Meanwhile, Rathnaar had a similar greedy and covetous grin inside his soul.

Because Rathnaar was also a risk-taker. He too had the history of acquiring the Tablet of Arcana by taking risks and making sacrifices.

Because what Rathnaar suggested was indeed the truth.

Being over-prepared was hundred times better than being under-prepared.

Who knew if the mysterious group suddenly found him? The more cards he had to escape or protect himself, the better.

As for the subordinates... all of them were confident in their skills and abilities to survive.

On top of it, if the situation turned dire, Kahn was the kind to prepare an escape route first. Thus, this decision reached a unified consensus.

The expedition shall carry on.

2 Hours Later.

The group finished ransacking the entire floor's natural resources and alchemy ingredients since they had the manpower and the floor boss was nonexistent.

And finally, they regrouped. However, Legolas spoke with Edmund.

"We're thinking about continuing to further floors.

But we have already completed our main goal here." he said.

Edmund was suddenly taken aback. It took him a dozen seconds to respond anxiously.

"It will be too hard from now on. We may lose our lives." said the saint alchemist.

"Yes. We were lucky to accomplish their mission without having to fight the boss.

But from here on, we can't guarantee your safety if you come with us." said Legolas.

The human saint quickly understood what the ironborn elf was trying to imply.

They wanted Edmund to leave on his own volition instead of becoming a burden on their group since things were going to be even more dangerous.

"I understand. Our main goal is realized so there's no need for me to tag along.

I'll leave." said the masked saint as he sighed.

In the end, although they were business partners... the matter of Misthios guild and his own Alchemy Enterprise was different. He had no say in their decision and neither did they owe him an explanation.

Besides, Edmund himself was aware that other than being able to provide some power boost and healing potions, he'd be no help during a battle. And Darwin was the member of the Misthios guild who could fill in that role already.

In the past couple of months since they entered the Immortal Dungeon, he had grown accustomed to all the people present here. He was aware of how strong these people were.

So him sticking around made no sense.

"I will be waiting for you in Sparta." he said and activated his dungeon pass as he bade farewell to the group.

Everyone watched him disappear into thin air, a sense of relief washing over their minds.

Kahn then turned to his subordinates and gave a command.

"We will progress on the coattails of the hero's party.

Let's hope we catch up and won't have to face another floor boss."

Just 2 Hours Later

Another being covered in a white and green cloak appeared on this floor, completely alone.

The aura of this individual was that of a Peak 5th stage saint.

"This has made my job easy. I shall keep following them and progress without having to fight myself.

As for the Mithios guild..." he spoke with an ominous voice.

"I'll get rid of them as soon as I reach the final floor."

10 Days Later.

The entry door flashed and a slim figure of a 4th stage saint summoner who was halfbreed elf appeared on the final floor of the Immortal Dungeon.

Eralen managed to achieve what nobody had done before.

But as soon as he appeared on the floor... an intangible force pulled him away towards the center of this floor at supersonic speed.

"Impossible!

How can such a thing exist in this empire?" he asked in disbelief as soon as the Dungeon Boss revealed its existence.

Just then... an insidious and terrifying voice landed on his ears.

"Oh, they sent another Hero of Life?

This one is unqualified as well. Simply too weak." spoke this ginormous being that was whooping 5 kilometers tall. Something that only few mountains on earth managed to reach.

"Wait! If there's some sort of test... I can prove myself worthy!" shouted Eralen.

"Is that so? Well then... I will use only 5% of my power and attack you.

If you manage to defend against it or even counter with your own skills... I shall deem you qualified." spoke this being. Just these simple words shook the nearby 20 kilometers of region.

"Prepare yourself... you damn elf!" shouted this tyrannical being.

But the next second...

A bright blue light flashed as the final boss used its weakest attack.

BOOM!!

The nearby 5 kilometers of ground disintegrated while there was a 500 meter deep pit in the ground in this charred vicinity.

