

The Eternal City

Tsaindorcus Vaision, also known as the Platinum Dragon Lord, looked around the dead city. He was currently using his Wild Magic to control the armor he named Riku Aganeia, a member of the newly named Twelve Heroes.

For more than a decade he recruited a group of the most skilled members of each race inhabiting this world to try and face the unstoppable force of the invaders known as the Evil Deities.

Someone may ask why the mighty Dragon Lord decided to hide on the Floating City, which previously belonged to the Eight Greed Kings, instead of descending into the battlefield and swiping the invaders away.

Some may say he is a coward, or that he isn't powerful enough to defeat the enemy. The truth was that he was paranoid. For all he saw those enemies were nothing compared to the dread brought by the Kings. Well... they may have been more destructive than those before them, but their power was on very different scales.

With his main body and Wild Magic he could probably face 3 or 4 at a time but he still was paranoid. For all the previous Eight's power, what was to be truly feared about them was their unpredictability and unknown items, many of which now fell in Tsaindorcus' grasp.

Many of his brethren fell to the tricks of the Kings, brothers and sisters burned and frozen to death, their Wild Magic useless against the items which defended them. It made Tsaindorcus paranoid about anything, and even if the threat was low he could

not risk being taken off guard for only his father knew what items those Evil Deities might possess.

So, he decided to use a puppet to test the waters before eventually descending himself. From there the recruitment started. Humans, demi-human or heteromorph didn't matter, they all stood in the face of the invaders from another world to defend theirs.

The greatest surprise came from the one many considered their leader, an invader himself, or as he called himself, a Player. He wasn't sure he understood exactly what that elf told him, he had no idea what a shutdown was or what the difference between a Player and Enpeecee was. For all he understood the firsts were some kind of masters to the seconds, but he wasn't sure on what hierarchy such distinction was made as sometimes Enpeecees seemed to be stronger than Players.

But there was one thing he was sure about. They were being pulled to this world not of their own will. That caused the resentment he felt for his father's madness to skyrocket into open hate at what he brought upon them all. While the Kings were the ones who slaughtered their race it was their father who pulled them from their original world to this one.

But he digressed, this was not the time to dwell in the past, they were here for a reason, to investigate the City of Death. And the calamity the befell it.

For the last fifty years rumors of a fallen kingdom full of undead circled around, it was said that the elusive figure called Landfall was responsible for it. It had been none of their concern at first as the entity didn't seem to be related to the Evil Deities at all but more recently there have been reports of powerful magical activity

in the area. It was concerning as this may be a sign of one or more of the invaders having taken residence in the city. Who knew what they could be planning to use all that negative energy for...

Still, this city was definitely strange. For a city supposed to be overrun by undead there were none to be seen around, this was a concerning element of their investigation.

“Undead were here, I am sure of it, the stench of those who refuse to accept death is not something so easily forgotten.”

Mjoul the beastman commented.

“Keep your guard up, whoever lives here might be luring us in a trap, they probably made the undead retreat, or something else exterminated them, unlikely as it is.”

Their expert in necromancy, Rigit Bers Caurau, offered her opinion. The human was the youngest and one of the only three females in their group alongside the female war troll, Aur, and the other elf, Main, who was far too smitten with their supposed leader.

But Tsaindorcus was far too focused on his own thoughts to care about the ensuing discussion. He could feel it, under the heavy veil of arcane magic... this land had been scarred by the use of Wild Magic on a scale only a few were capable of.

“Silence.”

The member known as the Black Knight said, silencing the others with a mere command.

“Footsteps?”

Asked Mjoul in a whisper as more and more managed to hear the sound coming from all around them.

The group immediately stopped and formed a circle as to cover any possible direction.

They did not wait long for something to show up. The first thing they were able to see was the glowing arm of the figure, but to a more accurate look there was actually no light emanating from the being, no, that was merely a reflection of the sunlight on their body which seemed to be made out of... crystals?

The Dragon Lord had to admit, in his long life, he never saw anything like the figure standing in front of him before. A colossal humanoid, as high as their tallest member, its body completely made out or covered by what seemed to be some kind of crystal. The straight sword in its hand and the tower shield in the other made out of the same crystal as well.

The strange humanoid did not possess any other physical features. No eyes, no mouth, no ear. It was just crystal. Immediately more of these figures made themselves known, surrounding them on all sides apart the one they came from. As if inviting them to leave.

Unfortunately, that wasn't happening.

The first to charge was the fierce beastman with his deadly enchanted axe which was easily blocked by the tower shield of the being.

The beastman jumped back to avoid the ensuing swing of his opponent. And then the horde of mysterious beings charged them. For all they were resilient and intimidating their attack power was pretty low, the Dragon Lord and his companions had certainly

faced stronger foes before and, as expected, a long drawn fight could not result in nothing else but their opponents' defeat.

“What the...?”

The player muttered under his breath as he examined one of their downed foes who had their head cracked open.

Tsa glanced at what their supposed leader was looking at and if he had a physical jaw, it would be hanging in surprise by now. The crystal turned out to be nothing more than an external shield for what hid under it.

A rotting visage slowly turning into black mist, the crimson lights in its eyes still burning as if trying to remain attached to the world for as much as possible. It seemed far too attached to life for an undead in Tsa's opinion.

“A Death Knight?”

The elf asked no one in particular, perplexed by the event unfolding before him.

“Check the others.”

The Dragon Lord said to his companions as all obeyed and started cracking open the crystals only to reveal different types of undead hidden within.

“No wonder they were so resilient, these are legendary undead said to appear once every one hundred years... and yet there are almost ten here.”

The young noble, Rigit, said as she could not help but be puzzled by the current situation.

“No, not necessarily, there may be a powerful enough undead to summon them around here, but I never heard rumors about one of the Evil Deities using necromancy.”

Rebutted the player as he looked around as if searching for someone or something.

“Well, I think the only way to find out is going forward right?”

Interjected Main. It wasn't really like they had a choice, it was either that or turning back.

