

Boom

A rapturous sound echoed across the landscape as a young man ran past.

The trees, towering as they were, blocked most of the rays of the sun overhead, leaving just enough for one to not trip over as they moved.

Taking advantage of the terrain, the black-haired man ran with an animal skin bag slung over his shoulder, his lanky physique allowing him the opportunity to cover more ground while conserving energy.

Behind him, the sound of what could only be described as earthquakes sounded, leaving the man even more terrified as he hastened his steps.

Glancing back intermittently, he couldn't help but grow wary as nothing came into view despite the terrifying sounds following him.

Soon, he arrived at a ditch where green liquid flowed like a stream.

Taking a moment to decide, he ended up leaping over, making sure not to touch the green liquid before taking cover in a hollow he found under the ditch.

His breathing was uneven, and he took deep breaths to calm his nerves while keeping his gaze trained outside, watching for any eventualities.

Time seemed to slow down at that moment as he hid in the hollow, perspiration trailing down his forehead.

Then just as he thought to move again, the earth suddenly shook, leaving him staggering before he finally recovered long enough to glance toward its origin.

There, in the distance, a monstrous creature with humanoid features walked, seemingly in search of something.

But if that were all, air wouldn't have escaped the young man's lungs.

Instead, just as one appeared, more began to show up until no less than 20 monstrosities had passed by.

"Shit." The man muttered under his breath as he retreated further into the hollow, worried that they might catch a glimpse of him if he stared for too long.

But just as he placed his hand against the wall behind him, it suddenly caved in and he found himself falling into a cave.

"Ugh." He groaned as he got to his feet, his body aching from the unfortunate fall.

But he didn't have the time to inspect his body as he found himself in what could only be described as an underground world.

Stalactites and stalagmites emerged from top and bottom, reflecting a blue light that illuminated the cave.

The ground was filled with a wide array of beautiful flowers, most of which were glowing, and even the walls were mostly covered by vines.

For a moment, the young man had his breath taken away, in complete awe of the beautiful sight.

But hardly had he begun to feel this way when a rustling sound caught his attention.

Frowning deeply, he quickly put up his guard as he surveyed his surroundings.

He pondered asking if there was someone out there but his experiences with watching horror flicks told him that it was a bad idea so he sensibly kept silent.

Unfortunately, he didn't have a weapon to make use of which made him feel quite naked at that moment.

Glancing back at the hole he'd fallen from, he guessed that it would take him a bit of time to climb back up considering he didn't have a knife with him.

'Damn it, what to do?' he cursed under his breath as he took a step backward.

Then, he heard it again and this time, it didn't seem to be made by anything that could be termed human.

Just then, the young man heard a familiar voice in his head.

[Synchronization complete]

[Current location: @#&_#?\$... Error]

[Titles: Mage, Psyker]

[Would the host like to make use of a title?]

"Yes!" The young man cried out like he'd heard what could be his only way to survive and in truth, it was.

[Please pick a title to be utilized]

"There's nothing here to build with so... I choose mage."

At the same time as he made the decision, the perpetrator... or more like, perpetrators of the unnerving sounds from earlier revealed themselves.

Large centipedes, with sizes comparable to anacondas, revealed themselves from within the flower bed and even from the roof above.

Then the blue light that covered the rock formations within the cavern reflected off the back of terrifying flying insects that had the body of a large wasp and the face of an ant.

The young man nearly barely managed to keep his composure at the horrid scene before him.

Holding back the nausea he felt, he quickly backed away while waiting for a piece of good news.

Thankfully, he didn't have to wait long.

[Title: Mage has been bestowed on the host.]

[Time until swap can be carried out: 8:00:00]

Not bothering to respond to the mental messages he received, the young man quickly grabbed a dried up stick from the bag he carried and chanted in a loud voice.

{Raging Inferno!}

As he spoke, a yellow spark appeared at the tail end of the stick pointed at the monstrous insects, and the next moment, a terrifying blaze erupted, burning everything about him.

The young man didn't relent even as the sweltering heat made him sweat more, instead pushing all he had into the attack.

