

Oracle 781

Chapter 781 Defeating A Necromancer Is Not So Easy

While the Myrmidian army's fighting prowess was already terrifying, something even more breathtaking happened.

A very special invisible Aether filament magically wove together all the Myrtharian Nerds within a 700 meter radius and the synchronization of these different Aetheric signatures created some sort of virtuous circle that quickly raised their energy values to a whole new level.

Feeling her Aether stats soar by over 1000%, Lucia grinned victoriously,

"Jake has already activated United We Stand."

Because of her overbearing pride she had refused to activate the skill herself. All the upper officers of the Myrtharian Nerds could turn it on, but none of them had felt the need to. Yet their leader had decided to activate this overpowered faction skill regardless.

Hade, who was leisurely fending off Azeus' lightning attacks with his lightning rod, looked up at Jake and frowned.

"Did I miss something? Anyway, this will make things easier." The former Fluid Grandmaster muttered thoughtfully.

At that moment, Azeus infused his own lightning into his nervous system to increase his reflexes and brain speed tenfold. His body shifting between its physical and electrical states, he became as light as a feather while gaining unprecedented velocity and explosiveness.

He was now intent on delivering the fatal blow.

Thinking he had figured out his opponent's abilities, he morphed into a lightning bolt and instantly shortened the distance, even bending the trajectory of the lightning bolt to strike Hade's ears and brain from side to side. This was his first and last mistake.

Not only had Hade merely been blocking his blows so far while barely holding back a yawn, but he was now enjoying United We Stand's buff.

"Poor thing..." Hade muttered as he eyed the barbarian with pity.

The black-haired young man snapped his fingers and the lightning bolt that Azeus had transformed into shot straight into the lightning rod, then was promptly transferred into a black ring the diameter of a crown that Hade was keeping in his Space Storage.

"Who would have thought that this Superconductive Ring would ever be of use to me." Hade sighed with emotion as he tossed the trinket into a carbon tube the size of an ale barrel that was none other than his repurposed lightning rod.

The collection of Fluid Artifacts he had accumulated over 150 years was such that he didn't even have room to store them all in his Space Storage. If many of his Fluid Artifacts did not serve as storage dimensions, he would have been unable to fit them all in.

The carbon tube and his lightsaber returned to the Spatial Ring on his finger and he sat down wearily in a chair he had just conjured. A table and tea set appeared soon after and he began to absently savor the respite brought by his early victory.

'If only stopping my son had been so easy.'

While Hade was again depressed, rehashing his past and his failures as a father, the battle between Vhoskaud and the Myrtharian Nerds was in full swing. After sitting on the sidelines for a while Pureblood decided to show what they were made of.

Wyatt held his arms out in front of him and an eerie crimson red aura erupted from his body, tousling his blond hair. The blood spilled from both sides so far rose from the ground like a reverse rain and soon a huge blade of blood laced with Blood Energy took shape, the tons of blood pooled together becoming as dense and translucent as a ruby.

"Rest in peace. Blood Swipe."

The Vampire Progenitor waved his hand as if pulling back a curtain and the gigantic blade of blood split the battlefield, crossing thousands of meters in a fraction of a second and becoming at its terminal distance as wide as an ocean liner. Hundreds of Death Knights were split in two and the blood spilled, not much due to their status as Undeads, floated back into the air, becoming the fuel for a second Blood Swipe.

Not to be outdone, other Vampire Nobles like Seren also used their ultimate techniques. Vampire magic was fascinating. In addition to the abilities inherent in all Vampires, their powers varied greatly from clan to clan. Like cats and dogs, there were hundreds of subspecies.

The big-breasted lolita, a strong advocate of Vampire supremacy, used the specialty of the Yelmaer clan. Her Blood Energy pulsed several times, echoing like sonar across the battlefield and quickly many Death Knights stopped moving, their eyes glazed over as if they were daydreaming.

The Myrtharian Nerds who were fighting them immediately seized the opportunity and mercilessly decapitated them, even if it took several of them to do it.

Arnold and Jett, the two Vampire Nobles who had participated in the war council a few hours earlier were not as original, but no less impressive.

The first one fought hand-to-hand using the same Celerity technique as the Thrajah clan, his speed presenting a challenge even to Jake. Of course, it was only his speed that was out of the ordinary. One casual slap from Jake would send him careening all around the Universe for sure.

Jett used an esoteric magic called Thaumathurgy, also called Wonder Magic. Using his blood or the blood of others as a medium and sacrifice, he could trigger all sorts of unpredictable effects on the battlefield to benefit himself and his allies.

After enough blood was collected, the sacrifice vanished as if it had never existed, but an unnoticeable wave swept through the battlefield. Immediately afterwards, the struggling Myrtharian Nerds regained the upper hand, finding the gap in the enemy's guard to deliver the fatal blow.

A Death Knight Captain, who was already badly wounded by two Myrmidians, even slipped out of sight, falling into the vortex that had summoned him. A Fire Archmage Undead mistakenly immolated the Earthmancer Undead fighting just a few feet away, causing a chain reaction on the battlefield.

After performing his blood sacrifice, Jett wiped his sweaty brow and withdrew from the fight. However, Lucia and the other Myrtharian Nerds he had just helped gave him a thumb up before they went on a rampage.

With the Vampires added to the mix, the battle clearly turned in favor of the Myrtharian Nerds and Pureblood coalition, with Vhoskaud also realizing that his defeat was inevitable.

But defeating a Necromancer was not so easy. The Death Knights, Dullahans, Zombies, and Undeads who had fallen were the weakest of his army. Those who were mentally too weak to withstand a mental illusion, those who were not strong enough to physically overpower their opponents or whose cognitive faculties had regressed to the point that they couldn't fight effectively.

They were like low-end robots only capable of performing simple actions. Faced with such fierce, coordinated opponents and a barrage of magic as diverse as it was unpredictable, their defeat was all but certain.

But it also meant that the Undeads still alive were the real deal. After losing all its subordinates, a towering Death Knight General wrapped in black flames corroding the matter all around him entered the fray. He looked like a mini giant in his black armor while his steed was as bulky as a mammoth.

In one swift movement, the black horse loomed like a ghost before Secyone and her sons. A black flash flickered past their pupils and the mother and child trio were booted out of the Ordeal. By the time Ingranus and Nicolet realized the danger it was too late.

In a few halberd swings dozens of Myrtharian Nerds were slaughtered. A nearby Myrmidian decided to act and in a few steps he slipped into the Death Knight General's blind spot and obliterated the Netherworld warrior with a powerful saber slash. Straight after, a kick from the enraged steed sent him crashing through the ceiling of the hall like a cannonball.

The Myrmidian got up unharmed, but when he looked at his hands he saw that they were as wrinkled and gaunt as those of a hundred-year-old man. A torrent of Death Energy was sucking the vitality out of his body, reducing his life expectancy and nerfing his stats at an alarming rate.

Refusing to die, the warrior let out a vindictive roar and a rich aura of life erupted from his body, engaging in a deadly duel against the death energy trying to extinguish his existence.

He resisted for a moment, but eventually his body crumbled back to dust.

Chapter 782 The Griffiths Clan

This new twist petrified the combatants, who finally realized that fighting a Necromancer was not without danger, even when victory seemed assured.

But just as the last particle of the Myrmidian was about to disintegrate, a life force blast burst forth from it and the bewildered Myrmidian reappeared unharmed at the site of his presumed death.

In a state of shock and disbelief beyond words, he read the notification he had received at the time of his resurrection with a heartfelt gratitude.

[Vitality Link lvl 7 activated: Leader Jake Wilderth has accepted your injuries.]

At the time of his death, his Oracle AI had overridden his authority and ignored his misplaced pride to enable this Faction Skill. The result was as plain as day. Jake had saved him.

But if Jake had accepted his injuries then... The Myrmidian and the other Myrtharian Nerds present gulped nervously.

In the mansion, kilometers above, Jake's body cracked and he promptly assumed his true form, a Gold Myrtharian over six meters tall whose entire body resembled a sculpture of Adamantium.

Even in this form, he failed to stop the collapse of his cells. After all, the Myrmidian had been decayed and was not a weakling like Secyone and her sons. Although the process took longer, his body eventually burst apart.

Enya, Esya and Aisling got a fright when they saw him shatter but when they saw his expression before bursting they regained their composure.

From the moment he agreed to the transfer of wounds he had planned adequate countermeasures. A dozen Aether Suns shot into orbit around him as if they were planets and Jake was their star. The floor of the mansion and the rock beneath melted and the agonizing cells of his scattered body ravenously vacuumed up all that matter and energy.

In a short second, Jake, in his Spirit Body form, stitched all the pieces of his separated body back together with his telekinesis, and then the damaged cells split many times over in a flash. Less than three seconds later, an intact Jake reappeared in the vaporized mansion.

"What happened?" Enya asked with concern.

"The damage to Pelicles was more extensive than I imagined." Jake confessed, scratching his head in embarrassment.

He knew the names of all the Myrtharian Nerds. Not much of a surprise with his eidetic memory.

"Be careful from now on." Esya chided him with a reproving pout.

"I'll be more careful, I promise..."

This incident had at least one positive point. It made him fully aware of the danger his friends were facing down there. He was tempted to join them.