And so, the twelve of them continued to march deeper into the city, their destination, the great castle in the center. More crystalized undead tried to stop them in their pursuit but now that they learned of their nature, they used the few holy spells and weapon at their disposal to gain the upper hand on them.

They all seemed particularly adamant about defending the streets leading to the castle, probably meaning that whoever controlled them was hiding there.

To confirm their hypothesis, they found themselves in front of the main entrance of the palace. A giant crystalized door which seemed sturdier than whatever the Dragon Lord ever saw before, even if he doubted that the actual resistance would be as impressive as its appearance.

But before they could confirm that idea the double door opened and a platoon of crystalized undead marched out, followed by a giant of a figure.

Its ten arachnid legs were covered in crystals as was much of its remaining body, a humanoid upper body seemed to be incased in crystal as it was attached to the spider like body.

“I-is that an Arachnid Lord?!... they are like level eighty or something... shit...”

The Dragon Lord heard the player mutter under his breath. He apparently knew this creature and seeing as one of the most famous Evil Deities was rumored to be a giant spider, Tsa had little doubt about the entity before him. Still the crystals were new as he hadn't heard about them before. Maybe the invader was trying to upgrade itself with them? That would somehow explain the undead, as they were probably test subject for an upgrade the thing was trying to implement on itself.

“Use fire! Both the undead and that thing are weak to it! Make sure to not let it get near you! It's poisonous!”

For all the hate the Dragon Lord had for the invaders he could not help but admit the usefulness on having one on his side as the insight he provided already proved to be invaluable many times in the past and even in the present his information was making their life easier.

And so another of the legendary battles the bards would soon sing about began.

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The girl hummed as she observed the battle unfolding before her eyes through the Crystal Screen provided to her by her mentor turned friend turned secret crush. Her dead pale lips turning upward into a smile at the thought of him.

Ever since she met him more than 10 years prior she was able to rekindle the dying flame of hope previously dying in her chest.

If it wasn't for him, she had no idea how much more failures and solitude she could have taken before snapping.

At first, once it was clear he had no malevolent intent toward her, she thought about using his knowledge to the best of its abilities to reach her goals. Unfortunately, it turned out that for all his might he could not help her with her problem. Still that was a starting point for a cooperative relationship between the two parts and a future blossoming friendship.

He taught her how to survive and use at best the abilities she was gifted with while she told him about the land, he found himself into, which seemed to be totally foreign to him.

For all his terrifying appearance he really had a golden heart for those he came to care for. He could have left once he had gathered the information, he wanted but instead stayed to help her reach her goal. He said that his friends would have beaten him half to death otherwise, something she found hilarious at the time as he was a talking skeleton.

With time she learned to know his friends, through stories and books he lent her for a time. By now, she almost thought at them as friends of hers as well. Friends she knew so much of but never met. They were words in a book or tales spoken through her mentor's voice.

It was that kind spirit that made her fall for him, being the only two mentally capable beings in the whole city may have helped though. But her maiden heart wanted to believe that her love would have not changed even if circumstances were different.

Her mentor was curious at heart, and they periodically went on small adventures around the continent to try and find a solution to her dilemma.

She shifted her position on her father's throne. As the only daughter of the king and crown princess, the weight of the crown fell on her since her parents were currently... indisposed... to perform their duties.

As queen she had a responsibility toward her kingdom and citizens... even if they were in their current state... she swore she would restore her kingdom to its former glory.

Their recent successes gave her hope for the future. After more than ten years of research they finally managed to pull a soul out of one of her citizens and put it in her mentor's undead. Then she coated them in her own magic. She developed her own type of magic and spell for the exact reason of protecting her citizens and making them as magnificent as before.

Unfortunately, the end result wasn't as good as she hoped. The soul they put into the undead didn't seem to be as conscious as it once was. They did not understand anything apart from orders, their mental capabilities seemed to be really limited as they weren't able to either communicate through writing or speaking.

The only reason they knew it worked to some extent was because the soul recognized her as the princess and knelt to her. They chose the soul of one of the guards she knew for that exact reason.

Her secondary objective of using her own style of magic to create a beautiful shell for her people so that they don't have to see themselves as undead also failed. Her magic just wasn't accurate enough, resulting in durable but grotesque shells around them.

She had experimented in any way possible to better it but as of now she didn't succeed. She would not lose herself to despair though, as long as she had her friend, she was sure she could do anything.

She looked back to the screen, the so called Twelve Heroes managed to defeat more of her reformed soldiers, if there was anything good about this, is that the souls of those poor people had finally been freed for good.

The only one remaining was her half-completed experiment on one of the so called Evil Deities.

Judging by her understanding her mentor's friend known as Ulbert would have scoffed at the unearned moniker, even more after seeing what these so called gods were capable of.

It was quite the amusing story when that specific Evil Deity decided they wanted to nest in HER city, it didn't take much for her mentor to immobilize it and finishing it off with his Instant Death magic. She really had no idea how those morons managed to bring so much chaos to the continent if all it took to kill them was that.

But maybe her friend was just too awesome. Yeah, that was it!

After it died her mentor resurrected it as an undead and gave it to her to test out more of her magic. The spider thing lost much of its power though, as an undead there was no more venom in it and it wasn't able to use magic anymore. All in all, it was quite a worthless being she just used for testing out her power instead of making another of her citizens suffer.

Of all her mentor's friends she really took the words of two most at heart.

Touch-Me taught her that lying down for your loved ones was the most noble of things and she couldn't agree more. While Ulbert said that the path to one's dream was paved in corpses, failures, and regrets, and only those willing to push down their screaming noble hearts and endure it will achieve them. A statement she was founding to be true after each day.

But the words of her mentor where the ones she carried most close to her heart.

Those who forget the past are doomed to fail again and again, so, never forget and never forgive. Everything you experience makes you the person you are and so the past must be remembered and cared for.

And so, she remembered her past, cherishing every moment of it, she never forgot going as far as to start writing a diary, or many by now. And above all, she never forgave, for whoever was responsible for the tragedy that befell her country would suffer a hundred-fold what she did.

She will save them all! Alongside Satoru, she will make her dream a reality.