The inferno raged for a full minute before it began to die down, leaving behind nothing but ashes in its wake.

The young man watched the stick he carried crumble to dust while burn marks appeared on his fingers.

As his chest heaved, he glanced around, scrutinizing the area to be sure there were no more threats.

Thankfully, the abominable insects seemed to have come as a group, making it easier to take them all at once.

"Fire magic is still the best, I guess." The man muttered with a satisfied look on his face.

Gulping hard, he contemplated going further into the cave or stepping outside again, however, the prospect of running yet another marathon dissuaded him from going along with the latter option.

At least in the cave, he wouldn't have to worry about towering figures.

Compared to giants with hands for eyes and hanging out tongues, the abominable insects seemed like small fry.

Taking a deep breath, he began his descent into the cave, only coming to a stop after he was drained of energy.

After he'd found a place to rest, he conjured a small fire and then set himself against a sturdy wall... he couldn't afford to fall into another secret cavern.

Letting out a deep sigh, the young man finally got some form of respite from what could only be described as a hectic day... if the day was over, that is.

It's somewhat difficult to tell the time when underground.

"Hah, Aya, are you there?" The man inquired.

[Yes, Mr. Dorin, I'm right here]

"What happened?... I thought I died."

[I thought so as well but it seems instead of permanent rest, you transmigrated again]

"Transmigration, huh." The man... no, Dorin muttered softly.

How long had it been since he transmigrated after dying on Earth?

He couldn't remember anymore.

It had been a complicated affair since that fateful day when he got into an accident.

At that time, he was Roland Chase, a prolific hacker and number 1 computer whiz in the world of coding.

There was no firewall he couldn't hack and the ones he wrote, none would dare say they could hack it easily.

That was his identity.

But everything changed after he found a code... or maybe it was better to say that it found him.

It was a strange code, almost alien, even.

Out of interest, he'd tried to break it down but was met with countless failures but despite that, he remained steadfast and at a certain point, it became an obsession.

He always won so how could he accept defeat now?

So he created a codebreaker that would wear down the code until it was weak enough for him to work on.

But the day the code weakened, all he got was incomprehensible screaming and then a bright light before... he died.

But then, instead of going to heaven or hell, wherever those were, he found himself in a different world.

Afterward, he'd found out that the world was one filled with magic and wonder.

Wizards, dragons, goblins, elves... beings he thought to only exist in fiction unfurled before his eyes, and for a while, he had to deal with existential dread.

But then, he managed to pull through and decided to learn more about the magic world.

That was when Aya arrived.

She was a voice in his head, a system that helped him understand his skills.

Using only his brilliance, he managed to become the youngest 7th-circle mage, a rank that was amongst the top in that world.

That was when he found himself embroiled in a war against a foreign species, one that brought terror wherever they went.

Naturally, he fought against them and as every soldier, he died on the battlefield.

But instead of permanent rest, he found himself in yet another world, this one filled with technological wonders.

Cyborgs, spacecrafts, plasma weapons... things that one would think existed in shows like Star Trek and Star Wars.

He was forced to live a different life yet again.

At some point, he'd adopted the name Dorin which meant 'Wanderer' because that's how he felt.

He felt like a man without a home, a man destined to die and come back endlessly.

Existential dread crept in yet again but he resisted with the help of a certain woman.

So he worked hard and became a Psyker, one capable of manipulating the waves of the world with mere thought.

But then, a war, similar to the one in the magic world came along and he found himself fighting in it yet again.

This made him wonder... was his transmigration related to this?

Was there an interdimensional race that wished to conquer the universe and he was the hero destined to save everyone?

That made him feel good and so he fought harder but it all ended up in futility.

He died again.

Only to wake up in this strange world with abominations everywhere he looked.

Massaging his temples, he yawned as fatigue washed over him.

Maybe because he'd been through the circle twice already, the existential dread he felt was lesser so after some time passed, he ended up drifting into slumber.

He woke up a few hours later, refreshed and ready to go, unfortunately, this did not extend to his stomach.

Ggrrrr

He grabbed his belly, his brows furrowed as he pondered on what to do about the hunger ravaging his insides.