In the vast underground hall, an Undead Hero who was once a Human Emperor and legendary Dragon Slayer of Quanoth, suddenly vanished from his position at Vhoskaud's right and teleported to Wyatt. His hand grew silver scales and claws before forming a fist aimed at the Vampire's abdomen.

Wyatt barely had time to brace himself when a steel pillar hundreds of feet long and five feet in diameter slammed him against the wall at his back that was already about to collapse. The fierce impact broke some of his ribs, but his opponent didn't give him time to let out a groan of pain.

The metal pillar suddenly snapped back like a stretched rubber band being released, but from the wrong side. The Undead Dragon Slayer's metal fist plowed into the Vampire Progenitor's stomach, causing him to vomit all his bile.

BANG!

The weakened wall collapsed for good and Wyatt was buried under thousands of tons of rubble. Immediately afterwards, a massive Blood Swipe powered only by Wyatt's Blood Energy shot out of the rubble and lashed out at the Undead Dragon Slayer, who barely defended himself by crossing his forearms covered in scales. Glaring sparks flew in all directions and the enemy slid hundreds of meters backwards, knocking out several of his comrades before finally deflecting the Blood Blade with a backhand.

A trickle of black blood flowed from his lacerated forearms, but the depth was only a few millimeters. This Undead's defense was top notch.

"This Undead is not a good match for a Vampire." Lysander commented as he stepped in front of the Dragon Slayer while shifting into a huge lion with a black mane that would make Mufasa look like a cub.

But just as Lysander was about to take over the fight where it was left off, Wyatt stopped him dead in his tracks by yanking hard on his tail.

"I don't need help. It's just a dumb Undead." The blond boy growled as he wiped the blood dripping from his lip with his thumb.

After witnessing the spirit of these Myrmidians, Wyatt felt for the first time the need to prove that he could do as well as them, if not better. An Ordeal earlier, Jake was inferior to him, but now even his subordinates were making him feel inferior.

He had to turn things around.

"I wanted to show my father that I don't need our atavistic powers to win my battles, but I guess I'll make an exception."

His eyes suddenly glowed red as he stared at the Undead Dragon Slayer. A crimson aura enveloped the Vampire and his opponent. With a devilish look on his face, he declared coldly,

"Death."

Wyatt, already pale as a ghost, fell to his knees, his heart shutting down and all his cells in a state of clinical death, but something entirely different happened to his opponent.

His corpse-like skin regained a healthy glow and his heart began to pump again. He had come back to life.

But could a living person withstand such a high density of Death Energy in his body? The answer was a resounding no.

Like the Myrmidian saved by Jake earlier, the Undead Dragon Slayer's flesh corroded almost immediately, and despite his monstrous stats his body disintegrated in seconds, returning helplessly to dust.

Once his opponent was completely annihilated, Wyatt stood up as if nothing had happened and said to Lysander with a sidelong glance,

"See ? I don't need anyone's help."

Seren and the other Vampire Nobles were stunned. In over a decade of following him, this was the first time they had seen him use his clan's atavistic magic. They had become so accustomed to it that they had come to believe that the reason he was at odds with his family was because he was born without the gift.

Creation and Negation. This was the ability of the Griffiths. In an area defined by the Vampire that he had to be included in, he would realize the words he spoke if they didn't already exist, but negate their existence if what they described was already there.

By uttering the word "Death", Wyatt had died, but his opponent had come back to life. Or at least, deprived of death he could only live. This magic obviously had its limits and its effects were temporary. Nonetheless, in the right hands, it could change the tide of a battle.

After Wyatt's spectacular victory, the Vampires, having regained their backbone, cheered loudly and threw themselves into the battle, ignoring their fear. The Myrmidians did not admit defeat either, and realizing that the remaining Death Knights and Undeads posed a real threat to them, they returned to what they do best: Warfare.

The former centurions, primipiles and legates that once made up Lucia's private army took control of their troops and like a well-oiled machine they formed up. Because of their planet's invasion by the Digestors, only the elite Myrmidians had survived. The proportion of centurions and legates was abnormally high, representing almost 10% of their number, but far from penalizing them, it only made them more terrifying.

Twelve Death Knight Generals and one Death Knight King, all that remained of the Death Knights' army, advanced valiantly, but each of them was ganged up on by a hundred berserk Myrmidians. Having witnessed what had happened to their comrade while attacking in close combat, a barrage of ranged attacks bombarded the remaining thirteen Death Knights.

And these were no minor arrows or spells. Each of these Myrmidians was a monster in his own right. The ink painter summoned his colossi again, the guitarist used sound blasts and air blades to rattle them, the wizards cast their mass destruction spells, while the marksmen aimed their Aether Guns and Bows at them.

A Myrmidian climbed onto the shoulders of one of his comrades and aimed a futuristic sniper at them and opened fire.

A blinding white laser shot out of the weapon and instantly formed a large hole in the chest of one of the Death Knight Generals. The blinding flash was extremely brief, but in a fleeting millisecond it had

drilled a hole several kilometers deep in the wall opposite the Undead. One could not see the bottom of it.

This kind of feat was repeated hundreds of times in a matter of seconds, and a moment later all that remained was the Death Knight King and a handful of other Undeads captured by Vhoskaud making up his personal guard.

The victory was all but assured.

Chapter 783 Nobody Gives A Shit

Realizing that he had lost all his subordinates, the Death Knight King drew his long claymore for the first time. His steed was not a muscular black horse like the others, but a gigantic flesh-eating pegasus that bore a striking resemblance to Actalaus, the Baron of Lodunvals' ferocious mount that Jake and Ruby had fought.

The two Undead Warriors and three Undead Archmages that comprised Vhoskaud's bodyguard until then also assumed a fighting stance.

One of the two warriors was a legendary orc as thick as a troll whose army had conquered and enslaved a quarter of the continent centuries earlier before finally being stopped.

The second was none other than the Hero who had crushed the Orc Conqueror's dreams of domination. He was a Velfal, a pale blue-skinned humanoid race with an unparalleled affinity for the Space Element.

"Beware the Velfal." Lysander warned them with a grave expression. "It can teleport anywhere, seal off space from a chosen area to prevent you from fleeing or use your Space Artifacts, and it can also stretch, compress, or tear space at will to attack, defend, speed up its movements, or slow you down."

The Myrmidians, who were rather proud of their crushing victory, immediately turned serious again, extreme vigilance on their faces. Lucia, who was commanding the battle from the rear lines also stopped posturing with her arms crossed and drew her trademark sword again.

"I'll take care of the Velsal." She claimed in a tone that did not allow for refusal.

Respecting their princess' wishes, the Myrmidians logically set their sights on the Orc Conqueror and the Death Knight King.

"Let me handle the Death Knight King." Kenway spoke for the first time since the battle began. "I am the only one with enough Life Force to take him on."

After living nearly 1,000 years, the undefeated Werelion could discern things that eluded these immature Players. If Lucia or Wyatt faced this Death Knight King, even if they won the price would be so steep that it would make their victory meaningless. On the other hand, he knew how to handle such abominations.

Before marching towards his opponent, he sent a telepathic message to his younger brother, who subtly nodded. In the end, Lucia, Wyatt and the other Myrmidians targeted the other Undead Archmages.

Now bereft of bodyguards, Vhoskaud had lost all hope of turning the tide, but his robotic face showed no sign of distress. Instead, after sneaking a peek at Shamash and Haynt's battle, he turned back to Lucia and her allies and congratulated them,

"I must admit that I underestimated you. I never thought that a bunch of Players from unknown factions would be able to wipe out my Undead army and all the clones I've made over the past few years. All my preparation to take over Laudarkvik was ruined in an instant.

"I concede you... this victory."

When the Android Lich admitted defeat, Lucia, Wyatt, Kenway, and the other observant Players sensed that something was wrong. Why did they catch a note of sarcasm in his last sentence?

Reveling in their confusion, the android smiled with satisfaction and his expression froze. The gleam in his robotic eyes flickered faintly one last time, then faded forever.

The android had chosen suicide.

The Death Knight King and the remaining Undeads were pulled back into their original dimensions, their bodies disintegrating into wisps of black smoke. The portals closed and the underground hall became quiet again.

BOOOM!

While Lucia and the others were still in a daze from the easy victory, a dazzling flash of light burst from the other end of the hall. A body as bright as a star crashed lifelessly into the center of the hall forming a huge crater, then as it exploded, its body collapsed on itself creating a mini black hole.

Shamash teleported in front of the mini black hole and with a wave of his hand made it disappear.

"Haynt... is dead?" Kenway stammered in shock. Even in his worst nightmares, this was a scenario he had never contemplated.

The bewilderment of Lucia, Wyatt and the other Myrtharian Nerds was overwhelming, but Hade, who had witnessed the entire scene, was solemn.

"Why? Why aren't you the leader?" The former Fluid Grandmaster asked with total confusion.

What he had just seen was not the power of a Fourth Ordeal Player.

At first the fight between Haynt and Shamash seemed evenly matched, but as with Lucia, the Lost Divinities officer didn't seem to take the fight seriously. He was passively returning blows for blows, but neither of the two opponents were fighting seriously.