{Satoru's P.O.V.}

The undead magic caster observed from the shadows the so called Twelve Heroes advance through Keeno's territory. In all those years he had worked alongside her he knew that if there was something that would get on her nerves that would be someone going around in her city doing whatever they wanted.

He had no idea if that was a trait of being a vampire, her own pride as a princess turned queen, or just her own personality. Still, she would not be too happy about this.

The image of a pouting Keeno manifested in his mind making him chuckle, she really was an adorable little thing. Buku and Yamaiko would have loved her.

Still, this was not the time to dwell on the past, he had been observing the group since they first entered the city. Studying your enemy's capabilities was the key to victory. 'Know your enemy as much as they do not know you and you will never know defeat... isn't that right Punitto?' the invisible skeleton asked no one.

For all his paranoia he had to admit the group didn't look like much, they struggled against the crystalized Death Knights and had an hard time against the undead Arachnid Lord, who had not been that much of a challenge for him to begin with, and was even weaker than that after its zombification.

The armored guy with four sword was probably the only one to be careful of as the other did seem to be around level 50 or lower 60. He would have to take care of the black armor guy as well, those enchanted swords did seem like legendary class items if he had to judge by their capabilities.

He teleported away as soon as they defeated the Arachnid Lord. The plan was simple, Keeno would face them and make them believe she was the only one remaining, that would push them to show everything they had and so make it easy for Satoru to destroy them if she did not before him.

He, of course, was ready to intervene if anything went wrong. He had no intention of letting his companion die for his own gain. If

there is something Satoru valued above everything that was the bond of comradery and friendship he came to share with his friends and, more recently, Keeno as well.

Not that Keeno was weak, at least, by this world standards. She was a vampire with incredible magical aptitude, so much that she came to invent her own spells and style of magic. Something that intrigued Satoru to no end as he never thought before such a thing was remotely possible.

Her power grew by the day as she feasted in the negative energy around her. That was something they came to understand a little while ago, in absence of blood her vampiric instincts started to drain every form of negative energy around her to strengthen her even subconsciously doing so. The appearance of Satoru, a literal endless pool of such energy, could do nothing but amplify the process and, adding her own incredible magical talent, this could not result in nothing else but a literal growth spurt in power.

If he had to judge her, with the items he provided her with, he would say she stood around level 60 by now. An incredible improvement over the 13 years they have known each other, as she started from around level 30.

That made him wonder, would she be able to surpass him in time? Her growth rate seemed to have been severely slowed down these last couple years though, it may have a limit to how much she could exploit her own racial traits.

But this was not the time to hypothesize such things. This was the time to teach those bold heroes a lesson they would hardly forget. Ok, now he was starting to sound just like Ulbert, he could almost

imagine the goat demon laughing maniacally at the thought of battling a bunch of heroes.

When said heroes finally entered the throne room he was hiding among the shadows of the ceiling. For all intent and purposes this seemed like the final boss room of a dungeon situation.

“Welcome heroes!”

The undead queen greeted her visitors as she elegantly dismissed the Crystal Screen with a swipe of her hand. Her hair cascading around her like a golden waterfall. He may shouldn't have said she looked good with long hair all those years ago.

“Who are you?! We have defeated the Evil Deity infesting the city, whoever you are, surrender at once!”

One of the heroes, an elf judging by his ears, exclaimed.

Keeno chuckled evilly as a smirk appeared on her face.

“You lowly beings stand in the presence of the mightiest of all! The feared Queen of Night and Terrors, the one all refer to as Landfall, the Evileye of the east, the Prime Grade Magic Caster, all meaningless titles before my true name! Keeno Fasris Invern! Last Eternal Queen of Inveria!”

She introduced herself in a prideful and arrogant tone prompting Satoru to facepalm. If he knew she would end up like this, he would have never lent her Ulbert's books about the perfect Demon King, she just seemed too interested on how to be a proper queen at the time and he thought she would be able to distinguish between his friend's actual advices and his ramblings. Mistakes were made and now he ended up with a vampire child with a chuuni syndrome.

“So you are the one known as Landfall? The destroyer of three whole kingdoms...”

The black armored hero said in a low and dangerous tone.

“You spoke of an Evil Deity... ah! Do you think that little bug could ever compare to me?! What you faced was merely the carcass of what remained after I finished it!”

She ignored the comment of the dark hero more interested in pushing the conversation away from that event.

“Now leave this place as I neither have the patience nor the time to deal with you ants! You are after the Evil Deities, are you not? Go along then! There is nothing for you here!”

If he could, Satoru would have smiled at her words, for all she pretended to play her evil queen persona she was still the kind girl he knew at heart.

“It may be true that we are after the Evil Deities, but! An evil thing like you... should never be allowed to leave with her life!”

But, as usual, kindness was only repaid with violence and hate.

At the call of the one who seemed to be the leader the others took up arms.

Keeno from her part made an exaggerated gesture with her short arms as if inviting her opponents to come to her.

“Very well then! Come! If it is death you seek!”

From the shadows all around the room hordes of his undead charged as the [Invisibility] spell hiding them dispelled.

“[Crystal Rain]!”

The blond vampire queen casted her 4th tier spell. Sharp magical crystals fell from the ceiling in a deadly shower which managed to take the enemies off guard.

The beautiful shining blue crystals always enchanted Satoru, the magical aptitude of Keeno was something Satoru admired to no end, how she was able to create her own spells and still have the time and mental fortitude to learn how to rule for the future good of her kingdom.

That was why he would help her reach her dream. To feel once more like he was part of something, like during his years in Ainz Ooal Gown, back then their objective was to rebel against the virtual discrimination against heteromorphs, but that was still a game.

This, this was far greater, to restore a kingdom and all the innocent people within who have unjustly been turned into mindless undead. This was no game, these were true people and Keeno was just a young girl struggling with a weight no child should bear on their shoulders. The weight of a country and all its inhabitants.

To see the glee and mercilessness in which these heroes just started killing every undead once they got into the city almost made his Emotional Suppression kick in. Touch-Me would have been disgusted by such beings calling themselves heroes.