After a while, he decided to make a move first.

If he was lucky, he'd stumble on something along the way.

But before leaving, he had to take precautions.

In the magic world, it was common knowledge that ordinary materials wouldn't suffice for a wand.

One had to utilize extraordinary materials like the trunk of an Ent or the claw of a dragon to make a wand.

Unfortunately, Dorin didn't have any of that so he decided to improvise.

Swapping his title, he equipped Psyker and fashioned a wand from the rocks around him then using his knowledge from his time in the magic world, he etched some runes on the body before infusing mental power into the construct.

After that, he left the wand to 'dry out' while he went in search of something to eat.

Thankfully, he was lucky to get some mushrooms which he inspected thoroughly to ensure they weren't poisonous before wolfing them down raw.

Sleeping yet again, he woke up to grab the wand and after equipping [Mage], he began his exploration of the cave.

In his journey, he came across a few insectoid abominations which he quickly dispatched with a spell or two.

Finally, he arrived in a strange-looking cavern.

It seemed to have been touched by artistic hands with structures resembling houses built around it.

Furrowing his brows, Dorin stepped into the cavern with a flame tongue dancing at the tip of his wand.

Casting an illuminating spell, he found that the walls and even the ceiling were etched with colorful drawings that seemed to depict a time past.

Intrigued by this, Dorin couldn't help but wonder if this was a sign that this world had humans in it.

"Aya."

[Yes, Mr. Dorin?]

"Can you translate those pictures?"

[Indeed. A moment please]

A buzzing sound echoed for a moment before Aya's voice returned.

[It tells of a time when humans lived as barbarians on the planet, barely surviving against the powerful monsters that roamed the lands. But then great beings called Celestials appeared from amongst them, seemingly blessed by the World's Core. These Celestials allowed humans to create a nation to fight back against the monsters and after more than a century of warring, the monsters were defeated and the human race flourished.]

"Is that it?"

[Yes]

"Hmm." Dorin frowned as he pondered the story thoroughly.

"If the human race won, then why are there still monsters?... Also, where are the humans?... Strangely, I haven't seen one person and this settlement..."

Dorin trailed off as he looked around and after a bit of consideration, he decided to inspect the area.

Moving from house to house, he found that the earthen structures were indeed houses for humans though from his calculations, the humans seemed quite tall.

Regardless, he soon found his way to the middle of the settlement where a quaint house stood tall.

He made his way inside only to find that instead of a house, it shared semblance to temples he was familiar with back on Earth.

Alabaster pillars supported the structure that seemed completely different from what Dorin had seen from the outside, prompting him to wonder if he'd entered a different world.

Stepping out, he found that it was indeed the building he'd entered but the inside and outside were without similarities.

When he entered again, Dorin inquired. "Aya, can you explain this?"

[The natural laws are distorted in this space. All I can say is that... this might very well be a kingdom of god]

"... A god's kingdom," Dorin muttered as he looked about.

It did fit the title with astonishing sights but what caught his eyes were the artistic paintings that seemed to be a continuation of what he'd seen outside.

It depicted the monsters returning and humanity waging yet another war and at the climax, just as the war was about to conclude, the Celestials were betrayed by the general of their army which led to humanity being wiped out by the monsters.

Dorin found himself gulping instinctively as he arrived at the center of the temple, an obsidian altar planted ahead.

He slowly made his way over, a deep sense of foreboding creeping up his spine.

Once he'd arrived at the altar, he reached out and touched it... it felt cold.

Then he saw it.

The Celestials weren't betrayed... no, they were the betrayers, offering humanity up to amorphous monstrosities they referred to as Outer Gods, in return for power, and even now... they went across worlds, sowing discord and causing wars to gain more sacrifices.

The magic world and cyber world Dorin had already been to were their current target.

At the end of the vision, a beautiful woman donning obsidian armor stood on a battlefield drenched in the blood of man and beast.

As she fell to her knees, she muttered softly. "Someone... save us."

At that moment, Dorin knew what was to be done but as he pulled away, one question remained.

Could he be the savior the universe was searching for?

Perhaps, he was soon to find out.