Then the old Astral had shifted into high gear, and Shamash had... snuffed him out. Just as Hade had defeated Azeus in his Lightning state, Shamash had annihilated the Astral's existence when his brilliance was at its peak.

"Yesterday you ordered the murder of the only woman I ever loved and now you've just killed the only friend I ever had." Kenway's voice, quivering with pent up rage, suddenly thundered across the battlefield.

A freakishly dense aura radiated forth from the Alpha Werelion, while a white mane and fur covered his body. His face vaguely took on the bestial features of a lion, but the transformation was completely under his control. It was as if he had transformed into a Werelion while intentionally keeping his human shape.

"So please don't blame me if I kill you." Kenway roared, an overwhelming spiritual pressure flooring everyone on the battlefield, including Lucia and Wyatt.

Jake and the three women guarding the mansion were also affected and their expressions changed drastically.

"Who knew a Werebeing could have such a high level of Spiritual Energy..." Enya sighed admiringly.

Esya and Aisling nodded with wry smiles, but tears were also streaming down the cheeks of the Dhampir Succubus.

Haynt was like an uncle to her. His unwavering power was like a beacon in the darkness for her, the pillar of her confidence. As long as the Astral was alive, she knew she wasn't alone, that someone had her back.

Now she was truly on her own.

"You're not alone Ains, you can count on us now." Jake patted her back awkwardly, but his effort seemed to work.

In reality, he was the one who needed comforting. Haynt's death was as unexpected as it was disastrous for him. The Astral was a treasure trove of information and Jake planned to ask him for a sample of his blood to perfect his Bloodline. The venerable warrior was also a wonderfully caring man, something rare among such powerful and elderly Evolvers.

As a result, Jake was on the verge of exploding.

"I'm going down." Jake announced chillingly as he sank into the ground.

Ainsling and the two sisters did not bother to ask him why. Xellmezon and Vhoskaud were dead and Azeus imprisoned. That left only Shamash to deal with. Keeping an eye on the mansion to intercept possible runaways was no longer relevant.

"W-who are you?" Lucia howled madly, her gaze riveted on the bloodied and unrecognizable body of Kenway breathing his last.

A golden hoof as wide as a car was currently trampling the invincible Werelion with its full weight. A titanic black Minotaur, or at least something resembling one, towered over them, its spiral horns shining like the sun as it sank into the ceiling and melted its surface.

Instead of simply answering, a spirit wave with the monster as its epicenter rippled through the entire hall. At that moment, the drab and dilapidated floor faded away, replaced by an incomprehensible scene.

In a majestic ancient city built in the middle of the desert, a huge temple under construction that looked more like a palace overlooked the city from the top of a cliff. Millions of slaves were working on the site to complete the construction as quickly as possible.

In the square of the finished temple, hundreds of thousands of worshippers stood prostrate and barefoot in front of a green malachite statue as tall as a building. The statue depicted a handsome old man, bearded and bare-chested with bull horns, a winged sun disk that served as a medallion and a long saw slung over his back.

Suddenly, all the pilgrims began to chant in one voice,

"Your glorious rising illuminates the existence of men:

All turn towards Your marvelous radiance!

Like an immense blaze, You illuminate the World...

When you appear, Shamash, the peoples fall prostrate;

All people, everywhere, bow down before You !

You shine in the darkness, and You hold the reins of Heaven!

Your glory has covered the farthest mountains,

Your radiance has filled the face of the Earth!

Perched on the Mountains, You inspect the World:

From Heaven, You hold at arm's length all the countries.

You have in your hands all that Ea, the wise King, has produced:

You take care of all the inhabitants of the Earth,

You feed all living beings without exception!

Up here and down there, their only Shepherd is You!

You never cease to cross the skies,

Every day, you travel the endless Earth...

You pass unceasingly the Sea, wide and immense,

Whose depths the celestial gods themselves ignore,

But your rays, Shamash, descend into the abyss

And the sea monsters behold your light!"

The psalm ended and the illusion vanished as Lucia and the others returned to the wrecked hall where they had been a moment earlier.

"You ask me who I am?" The giant Minotaur chuckled in contempt. "Now you know. I-AM-SHAMASH!"

SLASH!

An Adamantium saber the size of a skyscraper covered in runes dropped from the sky like an asteroid and cleaved the colossal monster in two. As the two halves crashed heavily with a loud rumble, a Gold Myrtharian floated down from the sky and stood majestically above the corpse.

"Who the heck you are? Nobody gives a shit." Jake sneered as he jerked the golden blood off his blade.

Chapter 784 Let's Be The Bad Guys For Once

The separated halves burst into flames, but did not regenerate. For this move, Jake had pulled out all the stops.

The huge saber in his hand was made of pure Adamantium and the Words of Power "Godslayer" had been engraved on its blade. It had been forged in the last few days by excreting the much needed Adamantium after digesting copious amounts of earth, metal, radiation and heat. A Fluid Core embedded in the pommel serving as Space Storage, and provided by Hade, allowed him to adjust the mass and length of his weapon at will.

With two new Soul Classes, his Silver Soul Glyph of Blacksmithing doubling the attributes of his craft, his current stats, and his recent progress as an Aetherist, Jake had just managed to produce a substandard Advanced Aether Weapon. He had also included some of his Blood Essence during the forging process, so the weapon was also upgradeable.

[God Slayer Myrtharian Katana(binded to Jake): A crudely forged weapon at the cost of exorbitant amounts of Adamantium and other precious magic metals. Aesthetically poor, it has only two redeeming qualities: hard and sharp. However, the Blood Essence, Words of Power and Aether Symbols added during its crafting have elevated this sword to a whole new level.

Attributes: All stats + 20%. Passive Skill 1: 100% more damage on Divinities and disrupts their faith energy gathering. Passive Skill 2: Amplifies all techniques used through the katana by 100%. Passive Skill 3 : Collects part of the soul and Aether of the defeated, heat, lightning, earth, steel and radiation from its environment to repair itself and evolve. Passive Skill 4: Its length and mass can be modified at will depending on the amount of metal available in the weapon's space storage.]

Definitely a godly weapon for the current Jake. He had the feeling that this weapon would accompany him for a very long time

However, he was not so naive as to believe that such a weapon would be enough to kill Shamash. To ensure his victory, he had combined his Gold Myrtharian Warrior Trance, Bloodline Ignition, Telekinesis, Gravity, Lightning, Heat, Aether Control and Aether Conversion for this attack.

This was extremely close to the maximum power he could achieve in a single strike without resorting to external assistance.

Hovering silently in the air, Jake glared down at the two burning halves of Shamash with a stifling intensity. He prayed that this attack was enough, but deep down he knew it was unlikely.

After all, Haynt and Kenway had been defeated in an instant. Not daring to take any chances, he fished out Kenway's bloody body with his telekinesis and entrusted it to the two sisters, who had not been able

to resist following him. Ainsling was also there, staring hatefully at Shamash's corpse as if it might bring Haynt back to life.

"Esya, tend to his wounds please." Jake pleaded gently.

"That won't be necessary." The younger sister said, raising her voice so that Lysander among others could hear her. The poor fellow was so worried, he had morphed into a lion.

Indeed, Kenway, who was on his last breath a few seconds earlier, was already pretty much recovered. This was the advantage of being a powerful Digitized Alpha Werelion. His Vitality and Constitution were even greater than Jake's, except that he couldn't use any other elements to boost his regeneration.

His regeneration was not as absolute either. As a native unable to dissociate his Spirit Body from his physical body, if his brain was destroyed he would be in a crippled state. Relying on HP regen, survival was not impossible, but if he was already injured as he was here it was certain death.

Three seconds later, Kenway opened his eyes and met Esya's lovely almond-shaped pink eyes. Remembering where he was and what he was doing just before, he jumped to his feet and shouted,

"Run. He's not dead!"

"I know." Jake replied calmly.

As he had feared, Shamash was not dead. The two halves were unable to regenerate, but just then they faded like a mirage before vanishing.

Jake, Lucia, Wyatt, Kenway, and anyone else with keen Extrasensory Perception immediately felt a presence reappear a few hundred meters away from the place of his presumed death. Looking in that direction, they spotted a bare-chested elderly man with a short beard and dark skin.

"Shamash." Jake greeted cheerlessly.

"That's quite a weapon you've got there." The god praised with a hard-to-interpret poignancy in his eyes. "For a moment there, I thought I was done for."

"Too bad you couldn't believe it long enough to make it happen."

"Oh? It seems you now know a little more about what we are." Shamash smiled casually. "You're right, I am indeed a god."

"Where is Haynt?" Ainsling yelled curtly, barely holding back from charging at him.

.

The Player wore a baffled expression before his face lit up again,

"Ah, the Astral, you mean? Oh, he's alive. But in his condition, I doubt he'll dare show his face for a while."

Jake sensed a slight edge of annoyance in the enemy's voice. Shamash had definitely captured a black hole corresponding to Haynt's collapsed star body. For him to be frustrated like that, it could only mean one thing...

Recalling the explosion of light that preceded the appearance of the black hole and the strange Constellation Magic that the Astral had used to eliminate Vhoskaud's clone army, he thought he understood something.

"I see. So Haynt escaped. You gods sure seem to be more fallible than you'd like to be, don't you?" Jake jeered at him with a mock bow.