But in the end, for all his complaints, the plan was still coming along well enough. As expected, the only true threat to him seemed to be the silver armored hero who definitely was using divine class items judging by the sheer damage dealt to his summon and its resistance to Keeno's spells.

He had no intention of killing the so called heroes if he could help it. For all their ignorance and prejudice, they were still useful as a deterrent against the so called Evil Deities, a bunch of heteromorphs from Yggdrasil, boss mobs that for some reason appeared around the same time he arrived. Speaking of which, he still had no idea what brought him here or why but discovering that was not on the top of his priorities.

It was true that he could take care of the bosses by himself but having someone else take the job and take the risk was far better. Leaving them alive would only risk the destruction of priceless information that could help their cause.

Seeing the short vampire fight tooth and nail made his nonexistent heart to swell in pride, he liked to think that such combat prowess was the result of his careful nurturing and Punitto's books on strategy.

The little thing was a true devourer of words. Give her a book and she will demand two the next day. It truly warmed his heart to be able to share his and his friends' knowledge and legacy. In a sense, by now, she was the adopted child of Ainz Ooal Gown.

Too caught up in his blissful memories he didn't notice the last of his summon perish under the beastman's brutal assault.

By now, half the heroes were forced to retreat as the previous battle, the ambush and Keeno's spells finally made them reach their apparent limit. Now, the only one remaining were the two elves, the black and silver knights, the cloaked woman and the beastman.

"You are finished, yield now! You will be judged fairly for all the suffering you brought!"

The male elf demanded. Keeno merely scoffed in return.

“Suffering? You know nothing of suffering! You who stand in the name of justice and the weak! You who invade and slaughter undead, not even considering if they may have a mind of their own!!

‘She seems pretty pissed off... it might be time to intervene’ Satoru thought as he prepared to join the battle with a sneak attack.

“You are just a bunch of self-gratifying losers who go around imposing their view of justice on others through nothing but violence! You all disgust me!”

The vampire queen spat as she gritted her fangs and her crimson eyes almost shined.

The black knight rushed her and slashed with one of its blade but the sword never reached its target as a skeletal hand adorned with ring stopped it mid-swing.

“I was hoping to take out the silver one with a sneak attack... but I guess this is fine too.”

The dark and deep voice of Satoru’s avatar echoed ominously in the throne room.

“Now then, why don’t you pick a fight with someone your own size, you bunch of gankers.”

{Tsaindorcus’ P.O.V.}

The Dragon Lord looked carefully through his puppet’s eyes, the one that appeared in front of them was no common undead. The sheer amount of negative energy emanating from it was sickening. His instincts as a dragon told him that the treasures he was

wearing were similar in nature and value to some of those he saw in the Floating City but, even more strongly, his instinct was telling him that this was no enemy to face lightly.

“Ah! As expected of my Prime Minister, always late to the meetings!”

The petite vampire said austerely.

“I am neither early nor late, I arrive when I intend to arrive, your majesty.”

The tone of the undead was calm, almost too calm, but the Dragon Lord could swear he detected some kind of amusement in the way the undead spoke its words.

“I would normally welcome visitors but... seeing how you are here to destroy everything we have worked for these last years... I think I shall destroy you instead.”

Those words brought back the heroes to their current situation.

They didn't even have the time to reposition themselves that the undead already began his assault.

Without a single word three lightning spells shaped as dragons impacted both the black knight and the beastman, taking out them both.

Main rose her enchanted bow and shot three magical arrows containing the power of fire, ice and lightning, they impacted with the undead seemingly having no effect.

“[Summon Undead 4th]!”

The human necromancer summoned her most powerful undead, with their major defenses taken down that was the best they could

hope for. Their opponent seemed to be taken aback for a moment as it stepped back.

“Are you an idiot? Using such low tier undead against me...”

The monster said as he rose one of his fingers.

No spell seemed to come, confusing the Dragon Lord until the same undead that should have been their new vanguard turned around and tried to slash Rigit. Fortunately for her the player saved her from a most embarrassing defeat.

“Now... [Prison of Bones]”

From the ground a whole cage made out of living skeletons armed with weapons of all kinds rose, encasing the female elf within.

“Nobody moves or she dies a most gruesome death.”

The other heroes who previously backed up, and where now returning to battle seeing the strained situation, stopped.

The Dragon Lord, from his part, was ready to sacrifice the elf if that meant taking down the undead before him, but that would have soured greatly the relationship between him and the only player willing to help as of now. And his help was far too valuable to risk it at the moment.

Now that the situation was in a stalemate and that they were depleted of most of their strength, due to the numerous battles that day, the only thing remaining to be exploited was diplomacy.

“You... I am sure of it now... you are a player!”

The declaration came from their supposed leader. The skull of the undead snapped in his direction, focusing his intense red flames on him.

“Umu... I have no idea what you are talking about...”

The apparent player answered but even the Dragon Lord could hear the edge in his tone. ‘So, there are others...’ at the thought of facing another one of those accursed beings he could feel the blood in his original body begin to boil.

“Don’t fuck with me! I may have been a newbie! But the legend of Ainz Ooal Gown is not something you can disregard in Yggdrasil! That World Class Item in your chest is just the confirmation! I may not remember your name, but I cannot forget the guildmaster of the guild who repelled 1500 players and NPCs!”

At those words the Dragon Lord recoiled. Repelling 1500 players and NPCs? That was not possible... it only took 8 to bring his entire race on the brink of extinction and almost conquer the world... to face 1500 at once was utter madness, something beyond anyone’s feasible imagination.

And yet the elf spoke the words with absolute certainty, as if retelling an all too familiar story. And if even the 1% of this absurd story was true, they have just found themselves before a being of unimaginable power.

“Tsk... then you are from Yggdrasil too...”

The undead being answered, dropping any pretense of ignorance.

“Why? Just why did you do all of this to these people?!”

The elf cried out against his fellow player who scoffed.