Ervalen, the Hero of Life, who arduously worked to get here and even had his allies sacrifice their lives to complete this mission...

Was simply pulverized into nothingness. Not even leaving his ashes behind.

"Impetuous otherworldly bastard. They should've told you already." spoke this majestic and tyrannical being that existed in this dungeon for a thousand years, revealing a vengeful expression.

"I hate the Heroes and Gods."

Chapter 769 Political Move

After Ervalen was killed by the Dungeon Boss in mere seconds without even getting a chance to protect himself... this incident ended his journey inside the Immortal Dungeon.

Blergh!

The remaining body or should we call as the remaining Ervalen threw up a lot of blood as he retched, suffering immense pain at the same time.

At this moment, 3 different colored orbs covered in archaic formations passed into the center of his body at the speed of light.

"Dammit!! The divine abilities I left with that body returned!

I have failed my mission." he spoke with a regretful and infuriated tone as his eyes turned blood red from rage.

Unlike Kahn's doppelgangers... Ervalen could create real copies of himself who also possessed the same rank as him and had methods that allowed him to impart a set of his own divine abilities to a particular copy.

In Kahn's case, none of his doppelgangers could use the Divine Abilities, the Blessings given by War Deity and the Deities of Blacksmithing or even the bloodline abilities like his main body. But this was not the case for Ervalen Baslaark, the Hero whose abilities were chosen by the God of Life himself.

And every time Ervalen died, he could exchange life force and resurrect himself using the spare copy.

However, in case all the copies died, the information and memories experienced by that Ervalen would go back to the main body.

And this wasn't the end of it either.

As long as even one copy remained, the divine abilities as well as all the memories could be passed to it, making that one into 'real' Ervalen.

This made him basically unkillable unless all Ervalen were standing at one place and killed together.

However, these were just 2 of his divine abilities. The rest were chosen to make it impossible to kill by overcoming that flaw as well.

This was why nobody who knew of his secrets believed that Hero of Life could be killed.

At the present moment, Ervalen used his healing abilities while processing the set of information that just appeared in his mind.

"What the hell!!!" he shouted in disbelief as soon as he processed the memories from the copy that died on the final floor.

His entire countenance was that of a terrified man who had given into despair and forsaken life.

Only after a few minutes did he manage to return to reality as sweat dripped from his entire body and chin.

"Why didn't the emperor tell me anything about it?" he asked himself, completely confused.

In an hour, he requested for an urgent council with both the Emperor and the Abbot who resided in their respective palaces.

"How can that thing exist in a dungeon?"

It shouldn't be possible for a supreme dungeon to create that creature." he spoke in front of the two monarchs of Zivot Empire in a heavily secured chamber.

"Did you see it with your own eyes?" asked the Emperor with an expectant gaze.

"Of course, I did. Only because one of my divine abilities allowed me to retrieve my memories." spoke Ervalen and explained what he saw on the last floor.

Both the Emperor Class High Elves were taken aback slightly.

"Brother... it's weaker compared to the time when our Grandfather reigned over this empire. But it's still very resentful." said the Abbot.

Then his gaze turned to Ervalen as he iterated...

"To tell you the truth. You're not the only Hero of Life who reached the final floor.

The imperial family had spread the rumor that no one was able to cross the 81st floor to keep its existence a secret. That 'creature'... You know what will happen if the whole empire learned about it." he spoke in a stern voice.

The 8th stage saint rank emperor then cut in.

"But there was one big problem.

Nobody, not even the Hero of Life from those times ever managed to come back alive.

Except for your predecessor, the two Hero of Life that came before also died after reaching that floor." he explained.

"But can such a powerful creature be contained there?"

"It's not really the dungeon boss is it?" asked the short and white-haired hero.

"That monstrous being didn't even use 5% of its strength but killed me, a 4th stage saint in a blink of an eye." spoke Ervalen, revealing a devastated and frightened expression.