"But we don't break as easily as mortals like you." Shamash retorted with a stiff face, finally showing his hostility. "I could break Haynt and Kenway. I shall break you too."

Jake did not contradict him, nor did he ridicule him this time.

"You may be telling the truth. You'd probably be right if I were alone." He finally declared. "But I'm not alone. You have your Divinity, but I have my friends. With my entire faction by my side, I can temporarily outdo a god. They can too."

Understanding his intent, all the Myrtharian Nerds gathered behind Jake and he summoned his Purgatory Dream. The wrecked hall disappeared, replaced by a world of ash and lava, thunderstorms and magnetic tempests. An almost indestructible underground bunker was built for his allies, leaving only Lucia, Hade, Aisling and Peter at his side.

Wyatt, Kenway, Lysander and the other Vampires were taken to safety with the other Myrtharian Nerds. The explosion of Haynt's body had released unimaginable amounts of ultraviolet and gamma radiation.

With the exception of Wyatt, all of the Vampires were on the verge of death and in need of emergency care. With no better solution, the Myrmidians gave them some of their blood to revitalize them.

Meanwhile, Jake closed his eyes to feel the effects of United We Stand. His Aether stats had temporarily crossed the 50,000 point mark. In a world where the Aether density was only 1000, such a transformation was like a butterfly breaking out of its chrysalis.

Combined with his insane Body Stats, his strength had reached the standard of a Seventh or Eighth Ordeal Player. His mental sense could scan half the city of Laudarkvik and his Perception was such that he could almost see his chromosomes clearly, whereas before he could barely see the nucleus of his cells.

As for the Aether, his affinity for it had never been stronger and he could understand things he never thought possible. If he had forged his new Katana in this state, he could have definitely created a peak tier Advanced Aether Artifact.

But the most frightening thing... It was his Luck.

It was now more than a million times higher than that of a normal human. What Jake was sensing from the Aether told him that no matter what he did, he would succeed. His intent alone could influence the course of a battle.

And Shamash could feel it too.

"Together." Hade said in an emphatic tone, he too benefiting from that monumental stats boost.

Lucia pouted, but reluctantly agreed. Aisling did not answer anything but at the fierce expression on her face she dreamed to reduce in charity the opposite god. As for Peter, he suppressed a yawn, but shamelessly ganking an enemy had never been a problem for him.

Jake twitched slightly, not a fan of the idea, but like Lucia he ultimately agreed to Hade's proposal.

"Fine, let's be the bad guys for once."

Shamash immediately sensed that the tide had turned. Immortal God or not he immediately activated his Oracle Teleportation Skill to get out of here.

[Teleportation impossible. The space you are in has been sealed.]

His heart sank as he received the notification. Looking up, he saw Jake's sneering smile. The Purgatory Dream could only be escaped by seizing control of the Artifact. Unlike his Third Ordeal, it was currently inside Jake.

To get out of here, Shamash would have to defeat him first.

Chapter 785 A Mortal Like Everyone Else

Peter showed right off the bat how ruthless and shameless he could be. As soon as he saw the stupor on Shamash's face, the junkie stomped his foot and shot towards him.

His pale arm turned an unholy shade of purple and a liquid reminiscent of blueberry jelly oozed from its surface. On contact with the air, the substance instantly evaporated into a gas and Shamash inhaled some of it despite his readiness to bury himself under the huge spectral creature he had just summoned.

Inside a towering armor-clad demon specter, Shamash twitched, then scratched his chest until he finally spat out a mouthful of black, purulent blood. His skin turned purple and his hair and teeth fell out of his skull, followed by his ears, nose and lips.

RAAAARRGH!

A blast of energy shattered the spectral summoner from within and the titanic black minotaur reappeared in the center of the Purgatory. In this form, the poison became insignificant and Shamash finally managed to stop its spread.

With a vengeance, he brandished his saw, which could also change size, and with a furious roar swung it down onto Peter.

The addict, instead of dodging, waited until the last moment before tilting his chest slightly to the right. The saw sliced his head obliquely, also separating the left half of his torso from the rest of his body.

Yet, immediately afterwards, the bloody halves regenerated, recreating two perfectly identical Peters in a general stupor.

Driven by experience, Shamash did not attack again with his saw. Instead, he summoned a huge sun disk that served as his pendant, and the medallion radiated a blinding light. The two Peters immediately began to melt and it was the addict's turn to retreat with a growl.

Just as the two Peters appeared to be done for, Hade teleported with his lightsaber over the minotaur's neck and all the Aether for miles around flowed toward the blade of light. Shamash's hair stood on end as he sensed his imminent demise and he ducked his head reflexively.

The sword missed its target and an arc of light shot through the Purgatory forming a kilometer-long gash in the Artifact's false sky. Shamash gasped, sweating profusely as he saw what he had narrowly escaped.

Jake winced as he beheld the false sky of his Purgatory being restored to its original state. There was nothing free about it. Restoring the Purgatory inner world cost him Aether. A lot of Aether.

He would rather Hade refrain from using such overpowered strokes in the future...

While Shamash was still flabbergasted, and with his head bent down, Lucia took advantage of his disadvantageous posture and thrust her Myrmidian Sword into his eye, popping up in front of him like an elusive wisp. When the blade pierced the eyeball, instead of bleeding, it began to glow, becoming a ball of glowing plasma.

The blade of her weapon turned white-hot and the princess had to drop her sword to avoid being incinerated. However, this was not a simple sword strike and the blade was charged with a foreign energy containing a profound intent.

Lucia smirked as she recalled her sword and a hole of several meters in diameter opened on the other side of Shamash's skull. The huge Minotaur smashed backwards and as with Jake's first ambush, his head did not regenerate.

Nevertheless, as with Jake earlier, the giant Minotaur eventually dissipated like a mirage and Shamash's presence reappeared on the other side of the hall. Seeing his face, they saw that he was no longer smiling and was now looking at them seriously as if he was facing his arch enemies.

"You hurt me." Shamash growled like a ferocious beast as he formed strange mudras with his hands, "If I leave you alive, you will be a danger to Lost Divinities and my kind."

A huge portal emitting a black miasma sprang up behind him, dwarfing his Minotaur frame. Blood-curdling wails escaped from within, and soon a huge, shiny black insect's leg poked out with a heavy thud.

A grotesque half-man, half-scorpion creature soon crawled out of the portal accompanied by thousands of similar spectral creatures, but about the length of an elephant.

"Let me take care of these scorpions. Venom is my thing." Peter licked his lips as he charged at the army of insect-specters alone.

Jake and the others shrugged their shoulders dismissively, but didn't stop him.

"Back to square one, I guess." Hade rolled his eyes as he walked calmly toward the god, who was glowering at them.

"As long as we can't find his divinity, we won't be able to kill him. Lucia remarked with a frown.

Her previous sword strike was close to her peak power. This thrust contained her Victory Intent, Essence and True Will of Victory. Anyone hit by this attack could only perish and embrace their defeat. Without a

counter power or a thirst for victory of equal or greater magnitude, the victim's body would simply accept death without resistance.

In addition to securing victory, she and her Myrmidian Sword would take advantage of the enemy's momentary acknowledgement of defeat to suck out as much of their Aether and a chunk of their Soul. At that moment, her Aether stats had risen by 10% and she had gained 2 Spirit Body levels. This proved that for a moment, Shamash was indeed defeated.

It was beyond comprehension...

At that moment, Jake finished engraving his Runes of Amplification on his body with a Sentence Of Power of his own. Watching the aggressive strikes of Hade, Lucia and Peter, he figured out a solution.

A solution in fact so ridiculously simple that he was mad at himself for not having thought of it sooner.

"I see the Divinities and Faith Energy flows."

At that moment, Jake's Myrtharian Eyes took on a strange purple tint and his vision, limited until then to primordial energy flows such as Mana, Aether or elemental particles, was enriched with new colors.

Jake concentrated on the color he was seeing for the first time and as he traced these energy flows, which were so dim as to be virtually imperceptible, he finally found an extremely dense node of pure power. Several infinitely wispy threads vanished into the distance, but one of them was connected to a similar nucleus in Shamash's left hip.

The microscopic Divinity kept changing position, the god ensuring that it remained untraceable. The most annoying thing was that it was not always in his body. It kept moving from one end of the hall to the other within a sort of domain and hitting it was almost impossible.

But Jake had another Sentence of Power planned for it as well.

"My body, my Aether, and my Soul refine and draw in Faith and the Divinities coming in contact with it."

As he finished carving the second sentence into his flesh, he felt profound changes take place within him. As soon as he released his aura Shamash instantly felt the difference, because his control over his Divinity weakened drastically. He had to expend a huge amount of willpower to prevent it from leaving his body.

"What have you done?!" The god screamed as he felt his personality and memories deteriorate against his will.

Unlike most of Lost Divinities members who were gifted with a Divinity later on, he was a true God born of the beliefs and faith his followers placed in him. Although he now had a real body, if his Divinity no longer recognized his authority it meant that he was no longer himself.

In that case, he might as well die.

Jake obviously ignored Shamash and teleported apathetically in front of him. He transferred a series of commands to Hade and Lucia telepathically and they both went on the attack at the same time as he did, pincering the opponent with perfect timing.