“You are an idiot, do you think I just go around killing people? When I have arrived here, this place was already like this, according to Keeno this happened randomly one day... I have tried to seek for the cause of the problems for years before now, Keeno

for even more than me as she was the only survivor of whatever hit these lands.”

The undead explained. Tsaindorcus continued to remain silent, he may have an idea on what happened here considering the Wild magic still lingering in the air after all those years but he had no intention of pointing this unknown powerful being in the direction of any of his kind. If the 8 Kings could do this much damage, who knew what this, apparently far more powerful, player could do if his anger was directed toward someone?

“But all the undead-“

The elf was interrupted by the voice of the vampire queen.

“You come in this city uninvited and unannounced! Then you start killing my people for their appearance alone! You march in here and try to kill me! You have no ground to complain on anything! Even less question Satoru on his actions!”

The vampire cried out in rage.

“You have no idea what it feels like to see all you knew and loved turned into these... these... mindless beings! I and Satoru worked day and night for more than a decade to try and restore them to their former self! Or at least, give them back their mind and a body they could use! And now you march here spouting and accusing with my people’s blood still on your blade!”

The short vampire clearly lost it as she continued to spew insult after insult.

“You! Who attacked my people without even thinking that they could have a mind of their own! You who call yourself heroes! You are nothing but a petty band of racist murderers!”

The short thing clearly lost herself to her bloodlust as her crimson eyes glowed evermore. Then all the resentment, all the hatred, all the frustration, all the despair and pain disappeared from the eyes as the skeletal player called Satoru put an hand on her shoulder.

“That is enough Keeno, do not waste your time with the like of them, it is not worth it.”

His words were cold and devoid of emotion, but they seemed to calm down and reassure the vampire nonetheless.

The crimson flames in the undead skull turned back to them.

“Take your unconscious companions, leave and never return... for next time you set a foot in this city there will be nothing holding me back from slaughtering you.”

The undead warned. The Dragon Lord wasn't happy with this arrangement, not at all, but if the player before him had no intention of attacking anyone who didn't attack him first, he could not complain about it. They had far too urgent matters to take care of than risk their life against someone who, to his own admission, didn't wish for violence if it wasn't needed.

The elf player seemed to be taken aback too much to say anything, so the Dragon Lord decided to speak for him.

“We are leaving.”

{XX years later}

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The young scholar walked through the dusty landscape. In all his years and travels he never saw a dead land such as this. Death permeated the air and clawed at his throat.

But the scholar advanced regardless, his humanity was far less important than what he could find here.

He was the strongest human magic caster the newly formed empire ever saw, and yet, he still strived for greater heights and that was what brought his downfall.

The village he grew up into was wary of his dangerous experiments with magic at a young age, and after a particularly nasty incident sent him away, he could understand that as few understood the importance of necessary sacrifices.

The newly established magical academy in the empire seemed like a great place to start and meet his peers. It turned out to be a shithole where people just followed what it was told to them, no inventive, no ambition, no autonomy. He became infamous even there, where progress and magic should have ruled above all.

Expelled he sought the help of solitary magic casters, he changed teacher after teacher, all worthless as they could not comprehend his innovative ideas or the fact that he was surpassing them one by one until he stood on the top of the pyramid.

And so, he left once more, unwilling to accept that this was his limit. The 4th tier could not possibly be the limit of humanity. The legendary Rigrít Bers Caurau of the Twelve Heroes was said to be capable of the 5th tier. He would have tried to search for her if she wasn't such an elusive fellow, or if there wasn't such a better option around.

The one known as the Godslayer, the Dragonbane, the Magic Caster who scarred the world. Many titles were given to the being rumored to have killed the strongest of the Evil Deities, the God Dragon.

Oh, he would have gladly offered his left eye to only gaze at what such a battle would look like.

He, of course, saw the scar left on the very earth by that magic caster with his own eyes.

It was unreal to look at, part of a forest and the entire side of a mountain turned to mere dust. The place had many names, Where Death Kissed the World, The God's Graveyard, The Scar Upon the World...

He truly wished he could have seen the spell that caused it, for it surely was the highest form of magic ever seen. Not even the 8 Greed Kings were ever said to leave such a mark on the land.

He had no idea how such a being had not be swarmed by apprentices from every part of the world. If all that stopped them was the fact that such great magic caster was undead, they were merely a bunch of utter fools.

As he finally reached the gate of the city there was no one to greet him, not that he expected someone. He flew over the gate with his magic and descended in the streets. It didn't take long for him to meet something there, it was a humanoid figure, made of or encased in what seemed to be some kind of magical crystal, a truly fascinating thing in his mind. He could only guess at what the purpose of such a thing could be.

The crystal seemed to be shaped in the form of a human, as some facial features were recognizable, even if the whole thing seemed to be quite disproportioned in some areas.

“Ah, good evening, sir, could you kindly point me in the right direction? You see, I came to this city to meet the famous Godslayer.”

The scholar presented himself as the being slightly inclined its head before raising an arm and pointing at the castle on the other side of the city.

“Thank you, sir.”

The scholar thanked but before he could leave, the being pointed at its chest, the magic caster looked closely and noticed how there was some kind of bulge there, his gaze immediately illuminated with understanding.

“Ah my bad, forgive my rudeness miss.”

The crystal humanoid only nodded in acknowledgment.

...

The trip to the castle was silent and pacific. He met many more of those crystalized beings going around and completing various tasks. They all turned to gaze at him as he passed, it was understandable as humans probably weren't a usual sight around here.

The castle was as grand as it appeared from afar, with every wall glittering thanks to the crystals encasing it in a sort of protective shell.

He met guards at the palace's gates which escorted him to the throne room as he requested to meet the grand magic caster who created them.

As the great double door opened, he was greeted by a mostly empty room if not for three figures standing on its opposite side.

One was grand and ominous, a skeletal undead enveloped in a magnificent dark gown, the crimson flames burning in his eyes shined in the mostly dark room as they fixed on him. But even with his glorious appearance he wasn't the one currently sitting on the throne. No, the throne was occupied by a child of all things, her blond hair cascading around her like a waterfall as her black gown made her look like a child version of some evil queens in children's tales. The third was a pale girl with long and dark hair, her eyes reptile in nature and as crimson as wine, the elegant purple gown flowing down her developing figure as if it was made to fit her, black scales could be seen spread all over her body.