"What do you think is the source of those dungeons in Alfheim?"

"Its power has been consumed and drained over a thousand years now to create those dungeons.

"If the normal people or the nearby empires found out... they would all attack the Zivot Empire to take control over that being."

"That's why we hid the truth. Otherwise... there would be no Zivot Empire in existence." explained the Emperor sternly.

"But now that you know... you have a higher chance to prepare and succeed." said the Abbot in a joyous tone.

"I... I do not have the confidence anymore."

"Besides, everyone else is dead. Only I know what exists there. No one would come with me to die." he said in an exhausted tone.

Through his memories, he already knew how hard it was to even reach there. Even his body with 3 divine abilities at his disposal barely managed to do it.

To his defeated countenance, the Abbot replied in a warm tone.

"Ervalen, you're different from all of your predecessors. That's why we offered you the deal that was never even considered for any chosen Hero, not even the 4th Hero of Life, Bjorn Ragnarsson.

"If you manage to control it, you'll not only be our family and marry the princess, which goes against our ancestral laws... but you will also be able to wield an unimaginable power that would decide the fate of our empire in the upcoming war against the Demon God."

Next, the emperor spoke with an amicable smile.

"The Immortal Dungeon will open next year again. You always have the opportunity to try. We will provide you with whatever you need."

"I can't."

"Not unless I become a 5th stage saint first."

"I need at least 5 more years to create more bodies and try again." he spoke, partially declining the command.

Both the monarchs had a gloomy faces after hearing this response. But they were patient enough to let it slide.

"And what about my comrades?" he asked.

The Emperor and the Abbot had heard about what happened.

Ervalen was once a King who had led the Uprising and also overthrew the previous rule. He led powerful people during his rise to power and journey to become the King.

But now that his subordinates were dead, there were bound to be repercussions within the top High Elf classes.

The reason?...

It wasn't even a glorified war with other empires but a dungeon expedition that even the public knew about. Their deaths couldn't be covered so easily and the Hero's Party would be a laughingstock for not only the empire but the entire world.

His capabilities to lead as a chosen Hero would also be questioned by the people if that happened.

Just then, the emperor spoke calmly.

"We have a way to justify their deaths.

We purposely held important information and now we are going to use it to our advantage."

"You mean..." Ervalen's eyes widened as he could already think of the best way to get out of this predicament because of his past life experience.

"Yes. We will declare it to the entire Zivot Empire and change the narrative of the truth by blaming their deaths on..." revealed the emperor and declared their intentions.

"Hero of Darkness."

Chapter 770 The Gaslighting

The two beings who stood at the top of the hierarchy of the Zivot Empire aka the Emperor and the Abbot revealed their plan to blame the deaths of Hero's Party members on the notorious Hero of Darkness in order to cover up the incident that transpired inside the Immortal Dungeon.

The secret well hidden since the past millennia was worth far more than the lives of their own people that loyally served them.

And to keep it hidden, Hero of Darkness was the best excuse they could use to blame for the deaths.

Currently, other than the emperor, the Abbot, their loyal servants, Ervalen and Myrienne were the only people who knew about their deaths. Even the families of the fallen had no idea about their demise.

Myrienne had yet to arrive in the capital so they already told her to keep this matter secret and arrive covertly.

"As for the group which is hunting the Hero of Darkness who could raise questions about the incident..."

We would create a site of the battle and fake a few scenarios which would make it seem like the Hero of Darkness and his forces wanted to kill you, the Hero of Life, they ambushed your party just like how it happened with Hero of Fire in the Vulcan empire.

But luckily, two of you escaped while the rest died while defending to protect the future of the empire.

This would be our story and we will perfect every detail after Myrienne comes here." revealed the emperor with a persuasive tone.

"All of them would be turned into virtuous warriors and their respective clans and families would be offered great compensation as well.

Compared to the importance of the secret of that being, it's a very small price.