The Lost Divinities Player felt the Faith Energy flow guaranteeing his invincibility dry up even before Jake swung his katana. Shamash raised his saw to parry Jake's blow but was confused when he felt no impact.

Suddenly, the Aether from kilometers away was vacuumed up again and Hade's lightsaber resurfaced an inch away from his left knee.

Shamash's heart skipped a beat as he saw the place the Fluid Grandmaster had targeted.

'Is this just a fluke? It must be.'

For the third time he transformed back into a giant Minotaur and Hade's attack only sliced his foot instead. However, the monster's size was clearly a bit smaller than before.

With bone-chilling timing, Lucia's blade thrust forth under the monster's left armpit and the Player understood that they now knew how to get rid of him, though he could hardly believe it. With a heavy heart, he retaliated by swinging his huge saw and Lucia was blasted off like a cannonball down the hall, crashing under a mountain of rubble.

At that moment, Shamash saw what Jake had severed and his eyes bulged out in rage and unbridled panic. A very important thread had been cut and the god felt helpless, like a trekker in the desert realizing he had just drunk his last drop of water.

A Divinity was a complex thing. Even if Shamash exhausted all his energy to the point of being kicked out of the Ordeal, he could always recover by returning to the source of his Divinity which was located in his private cabin in the Oracle Bunker on B842. It was this tenuous link that made him truly immortal.

But Jake had just severed that link. For Shamash, it was like having his heart ripped out.

Right now, he was a mortal like everyone else.

Chapter 786 You Can't Kill Me

And like any mortal about to die, he exploded with his full potential.

His movements became suddenly cold and calculated and his concentration reached its peak. A mysterious energy even more refined than the one enveloping Lucia's sword began to radiate from his giant saw and his aura became comparable to that of a renowned master of arms.

For the first time since his debut in the Mirror Universe, he began to use the body and bloodline he had obtained as rewards for his previous Ordeals instead of relying on his divine powers.

The Black Minotaur shrank in size, becoming more compact and lean to achieve greater mobility, and in a few strides sprinted to Lucia, whom he had sent flying into the wall. A miniature sun appeared in his hand, which immediately merged with his body and his weapon, transforming him into an incarnation of the Sun God. Shamash brought his blazing saw down on the struggling young woman and she hastily blocked it.

The Myrmidian princess's eyes widened in shock as she parried the stroke, her legs buckling under her weight and her knees smashing into the ground, forming two mini-craters. Her skin began to scald and if she didn't have the Myrtharian Body passive she would have been cremated on the spot.

Her Myrmidian Sword emitted a shrill sound of anguish and Lucia was horrified to find that the blade was already half sawn.

'Oh no!' She freaked out as she decisively recalled her sword.

With bare hands, she lunged forward and rammed her elbow into Shamash's plexus. Or so she tried. Having realized that he had only one life left, the god had also discovered fear and instead of taking it condescendingly, he deflected Lucia's elbow with a palm strike.

The young woman winced with pain as she saw the smoke coming out of her charred elbow. She summoned a pair of gauntlets and began a beautiful and deadly martial dance with the fallen god.

Jake and Hade were shocked by both Shamash's and Lucia's martial prowess. Jake in particular realized that he was practically a novice at it compared to them. If the Minotaur had used these techniques from the beginning, perhaps he wouldn't have been hurt even once.

"But Lucia is losing." Hade sighed as he dashed to her rescue.

Jake nodded silently and teleported directly between the princess and Shamash.

After all, Lucia not only had to fight the enemy, but also endure the point-blank radiation of a mini sun. Her entire skin was charred and she had long since closed her eyes to preserve her sight for the fateful moment.

"That's enough." Jake and Hade shouted at the same time as they struck without mercy.

Jake's katana met Shamash's glowing saw while Shamash deftly tilted his head to block Hade's lightsaber with his horn. This time the horn held, and Hade felt a terrific surge of heat transfer from the horn to his weapon, then to his entire body.

Stifling a grunt of pain, the former Fluid Master leapt back to regenerate with a healing spell before immediately attacking again. Conversely, Jake felt the same heat flowing through his body, but was shocked when it began to vaporize his flesh.

Like Hade the moment before, he had no choice but to step back momentarily before counterattacking. The three of them began to harass Shamash relentlessly, and he soon made his first mistake.

Lucia's Myrmidian Sword sliced lightly into his thigh, but not enough to cut a tendon and incapacitate him. The intangible energy Shamash was using to hurt them with every move he made erupted from his body and the trio scrambled backwards, their melted skin and muscles revealing their bones beneath.

'What's this?' He questioned Xi during the fight with a grim look on his face. This was the first time in a long time that ordinary heat had managed to burn him so badly.

[I'm not sure, but it must be a manifestation of his True Will combined with other techniques and an advanced understanding of physical laws. There is a similar martial concept in the older Systems called Mandate of Heaven. By understanding a Mandate, they can infuse the corresponding intention into each of their techniques. By understanding the Sun Mandate, one can use Sun Force and make the most ordinary ice object more scorching than a star. The beauty of these Mandates is that they override the opponent's characteristics, attributes and defenses and can even attack your Spirit Body directly.

[At high levels, they can even ignore your stats and affect you as if you were an ordinary human. This leaves you with only your own True Will to defend yourself. This can be seen as an evolution of Intent, which itself is qualitatively below True Will. Of course, what Shamash uses is obviously inferior, but mostly mixed with other intents and energies that characterize his Divinity.]

"I understand." Jake spoke aloud, promising himself to look into the subject once the battle was over.

Lucia could already use several Intents, including her True Will of Victory. He hadn't asked Hade, but he was pretty sure Hade was using a similar ability to allow his lightsaber to slice through the unsliceable.

But until then, Shamash had to die.

Even if he was burning, so what? This Sun Force had not reached a level where it could nullify his stats. Once his skin was burned, he began to excrete Adamantium and his formidable Vitality came into play, continually repairing his body.

Tougher physically than Hade and Lucia, Jake gritted his teeth and charged toward the enemy.

"True Will is it? I just want to slay you!" Jake roared as he lashed out with his God Slayer Katana at full force.

When one had Jake's mental stats, sometimes to succeed one just had to try. His True Will, which he had previously only known how to use through his Rune Engraver Soul Class, seamlessly infused his blade and collided with Shamash's saw.

BOOOOM!

The god's mismatched figure slid backwards, leaving deep furrows in the ground, a persistent gash across his chest despite his Sun Minotaur state. He immediately reverted to human form and belched a gush of blood onto the ground.

"Tsk! That didn't work." Jake sighed as he thought about what had just happened.

Apparently, the thought wasn't enough.

[Of course it wasn't enough!] Xi exclaimed in an exasperated voice. [I mean, yes, but it's going to take a lot more dedication than that to get a result. Your True Will is everything you stand for, but it's simply who you are. That's why Soul Classes change you so deeply. Right now, yours is just what we would call a True Will of Self. What you fear most is that you will not be yourself anymore and betray your values. But your Bloodlines and Soul Classes affect you too. Give your Spirit Body time to grow and it will take care of itself. If you want to speed up the process of developing a particular True Will, there is no secret. Repetition until it becomes second nature.]

Still... As Xi lectured him, Shamash was taking this unhealing wound seriously. Deprived of the thread linking him to his main Divinity on B842, the god could feel his life slip through his fingers after being slashed by that God Slayer Katana. Every wound to his Divinity was a wound to his soul and he had already lost his mind.

Seizing the opportunity, Aisling appeared out of nowhere and unleashed her Succubus charm at full power. The already confused god was suddenly enthralled by her, with hearts in his eyes. By the time he pulled himself together, it was too late.

Lucia stood before him and stabbed his heart with her Myrtharian Sword. Undaunted, Hade teleported behind him and chopped off his head without hesitation. As for Jake, he teleported nine meters to his left and caught an invisible speck of light in his hands.

What little remained of his Divinity was sucked into Jake's body and the god lost most of his powers and memories. All that was left was an overwhelming sense of resentment.

"YOU can't kill me!" Shamash shrieked as he abruptly released all of his spiritual energy in a huge blast.

Jake, Hade and Lucia didn't expect anything special in this area from an agonizing Player, but how wrong they were...

Chapter 787 Good Stuff

Jake first felt his hair stand on end with a terrible feeling of foreboding from his Eltarian Bloodline. Out of pure self-preservation his muscular body was instantly coated with Adamantium, a helmet at least eight inches thick encasing his head and giving him a mushroom-like appearance.

His Luck also kicked in and miraculously Shamash's scattered aura went past him without clashing head-on with him. Nevertheless, the faint trace of that aura that brushed against him triggered a radiating pain throughout his Spirit Body and even his soul that was nestled safely in his glabella seemed about to be extinguished.

For a brief second, Jake forgot who he was and collapsed to the ground after teleporting as far away from Shamash as possible. When he regained consciousness at the far end of the hall, he saw that two-thirds of the Myrtharian Nerds were lying dead on the floor, their bodies unharmed.

Those closest to the epicenter had not survived except for those who had donned their Adamantium helmets in time. Hade had reacted just in time and managed to shield a group of Myrmidians with his own aura, but blood was pouring out of all his orifices and he had a haggard expression as if he were about to faint.