But their appearance was far from what he came here for. Activating his Talent his eyes widened at the sight of the girl's magical power. '5th no... 6th tier!?' That aura... so majestic!' the girl's magical aura danced around her like a calmly flowing river. He immediately turned toward the other undead being only to see... absolutely nothing, not a drop of magical power. 'H-How can this b-be?' he thought in astonishment and bafflement. He turned to the other girl only to see nothing out of the norm.

"Are you going to remain there and gasp like a fish? Or are you actually coming forward?"

Those words uttered by the girl made him return to reality. He immediately marched forward and, putting his lessons in etiquette to good use, knelt at a respectable distance.

"Umph! That's better... now, you are in the presence of Keeno Fasris Invern, Queen of Inveria, the one called Landfall, the Evileye

of the east and the Prime Grade Magic Caster! Speak visitor, why did you come to my kingdom?"

The girl, no, the queen questioned him in a tone no child could possibly possess, this one was surely an ancient being just stuck in the body of a girl.

"Fufufu... you know... all those titles don't make you any higher than you are..."

The black-haired girl said mockingly. 'Is she insane? That girl could squish her like a bug, and she still taunts her?!' the magic caster thought in astonishment.

"Shut your mouth! You promiscuous lizard!"

The queen retorted as the two girls started a glaring contest.

"Girls, remember your manners... we have a guest..."

The calm, dark and dead serious tone of the skeletal undead immediately prompted both girls to obedience, confirming in the scholar's mind that this was indeed the one he was seeking. For whom else could so causally order around a caster of the 6th tier?

"M-My name is Fluder Paradyne Your Majesty... I have come to your land in search of the one who is called the Godslayer due to them killing the God Dragon."

The magic caster explained, still kneeling. The queen's face morphed for a moment, and he was barely able to see her fangs as she snarled for an instant before composing herself. He had no idea what he said wrong, but it might be better to wait and see instead of speaking, for his own good.

"The one who slew that monster, was me."

As expected the one to speak was the skeletal figure who finally confirmed Fluder's hypothesis.

"I beg of thee, oh Great One, please... accept this meager magic caster as your disciple! I will do anything for the chance of being taught by the greatest magic caster in the world!"

Fluder begged bringing his head against the ground.

"Umu... anything you say... that is a bold statement..."

He did not dare raise his head as he expected the undead verdict.

"Yes... if you are skilled enough... I may have a way to put you to good use... but first I would like to assess your usefulness so I will take you as an apprentice for let's say... a year, and then I will decide if I wish to continue your tutoring, how does that sound to you?"

The undead couldn't even finish his question that Fluder's head snapped up at an almost neck breaking speed.

"O-of course My Lord! I would be more than honored for this chance!"

He felt completely giddy inside at the sole thought of learning from such a being. If he stood now, he couldn't assure himself that his trembling legs would be able to sustain him.

"My name is Satoru by the way, try to remember it."

Those cold words cut through him like a hot knife through butter. How could he forget? Such poor manners on his part to not even ask for a name to refer to before asking for apprenticeship! He felt like ripping out his hair in absolute fury at himself.

"O-of course M-Master Satoru! I a-apologize for my rudeness!"

He bowed once more.

“Umu, is there anything else you wish to ask?”

He gulped at those words. Would he dare? Could he dare? Pushing down any doubt he had he decided to speak.

“Master! My Talent allows me to see the magical power of everyone I look at... I-I looked at you earlier and so absolutely nothing... could you please explain me the reason?”

At his words those red dots immediately fixed on him making his heart skip a beat.

“I have many ways of hiding my power... but still, that Talent of yours interest me greatly... would you know if anyone else has a similar one to yours?”

Fluder immediately shook his head.

“No Master, as far as I know I am the only one with such Talent in the world.”

At his words his new Master hummed seemingly satisfied.

“M-may I? M-may I see your p-power Master?”

He asked shaking in anticipation, the undead seemed to think about it for a few seconds.

“As you put me in a good mood, I will allow it... still this is something that must remain between us.”

The younger caster nodded vigorously as he could no longer contain his anticipation. The skeleton rose one of his hands adorned with rings and took off one of them.

The world around Fluder exploded. That power so usually contained inside the body, except for those gifted enough, now enveloped him. This was no flowing river... this was a raging flame unbound and everchanging, his jaw hanged as low as humanly possible, and his eyes were wide trying to bask as much as possible in that glory.

'8th no, 9th! Is still growing... by the gods!' his mind could not simply keep up with the influx of energy around him and then as the thing finally revealed its peak he knew he finally found it... the abyss of magic finally laid there, bare before him and he could finally gaze in it's depth only to find no end to its infinity.

That day Fluder Paradyne found no god, he found a Supreme Being.

{XX years later}

{Satoru's P.O.V.}

The skeletal magic caster gazed at the horizon where the sun was currently setting. He had no idea why he liked sunsets so much, he just began to watch them everyday from one day and never stopped, he didn't even remember the day it started.

Lately he had began to doubt his humanity or to be more clear, the period he passed as a human. Over more than one hundred years since he arrived here his memories had begun to fade.

This whole thing started one day, when he wanted to tell Keeno about his mother and then he just... he just realized it... he could not remember, not her face, not her voice, not even her name. he knew she existed, and she had been kind to him but everything else faded with time.

It broke him inside. The knowledge that his memory was failing him, who was to say he remembered things correctly? Or even if they had been true events and not just a fantasy of his mind?

The only thing he clung to with all his might were the memories of Yggdrasil. Sharing them over the years with Keeno and Little Drau helped him a lot in not unconsciously losing those precious memories of his friends.

He even began to write books about what he remembered. He would come back in a few years and see just how much he was losing.

“I imagined I would find you here.”

The voice of the almost 200 years old vampire reached his nonexistent ears, taking him away from his gloomy thoughts. She held herself with the grace of a true queen.