And in the end... Hero of Darkness would be labeled as the enemy of the Elven Empire.

In simple words, we're killing two birds with one stone." iterated the Abbot.

It looked like the duo had already predicted this outcome and prepared before Ervalen even started his expedition a couple of months ago.

[So that's why they didn't announce anything to the people of Zivot Empire. Both of them are cold and ruthless, but the plan is indeed genius.] thought the Hero of Life.

All 3 of them agreed upon things between themselves. And he wasn't even bothered about the sacrifice of his comrades. Not that he was heartless... but sometimes, to protect peace and stability, lying was the only option.

As for Ervalen's next expedition to the Immortal Dungeon... They had both time and resources.

And now, his only target was to breakthrough to 5th stage saint.

An hour later, Ervalen arrived at Eleanor's palace and told her what actually happened.

Eleanor was heartbroken and terrified after hearing that everyone died. Her head spun around in shock and sadness.

"Don't worry... your best friend Myrienne is still alive." he spoke with a smile.

"What?! How? Didn't you say everyone died?" asked the princess haphazardly.

"I made her leave before facing the dungeon boss. She should arrive in a couple of days." he replied in a caring voice.

Only now did Eleanor let out a sigh of relief and recovered from the shock.

Unbeknownst to Ervalen, he had inadvertently saved his romantic rival, the female elf who Eleanor was truly in love with.

As the conversation continued, he explained what was about to happen from now on.

Eleanor nodded in affirmation and complied.

After Ervalen left and she was alone in her bedroom, Eleanor let out a devious smile and spoke...

"Well done... my puppet."

Giving it another thought, the princess thought about the times when she actually started her plan 6 years ago when Ervalen was summoned to Vantrea.

Ervalen died in his previous world but the God of Life already had his eyes on him to summon as his new Chosen Hero.

All he did was revive him again and chose the divine abilities for Ervalen. Giving him a chance to restart his life in his original body.

But when Ervalen was brought into Zivot Empire, his mental state was still full of loss and hatred.

It took him months to even accept his new identity and role as a chosen Hero.

This was when her father and uncle revealed their intentions.

They planned to tie Ervalen to their family through marriage, using the excuse that he was half-elf so it was acceptable. But her position would still be the same and her brother, who went missing was still going to be the Emperor.

But she would not accept such a fate. Thus, Eleanor started her plans to become the Empress of the Elven Empire using the Hero of Life.

After making dozens of attempts and finally befriending Ervalen through numerous efforts, she learned many things about him.

But she later deduced that Ervalen had Abandonment Issues.

In his previous world, Ervalen's mother died protecting him and his best friend betrayed him for his throne.

The woman he loved never actually cared for him and was also using him for her own gains, joining hands with his treacherous friend.

This betrayal had broken his psyche from the inside, leaving a deep scar on his mind.

Not everyone took life experience the same way. Ervalen ended up thinking that his life was bound to be filled with loneliness and he would never be truly loved by anyone.

In the beginning, he was distrustful of everyone including her. But she patiently left hints and made him trust her after sharing many things regarding the empire and the matters related to Heroes and Gods.

A broken person who had a tendency to blame themselves for not being enough, getting abandoned by others, and suffering heartbreak after heartbreak was prone to yearn for love and affection no matter how small it was. These type of people often lost their reasoning in the process.

In their mind, anyone who showed them affection and sense of belonging would become the center of their world and their life.

Only after 5 years, Eleanor successfully turned him into her chess piece by gaslighting him again and again, making him think that it was he who loved and wanted the princess, not the other way around.

Over a year ago, Ervalen finally confessed to her after gathering all the courage he had.

But 'unexpectedly', the beautiful and kind princess also said she loved and admired him equally.

And finally, she deepened their relationship by manipulating the Hero slowly through their 'romantic relationship'.

Now, Ervalen was nothing but a chess piece that would pave the way for her to achieve her goals.

A pawn who danced on the tip of her finger.