The small fry of the Myrtharian Nerds had all been exterminated without exception, including those who had equipped an Adamantium helmet in time. Some others, although talented, had not fitted their helmets in time and their souls had been fatally damaged. To avoid any incidents, their souls were hurriedly repatriated to the Red Cube, as they were about to dissipate.

Among them were Ingranus, Nicolet, but also Peter, who in his flippancy had never really thought himself in danger. He still had the cigarette he had just lit in the middle of the fight in his mouth, his face blissful.

His bloodline had a lot to do with his overconfidence. Even in case of failure, the addict had never imagined himself dying.

The Thousand Poison Hydra, a dreaded Grade 10 Bloodline. As long as his Hydra Core was intact, host to his Soul, Peter would continue to spawn new clones every time his head was sliced off until the battle ended. He was immune to almost all poisons and could evolve his bloodline and his own venom by digesting them.

His Hydra Core was like an Aether Soul Core, but also contained his bloodline essence. With his Soul within, Peter naturally believed himself to be invulnerable and this caused his downfall.

Hephais had survived by merging into the shadows as soon as he felt the aura wash over them. The first lesson his mentor had taught him as an assassin was to survive, no matter what. This went directly against the precept that assassins should sacrifice themselves selflessly to carry out their missions.

The picture was a little better for the Myrmidians who were used to battling in helmets and armor come rain or shine. Some were even so paranoid from fighting the Digestors that they slept and showered in their gear.

Despite this, about 40% of them died. It was a testament to the horrific power of Shamash's psychic attack.

Lucia, like Jake, had blacked out after teleporting to the other end of the hall. In her half-opened hand, a golden pearl covered with cracks was glowing dimly. Presumably the item that saved her life.

As for the other casualties, Wyatt and Seren proved to be the only survivors from Pureblood. Seren was a specialist in mental illusions and knew how to protect her mind. Despite her big-breasted lolita appearance, she was actually over 70 years old. Her Spirit Body lvl was far above the average level of the participants.

As for Wyatt, he had survived because his Vampire Progenitor Bloodline made him virtually unkillable if he wasn't injured by a Holy Weapon or exposed to the sun. His Bloodline had evolved further and now amplified all his attributes, including his Spirit Body density by a factor of 120. This was enough to allow him to survive once his Blood Barrier was erected.

The two brothers Lysander and Kenway were of course alive due to their high level.

"I-Impossible." Jake stammered as he stood up with a splitting headache.

That psychic attack... That was consistent with a level 95 or higher Spirit Body. It should be something impossible from a Fourth-Ordeal Player. If Shamash had thrown such an over-the-top spirit technique from the get-go, most of them would have been slaughtered instantly.

Better yet. If the god had stopped acting like a bombastic villain and used a soul attack during their assault when they least expected it, he might have even killed him and Lucia. Even if they survived, they would have been out cold for a while. Only Hade, perhaps, stood a chance of weathering this soul attack and remaining unscathed.

Still in the same spot in the center of the huge hall, Shamash was on his knees, covered in blood, his aura exceedingly faint. However, Jake and the other spectators only found him more dangerous.

For his body temperature was spiking rapidly. Like a re-enactment of Haynt's death earlier, the dying god summoned a monstrous sun 30 meters in diameter above him and with a vacant stare let himself be sucked into it.

Soon the sun's brilliance intensified and Jake's pupils narrowed with fright as he realized what was about to happen. A Supernova.

"Run!"

He didn't need to repeat himself a second time. His shout was the trigger that snapped the Myrtharian Nerds and Pureblood Vampires out of their daze and they all rushed without looking back in the opposite direction of the god.

Jake and Hade stayed behind to counteract the heat and radiation as best they could, but eventually they too had to retreat. Before teleporting away, the sun's volume expanded a hundredfold and half of the Dark Race district collapsed into darkness, dragging most of the sleeping inhabitants with it into the flames.

The fallout from the explosion plunged the entire Laudarkvik into smoke and the flames rose to the sky, prompting the evacuation of the two neighboring districts. It was a chaotic night as the two coalitions worked hand in hand to extinguish the flames.

No one knew what had happened and no one cared. The Stele's prophecy was about to be fulfilled and the war was already at their doorstep. This cataclysm only set the stage for much worse things to come.

The Myrtharian Nerds and Pureblood joined in the operation in silence, none of them daring to claim that they were responsible for this catastrophe. But not everyone was fooled.

That night Astraroth Thozuch left Laudarkvik with his clan. When Aggenur Dorgrarauth saw him leave, he felt that the tide had turned and he followed in his footsteps, vanishing into the night. Only Xaverie Zangruth, Aisling's mother, and Seskel Thrajah chose to stay in the city.

The first one because she believed in her daughter. The second one... because he was prideful to the point of being retarded.

It was only in the morning, well, in a manner of speaking, since night was now permanent in all the southern part of the continent, that the fire was extinguished. Nothing was found in the rubble but ashes.

Long before, Jake had teleported to Vhoskaud's burning lab to see if Shamash had left anything behind when he perished and to remove the traces of their battle, but he found nothing but a dusty golden Medallion depicting a winged sun.

[Bronze God Artifact: The Solar Disc of Shamash: A medallion representing his divine authority over the Sun. In Babylonian mythology, and as in many primitive societies that believed their planet to be flat, Shamash, like Ra and other billions of iterations of the sun god in the Mirror Universe, were benevolent gods who provided an explanation for the sun's course. Their divine role was to pull it across the sky during the day. This medallion represents this divine authority and will be treated as a Sun God, becoming eligible for a sliver of Faith Energy from populations believing in such concepts.]

"Thaaat's... Good stuff!" Jake beamed as he immediately put the medallion around his neck.

The description was vague, but he got the gist. It didn't matter if Shamash was really a god from Earth or not. What mattered was what he represented. This Medallion had been with him for a very long time and could almost be considered a Divinity in its own right.

These days his Luck stat was beginning to show its usefulness. The opportunities they encountered were fraught with danger, but the rewards were also commensurate with the risk.

He had long since wiped the Words of Power from his skin and was currently weaker than ever, his mind so weak he could barely stay conscious. Using any spell was obviously impossible.

And yet, he was ecstatic.

Chapter 788 Do Your Best

While Jake was rejoicing, a fortress thousands of kilometers away from Laudarkvik received the news of last night's events in Laudarkvik. If Jake had been there, he would have recognized the architectural style, which was identical to that of the first stronghold he had destroyed a few days earlier when he landed in the Lost Divinities HQ.

"Shamash is dead." Deimos announced chillingly.

The implications of this announcement would have far-reaching consequences for their plans.

"What?! Shamash is dead?! Don't mess with us, Deimos!" The giant demon Belakor thundered as he smashed his fist into the huge stone table around which their meeting was taking place.

Nucnar, the once rock giant covered in minerals and gems but now only the size of a 7 or 8 year old child, pleaded in his still gruff voice,

"Please, Deimos. Tell me you're kidding."

After being practically obliterated by Jake, his Divinity was struggling to rebuild his soul and body. Right now, he was like a recovering amnesiac slowly regaining his memories and abilities.

His situation was in fact the most common in the subfactions that Lost Divinities was constantly establishing in the new Systems. He had once been a popular minor mountain deity in a certain region of his home world, but his existence had been all but forgotten and he had fallen into disuse.

If he had not joined Lost Divinity, he would have simply ceased to exist once the last people who remembered him were gone and his Divinity had run out.

Lost Divinity had a very straightforward way of fixing their predicament and ensuring their survival. Before lending them the power of another Divinity or a body with a Divine Bloodline, it had a much more pragmatic and forthright solution: believe in them.

Of course, millions of ordinary humans from a lower universe like those on Earth would have been useless. The energy of their thoughts was too insignificant to give life to anything. At most, it would have allowed Nucnar to survive and perhaps slowly recover over the years if the believers were devout enough.

But getting stronger? Unlikely.

But what if it was a powerful Evolver or God from System A0 or A1 who decided to believe in their existence? One thought from them could easily annihilate a Seed World. If they were willing to spare a sliver of their attention for these forgotten deities, saving them was a cinch.

This was how Lost Divinities ensured that most of its new members would join and remain loyal. Without Lost Divinities, these minor deities were nothing.

However, in the end, a scrap of attention was still a scrap of attention. Even if these overpowered Evolvers acknowledged their existence, did that mean they were willing to let these new Players drain their mental energy without limit?

Of course not.

That was why Nucnar was recovering so slowly. The Evolver in charge of believing in his existence... didn't give a shit about him. If he hadn't been allowed to tap into the energy of another Divinity, it would have taken him years to recover.

That was why the news of Shamash's death was so dramatic for him and the other members. If even Shamash had perished with an almost inexhaustible stream of Faith Energy and a Divinity with a long accumulation, then they stood no chance of winning.

"Is the news reliable?" Khag' Dagmai, the Nosk God asked seriously.

"I'm not lying, alas. I wish I were." Deimos replied listlessly. "The death of Shamash affects our plans. We must now decide our attitude toward Laudarkvik. If we decide to stay, the clash with the Myrtharian Nerds and Pureblood is inevitable. The losses will be heavy and the victory uncertain."

"What do you decide?"

"One vote each by raising your hand as usual." Ozo reminded as he floated in his bubble form overlooking the table.

The irony was that he was the only Player present devoid of arms.