“Keeno... what brings you here?”

The girl just said nothing as she jumped on the edge of the balcony gazing at the city below.

“You look up at the sky lost in your thoughts, while I prefer to gaze below and admire what we have managed to accomplish together.”

She said melancholically. She had been like that for the last few weeks, ever since Draudillon left the city. She had been notified that her mother passed away and it was now her turn to pick up the crown.

For all those two always bickered and fought they were far too fond of each other. And, while not of the same age, they still felt

like peers, as they both had been royal princesses and heir to their respective countries.

Not counting the huge help Draudillon had been in their plan of restoring the people of this country.

After he discovered that the Dragon Lord Cure Elim was responsible for the catastrophe that befell the Inveria Kingdom, he tried to track down the beast and slaughter it once and for all. There was still the lingering hope that killing him would undo his damage or, at least, give Keeno some peace of mind.

Cure Elim, also commonly known as the God Dragon, had been an incredible foe. If it wasn't for him using the Twelve Heroes as cannon fodder, he was sure he would have had to use most of his trump cards and even the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown to bring him down.

Fortunately, once the heroes were mostly defeated it all came down to him using a few high tier spells and his [The Goal of All Life Is Death] to make sure he was completely destroyed.

Unfortunately, the player in the heroes' party perished as he got blasted with the Dragon Lord's [Soulbreaker Breath] as he defended his lover. That, at least, made him get some respect in Satoru's mind. He may not have been the smartest player, but he certainly had some of Touch-Me spirit inside him.

Unfortunately, the spell didn't break and so all was left as before the defeat of the Dragon Lord.

That was when they actually contacted the newly formed Draconic Kingdom, they offered their protection to the newly born kingdom

in exchange of their help in understanding the secrets of Wild Magic.

The reason they went to it was due to them being their strongest neighboring country, as they had one of the descendants of the Brightness Dragon Lord as their ruler, and because they were the only country who wasn't bent on the Six Gods religion that condemned any race apart from humanity as inferior.

That alliance resulted in Draudillon coming to the capital and helping them in their study of Wild Magic to find a way to reverse the Dragon Lord's spell.

But even after 80 years of research they could find nothing to reverse the spell. They surely managed to find a way to manipulate souls better though, and that resulted in a perfect transplantation from their current weak and mindless body to a new one created by Satoru.

The result of their soul manipulation could still not speak but it was fully capable of moving and doing anything it liked with their new body as they seemed to retain their full human mental faculties.

After all those tribulations and long years of cooperation it was only normal that a deep bond would form between the two of them and separation would certainly not help.

“You must be proud of yourself, you have done something that none other in this world was ever able to accomplish... I am sure your parents are proud of you.”

He said as he ruffled the vampire queen's hair making her sigh.

“I know... tell me Satoru... do you want to leave?”

Those words made him stop and turn his full attention to her.

“What brought this up?”

He asked as the queen turned toward him to gaze into his crimson dots with her own crimson eyes.

“I know you, you love exploring, you love the thrill of experimenting and discovering... more than one hundred years ago you promised me you would help me restore my kingdom, for all we could, we managed to do it to the maximum extent possible... so now, you are free to leave, I will not hold it against you... I have no intention of caging you here.”

The sadness in her gaze struck Satoru harder than any attack he ever received. ‘Was this the thought that tormented her since her friend left?’ he wondered.

He had gazed into those eyes many times in the years before, he had seen them grow from the ones of a desperate child to the ones of a determined and wise queen.

But he could not deny her words, for all she said was true, he loved exploring, experimenting, and discovering. And he certainly had no more obligations to remain here.

But he also knew, that above all those things, he loved the people dear to him even more. He already knew the pain of loss, he had more than one hundred years to come to peace with himself on the fact he would never see his friends ever again. He was not willing to feel that pain again, no matter what.

He stepped forward, reaching his dear little vampire and hugged her as gently as he could. Even if he was sure that as a level 75 vampire the girl wouldn’t receive much damage even if he used most of his physical strength.

“Keeno... as long as this city and its people remain standing, this will be my home, I will not leave it nor abandon it... this I swear on the name of Ainz Ooal Gown.”

He pronounced his oath as he felt the blond vampire hug him back with all her strength as her body began to tremble. He was sure that she couldn't cry as a vampire physically couldn't, but nothing stopped her from sobbing.

“You should be careful about swearing things like that... now I will have no choice but to make sure this city last forever... an Eternal City you will never leave.”

{XX years later}

{Keeno's P.O.V.}

Keeno stared at the mirror before her as nothing stared back. It was one of the most annoying things of being a vampire, mirrors were useless, well, at least she could observe the figure currently brushing her hair in all her magnificence.

One of the highest forms of undead, a Death Emperor, created by Satoru and then coated in crystals by her. The gentle and delicate face of her mother stared back at her as she continued her gentle ministrations.

She had refined her technique for more than two centuries only for this, to recreate what was once lost in the most perfect way possible. And, she had to admit, she had been satisfied with the result.

Her parents had been brought back a couple decades ago, after she had been sure that everything would go 100% smoothly. Satoru even used his Staff to create their new bodies, the most

powerful undead to ensure they would not fade with time or be easily killed.

They even tried to use living summon at one point, for all it seemed cruel, but they already had a soul inside them and so it was impossible to replace it without killing the body, and so it would be a useless cruelty to begin with.

“Mom, I think that’s alright, my hair is as good as always.”

Apparently, her mother disagreed as she used her superior strength to force her down on the chair shaking her head as if dealing with a child. Keeno would never admit it out loud, but she probably pouted like one in that moment.

Having her parents around again was such a relief, she had almost given up on it. If it wasn’t for Satoru, she was sure she would have indeed given up on it a long time ago. Cleansed her kingdom with fire and left her heart buried in the ashes.

Fortunately, such a thing didn’t come to be even if most of the kingdom of Inveria had been indeed cleansed in fire and blood by the newly formed neighboring countries.