No hands were raised except for that of the beauty Ashun. Feeling all those crooked eyes on her, she giggled,

"What? I like these guys. Mortals rising up against the evil Gods... Aaah! I smell the makings of an epic saga!"

"You crazy bitch in love! You and your delusions of romance between a god and a mortal!" Belakor bellowed as he flung his Hell Greatsword in her face like a javelin. "Wake up! They are our enemies!"

"Cough, cough..."

A snow-white-haired elder wearing a worn-out cyan robe cleared his throat loudly. He was the one who had trapped Jake's arm in an iceberg.

"Forgive me Ashun." He first apologized courteously with a head bow before vociferating with bulging veins on his forehead,

"But did you just say we're the EVIL ones?! I'm righteous!"

The other Players rolled their eyes.

"Yeah, yeah, sure old man, you're a saint. We all believe you." Belakor snorted. "Though, if I remember correctly, wasn't it you who froze a village in the middle of summer when they asked for warmer temperatures during the heat wave? I also remember the time during our third Ordeal when we were

being chased by thousands of monsters and you deliberately froze the only escape route behind us, dooming thousands of Players. Ring a bell?"

The old Player shook with anger at the sneering face of the demon, but refrained from retorting. That bastard Belakor loved to piss them off and feed off their negative emotions. It was his favorite pastime.

"Thyohr and Belakor, stop your nonsense." Deimos warned them in an icy voice. "Okay, 1 vote for and 2787 votes against. Ozo and Khag' Dagmai, what would you have voted?"

"Is there a need for this question?" The Nosk snorted as he clenched his fists, "They are worthy prey. They deserve to be hunted. To die by my sword is their glory and honor.

"But I will comply with orders..." He added just after grudgingly.

"And you Ozo?"

"I don't like to fight without reason. If the battle is avoidable I prefer to stay away from it." The bubble alien admitted honestly.

The less admissible reason was that Jake was not a good match for his abilities. His energy was precious and he hated wasting it on futile fights.

"Alright, I can relate to your choices." Deimos smiled before becoming grave again as he gazed at the other members seated at the table. "As for me, I would have chosen to fight too. Like Khag', the more my opponents resist, the more they are worthy of being killed by me. But in the end, victory will still be mine."

The Lost Divinities Players did not contradict their leader. From their perspective it was indeed the truth. The Spartan was so frightfully strong that no one understood his limits... Except Shamash.

And he was dead.

Deimos had once admitted that without his gear and his own Divinity he would not be able to defeat Shamash if he got serious. It was a matter of specialty. Without a disproportionately powerful mind and the ability to resist his Sun Force, it was a losing battle without proper equipment.

Seeing that the other members were waiting for his final verdict, the Spartan stared impassively at them for a moment, then said,

"In truth, this vote was unnecessary. I just wanted to know what you would have decided. I have already received orders from the Nullifier to abandon Laudarkvik and regroup at the Shatug Empire with the rest of our forces. Our retaliation, if any, will take place in Celestial City. It's just a shame that with the Nullifier present, there's no point in this revenge anymore."

"T-the Nullifier gave the order in person?" Nucnar shivered in horror as he remembered the appearance of their absolute leader on Quanoth. "Did he say anything about our failure?"

A heavy silence settled over the room. Deimos smiled and repeated word for word,

"He said, and I quote, do your best to absolve yourself. Otherwise pay the price for your sins."

Chapter 789 That's All I Want To Hear

Shatug Empire, in a remote coniferous valley a few hundred kilometers south of Celestial City.

Over the past months and years, the landscape had changed beyond recognition. The once lush forest of giant pines had given way to a complex of futuristic factories constantly spewing clouds of unsettling black smoke.

The mountains surrounding the valley had been almost entirely mined, turning the former valley into a flat plain before evolving into a mile-deep pit that kept growing deeper every day.

Millions of androids were working like worker ants to run these factories, expand the base, build, reinforce the existing structures and defenses, deforest and mine... There were androids of all sizes, shapes and hues and most of them were over six meters tall and possessed energy levels incomparable to those that Lucia and the others had faced.

The materials that made them up were also much more valuable. There were no more ordinary metals used in their design and in addition to the local Adamantium, Mithril and Orichalcum, there were many extraordinary materials not found on Quanoth.

At the center of this factory complex stood the most gigantic and majestic android the planet had ever harbored. If Jake and the other Myrtharian Nerds had been present, they would have recognized Vhoskaud's features on this robot.

But this one was very different from the clones Jake and his faction had eliminated so far. This android was an unprecedented machine of war and destruction, both offensively and defensively invulnerable.

Nearly 100 meters tall, its armor was several meters thick and made of an alloy of Adamantium and Oranium, a metal almost unheard of before the Sixth Ordeal. This technological monster looked vaguely like a carbon-gray Optimus Prime, with its long vibrating sword plugged into its back by a powerful magnet.

The surface of its body seemed to be constantly recombining, adopting the shape of various tools, weapons and structures as the need arose. On its shoulders, six large laser cannons as wide as a frigate were constantly monitoring the valley, ready to destroy any threat at the slightest incursion. Its arms, knees, heels, elbows, chest and even its head were not to be outdone, each one sporting various plasma cannons, missile launchers and other ultra advanced gadgets.

If that wasn't terrifying enough, its robotic eyes were like two black holes slightly distorting the space around them and the body of this huge android was enveloped in a thin halo of dark energy, so dense that anything that inadvertently came in contact with it was instantly disintegrated as if millions of years had passed in the blink of an eye.

Suddenly, its two black eyes flickered several times before stabilizing again. The titanic android woke up, a slight frown appearing on its metallic face.

"Hmmm... The android WX896, series 7 is dead and the Laudarkvik mission is a failure. How unexpected." The real Vhoskaud commented deadpan.

Its personality seemed very different from that of its clone. There was a deep apathy in this huge robot and an analytical rationality pushed to the extreme that prevented it from feeling any emotion.

Its only real motivation was its will to grow, to proliferate. Compared to the clones that Jake and his companions had defeated, which were emotional and temperamental, this one behaved more like an artificial intelligence devoid of feelings.

And no doubt that made this Vhoskaud much more dangerous.

At that moment, when the android was considering satisfying its curiosity by contacting Lost Divinities to find out how it turned out, it received a communication request.

"Lost Divinities? What do they want from me? Don't tell me..."

The robot accepted the call and the giant hologram of a hooded man appeared in front of him. The only distinguishing features of this individual were his black robe and his light blue skin, streaked with darker blue stripes.

"Nullifyer, to what do I owe the honor of this call?" Vhoskaud asked in an amused tone, cutting straight to the point.

A deep, chill-inducing voice reverberated throughout the valley,

"Shamash is dead. Lost Divinities is withdrawing from Laudarkvik."

Vhoskaud's eyebrows rose slightly in surprise. That its clone had been defeated was not such a big deal, but an entire subfaction of Lost Divinities was there, along with three of their senior officers and several extremely dangerous free agents. Shamash was one of those free agents who was known to be infallible.

"I assume that you are not just contacting me to inform me of your decision. After all, Laudarkvik's fate is no longer my concern." The android finally replied, knowing full well that the Nullifyer was not the kind of person to waste its own or anyone else's time.

"Of course not." The man shook his head. "Our clash in Celestial City is inevitable, but I would like us to temporarily collaborate in order to exterminate our common enemy, what do you say?"

Vhoskaud was really taken aback this time.

"You want to make an alliance with me to wipe out ordinary Players? Can't you kill them yourself? Laudarkvik's failure is a minor setback, but it doesn't change the big picture. If they don't attack me directly, I don't care about these humans. However, if our paths cross in the Celestial City then be sure I won't give them any quarter."

"That's all I wanted to hear." The Nullifyer's hologram snorted before disappearing.

Finding itself alone in the valley, the android's gaze faded and the silence fell, leaving only the rumble of factories and workers toiling away.

"The final day promises to be exciting." The robot murmured before becoming still again.

Simultaneously, the millions of hard-working androids suddenly increased their work intensity and deforestation accelerated in leaps and bounds, while brand new robots were churned out of the factories nonstop.

A new sun rose over Laudarkvik, but the sky remained inky black. The fire had finally been brought under control after two whole districts had burned down.

The Myrtharian Nerds did not immediately take control of Laudarkvik after most of the demons had left, choosing to ignore Xaverie and Seskel, the two remaining leaders of the enemy coalition.

They had won the battle, but the casualty figures were devastating for Jake and Wyatt. Wyatt had lost all of his comrades except Seren, while Jake had lost nearly half of the Myrtharian Nerds accompanying him.

Svara, who could bring the souls of dead heroes back to life and stabilize their condition with her Valkyrie Bloodline, managed to save several dozen of them, bringing the death ratio down to 37%.

In the end, nearly 500 Myrmidians had lost their lives, as well as about forty ordinary Players. That was more than 20% of their faction in total.

In addition to the official Players, Lucia had lost most of the Knights and Dragonids she had recruited. Unfortunately, that was before she invited them to join the Myrtharian Nerds. These short-lived allies could not be saved and had died irreparably.

As for Haynt, he had managed to survive. Once the battle was over, he reported to their headquarters on his own.

The once powerful and feared Astral was now a shadow of his former self, his body barely bigger than the flame of a candle. The native assured them that his life was not in danger and that he would recover sooner or later by relying on his Constellation, but it would surely take decades.

Jake couldn't wait that long and invited him into his underground cavern and placed him in the center of an Aether Sun Cores formation. The Astral was so shocked and surprised by the stream of revitalizing energy that poured into his heart that he immediately let out an involuntary moan of pleasure.

With a timid "Thank you", he began his meteoric recovery. But even so it would probably take him several weeks to recover. After all he had lost 98% of the energy accumulated in more than 900 years. It couldn't be made up in such a short time.

Jake had no intention of taking any more unnecessary risks and decided to wait for the remaining members to arrive at his fortified camp outside the city.

The afternoon after the night battle, Drastan, the Versing Troll Hunter, arrived with thousands of trolls of all sizes and varieties. There were mountain trolls as tall as houses, forest trolls as tall as trees and covered with bark and moss, and even stranger trolls covered with fur, scales or a carapace.

The arrival of these heavy monsters armed with gigantic clubs suddenly woke up the mourning camp, but they relaxed when they recognized the muscular ebony. Seeing their mournful expressions he knew at once that something serious had happened. Familiar with Hephais and Svara, he asked them what had happened and sighed with relief after hearing everything,

"Sigh... If I had arrived even a few hours earlier my troll army would have been exterminated. Their regeneration is monstrous, but their minds are their biggest weakness. They would have made short

work of the Undeads and Androids, but the soul attack of this Shamash would have been lethal. I'll have to find a way to deal with this issue before we face them again."

They discussed for a while the possible solutions, namely the adamantium helmet, but Drastan knew at once that it would be expensive to equip his whole army of trolls.

Chapter 790 Leave It To Me

The good news, however, was that they had stolen a lot of valuable magic metals from Vhoskaud's laboratory. Most of it had melted in the explosion, but materials like Adamantium had been blown away by the blast before melting completely.

If one looked, it was easy to find traces of it everywhere. Knowing that Drastan's troll army would certainly not be their last unannounced addition, Jake immediately ordered the Myrtharian Nerds present to ramp up their efforts to search the burned-out districts.

The most notable arrival was that of Vincent the next day. This included his new wives with lovestruck faces and his father-in-law looking expectantly at Jake and Kevin... Plus a nation of elves on their heels.

"Cousin, I have to admit, you've outdone me." Kevin bowed low to the sheepish Water Elf. "Who would have thought that I, the most handsome of us, would still be single after four Ordeals. Fortunately, my chances of finding a soul mate are still better than a certain someone..."

"Are you talking about me?" Jake glared at the man. How could he not sense that this was a dig at him.

"Of course I'm not. Why would you think that?" The Werebear blinked innocently.

A vein bulged on Jake's forehead, but he held back from slapping him silly.

"That's absolutely not true! Of the two of you, he is currently in the lead."

Lucia's female voice chimed in behind them. Turning around, they saw her walking towards them in the company of Esya, Enya and Aisling. Staring at the four sublime beauties all at once, Kevin's face turned ugly.

'Damn it, I forgot he was surrounded by stunners. All the more reason to call him a moron. So many missed opportunities!' Kevin criticized inwardly with a bitter look.

Still, not wanting to lose face, he teasingly retorted,

"You heard Lucia, Jake. You have heavy responsibilities on your shoulders. Maybe your charm is more dangerous than you think..."

Vincent who had been silent from the beginning with an elf on each arm gave him a sympathetic look while admiring the four young women. Especially from the red-haired beauty, he had a kind of uneasy feeling in her presence. That of not being able to satisfy the appetite of such a woman...

Lucia was also shrouded in a haze of danger. Since all this time spent with them, Vincent was very clear about the proud and competitive personality of the Myrmidians and he feared for his cousin if such a harem came true. Even if it didn't, Lucia would be a handful for the unfortunate one who would win her graces.

In the afternoon of the same day, Asfrid and the other Eltarians arrived in Laudarkvik. Asfrid had already been briefed by Lucia about what had happened and instead of reprimanding Jake for not waiting for them she firmly decreed,

"From now on, let me and my team take care of these kinds of opponents. At the very least, you won't have to worry about your souls' safety."

Jake was surprised at her confidence, but remembering what Asfrid and those Eltarians were capable of several months earlier by linking their minds he regained a semblance of optimism.

"Very well. From now on, I'll leave you in charge of the Myrtharian Nerds' mental safety. You have free rein." He allowed her gratefully.

"Leave it to me."

No sooner said than done. Less than an hour later, Jake received a notice from Asfrid ordering every Myrtharian Nerds to proceed to the Eltarians' camp. Curious, he hurried over there and was surprised to see a pile of translucent shells stained with blood.

With his heightened senses, he knew at once that this blood was not ordinary, but Blood Essence. Each of these shells had been treated with Eltarian blood.

If he had any doubts, the bloodless and ringed faces of the Eltarians, Asfrid included, confirmed his suspicions. It was a significant sacrifice that amounted to regressing their Bloodline by half a level.

The Eltarians were not like the Myrmidians or the Kintharians. Boosting their bloodline was not as straightforward. It required the practice of demanding mental routines as their minds gradually grew like a muscle.

To progress and recover faster, this species could easily absorb spirit energy like Svava, but it was not a common source of energy unless they were continually committing massacres.

New novel chapters are published on Libread.com.

Of course, absorbing the Spirit Body of a level 90 native would not allow them to gain as many levels. Most of that energy would go into their Bloodline.

Just as Jake didn't instantly become ten times stronger by gorging on a star, their appetite had a limit and their minds needed time to purify and digest the spiritual energy of others. Unless they had access to outstandingly pure spiritual energy from the start there was no shortcut.

"When I gave you free rein, I have to admit I didn't expect this..." Jake confessed seriously while throwing a concerned glance to the woman with the long silky blue hair moist as seaweed.

Sensing what was bothering him, Asfrid said,

"Don't worry. No Eltarian was forced. We all agreed that this was necessary to bring the rest of the Ordeal to a satisfactory conclusion. It will also make us stronger in some ways."

Jake squinted his eyes but accepted her explanation. Feeling that he was not yet convinced, she added,

"The killing that will happen next will help us recover in no time. If you really want to help us, look for treasures rich in pure spiritual energy. It can also be herbs, fruits or flowers that stimulate mental activity. Anything that is good for the mind will do."

As she spoke of pure spiritual energy, he thought of the Soul Stone sitting in his Space Storage, but hesitated to lend it to them. He wanted to know what all the shells were about first.

Understanding the meaning behind his silence, Asfrid returned to the heap of shells and waited for the other Myrtharian Nerds to show up. When everyone was there, she proclaimed loudly,

"Thank you all for coming. The varieties of shells you see stacked before me are artifacts that my species has been creating for centuries. The secret of their design was handed down directly to us by Eltar in our ancient scriptures. The crafting of these artifacts is within the reach of any skilled blacksmith, but the cooperation of many Eltarians, as well as our Blood Essence, is required to complete these artifacts.

"Their function is to allow a non-Eltarian to connect to our One Mind. All you have to do is spill your own blood on them and let the shell scan your Soul Signature. You may not know it yet, but what makes our race so strong is not our superior mental abilities, but our ability to link, combine and merge our minds to create a more powerful spirit entity. Connected, our minds no longer exist as frail, isolated souls, but together form a unified spirit whose power far exceeds the sum of our energies.

"The effectiveness of this resonance depends on many factors, but the most important thing is to trust each other. When you link your minds like this, your thoughts and emotions become apparent to the other members of the One Mind. You can't hide anything from them.

"You can of course not let go completely and protect your thoughts but this will affect the power of the One Mind. However, this is not the only advantage of these shells. Once you are connected to our spiritual network it becomes easy to transfer psychic energy or communicate. Likewise, you can easily lend your mental energy to others. This is the mental equivalent of the Vitality Link. Also, even if you can't surrender completely to the One Mind, you can achieve this mind-meld with those you trust as long as they are connected to the network.

"Any questions?"

The latest_epi_sodes are on_the LIBREAD.COM. website.

Heavy silence.

"In that case, those of you who want one of these shells, I'll let you have it in good order. Sign your name on the register next to it because we've only made 3,000 so far. If you lose it you will pay the cost of the next one out of your pocket."

A group of Myrmidians immediately rushed to the front of the shells, forming a long, orderly line. After the incident with Shamash they were taking psychic threats very seriously.

Jake did not join the line with the others. Already having a shell in hand, he studied it from every angle with a thoughtful expression.

"Asfrid, Lucia and I being part Eltarians, can we connect to the One Mind you mentioned?" He asked cautiously.

The Eltarian leader thought about the question for a moment, then shook her head,

"You are missing some innate Eltarian skills. Your bloodline comes from Lucia but her ancestry is not that pure. But..."

"But?" Jake raised an eyebrow.

"But you're still Eltarians. The other Eltarians can connect to you. Say the word and all the Eltarians will channel their fused energies to you to assist you in battle."

Jake tossed her the Soul Stone, which she caught off guard in her cupped hands. When she felt the pure Soul Energy inside her eyes went wide as saucers.

"I am convinced." He smiled. "If I don't reward you for your contributions what kind of leader would I be."