Both Re-Estize and Baharuth thought that those lands were inhabited by mindless undead and so free for the taking. She did not retaliate. After all she knew that for all she wished, she could not hold those lands, and giving the millions of souls a body back would have taken tens of thousands of years. After all, in more than 200 years she only managed to give around 100.000 people back a body. And that was by pushing Satoru to his limits, something she wasn’t unwilling to do any longer. So she may as well leave the other countries purify the lands and take them for those who wished to live there.

It had been a painful decision, but she was the queen and so it fell on her to make it. Oh, how she wished that her father retook his throne... but when she suggested it, he simply shook his head, picked her up and settled her on the throne. An unspoken but clear message of his will.

And so, she continued to rule. The invaders continued to conquer her lands until they reached the area around the capital. There she and Satoru met them to tell them that they may keep those lands but the area around the capital would remain to Inveria.

But the greed of men knew no limit and as they charge the capital the had been cleansed in the same fire they used to burn her citizens.

After a devastating defeat of both Re-Estize and Baharuth, both left the area around the capital alone, the last remaining bastion of Inveria.

The funny thing was that she could easily conquer them both, even without Satoru. For all she used her magic to create a more beautiful shell for her citizens' body, the crystals she used strengthened even further the power of the already legendary undead beneath. She could command 100.000 of those improved undead to march on the continent and the only ones capable of opposing her would be the Theocracy and Dragon Lords.

But she abhorred war and death for she preferred peace and tranquility.

Lost in her thoughts she didn't notice her mother stopping her brushing until she shook the small vampire out of her own train of thought.

“Oh, are we done?”

She asked rhetorically jumping down from her chair and checking that her royal gown was completely in order. She normally would never care for such trivialities but today was one of those days where every detail mattered.

“Then I will see you later mom!”

She said as her mother went down embracing her fiercely. This was her way of showing her affection and how she was proud of her, even if she couldn't vocalize it. Keeno answered to her hug with one of her own.

When she left the room, she immediately went for the balcony overlooking the central plaza of the city. On her way there she met Fluder, he had been probably waiting for her there.

The old human was long past his prime and now sported a long and immaculate white beard. For all she considered him still a brat she could not deny his usefulness. Being a human, he had been given the position of minister of foreign affairs so that the few times they had to deal with the other human countries they could send someone who would not put them on edge.

“Your Majesty, just in time, I had wished to speak to you of our last meeting with the emperor of Baharuth but I guess that would be for a later time... the lad may be smart but he couldn't hold a candle against you, he is just too engrossed in his own mind to see the foolishness of his actions.”

The old man said, Keeno scoffed, the empire had been trying to pressure them in attacking Re-Estize for the longest time now and she really was tired of it.

“But that is beyond the point... I actually came here to deliver you a letter that just arrived from Queen Draudillon.”

He said as he produced said parchment from his robes.

She took it and opened it.

Dear friend,

I take advantage of this joyous occasion to write you this missive.

I am terribly sorry for not being able to come and celebrate it with you and Satoru, but my country is still recuperating from the Beastmen invasion and time is not on my side lately.

I thank you again for your great support during the repelling, if it wasn't for you, I have no idea if the damage could have been limited to the current one or if we could have repelled them at all.

Once again, I send you my wishes and hope your land will last eternally as it stood for the last 200 years of your rule.

With love, your friend, and Queen of the Draconic Kingdom,

Draudillon Oriculus

PS: I'm curious to know if you are still making all the women in your kingdom as flat as a board to compensate for yourself, or have you finally accepted your own flaws?

The vampire queen scoffed at the last paragraph, that voluptuous half dragon could no help but always point out her lack of assets due to her growth being stopped.

She sighed, her friend will never change, though she would still miss her from time to time. For all that they had been rivals in every little thing she truly grew to care for her fellow princess now turned queen.

She would have preferred if the dragon stayed away from Satoru though. To this day she had no idea why her friend started to flirt with her crush. Was it his valuable items, his power or even his charm that attracted her to him? She had no idea, sometimes she even thought she just did it to get on her nerves.

Setting her thoughts aside for the moment she put the latter away in one of her gown's internal pockets.

“Well done, Fluder, I will listen to your full report another time.”

The old man bowed in respect.

They continued to walk silently down the hallway.

“Tell me, how is your research going?”

She tried to make some kind of conversation as the silence was starting to suffocate her already anxious mind.

“Quite well, I hope I am not still too far from the next step in my descent in the abyss of magic.”

He was clearly referring to his desire to finally reach the 8th tier, the same level of magic Keeno was currently at. For all he already was the greatest human magic caster this world knew of he wasn't still satisfied with it. A sentiment Keeno could share as there really was no end to one's improvement as Satoru often said.

Speaking of the devil, here he was, waiting just on the edge of the glass door leading to the balcony.

His usual dark robes still fitting for an occasion like this.

“Congratulations for your 200's coronation anniversary, with the hope of many more yet to come”

She returned his words with a smile as she passed him and reached the edge of the balcony.

Under her, tens of thousands of people awaited her silently, the light of day reflecting on the crystal bodies she created for them.

Fear immediately gripped her heart. For all that she was ancient, she had never been a people person, the few speeches she had to give caused her endless stress and she never had such a crowd before.

She felt a giant hand grasp her shoulder, she looked up only to gaze at Satoru's red dots.

“It will be fine, I'm here for you.”

His words calmed her dead heart. Yes, everything will be fine if Satoru was with her.

She gazed once more at the city, the result of her efforts, the coronation of her dreams and the physical manifestation of her bond with Satoru.

‘Yes, everything is going to be fine’ she thought as her mind focused, and she gazed to her right where her parents stood looking at her and holding each other.

She finally looked at her citizens again.

She was going to protect them, she was going to protect the city, she was going to protect her dream.

She smiled and opened her mouth to begin her speech.

Everything would be okay, for this was her city, her Eternal City.

A.N.

Ah, that took some time. But I had fun writing it, hope you all like this Christmas special, even if it has nothing to do with Christmas at all. But then again, I am crap at writing those type of stories.

Please leave a comment/review to share your thoughts!

Have a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Till next time and stay safe!