Mastering Database Refreshes in SQL Server: A Practical Guide

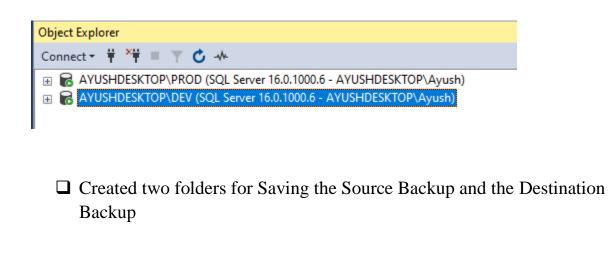
Performing a database refresh from production to development environments is a critical task for maintaining accurate, up-to-date testing environments in SQL Server management. Here, I share my step-by-step approach, including the challenges I faced and the solutions I applied, to ensure a smooth refresh process.

Step 1 & 2: Established PROD and DEV instances and created folders for backup storage.

☐ Created two Instances PROD and DEV

Destination

Source



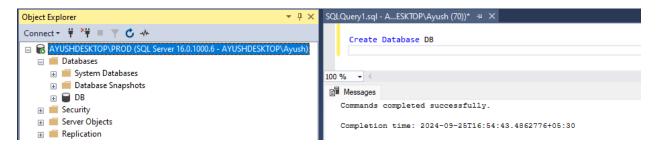
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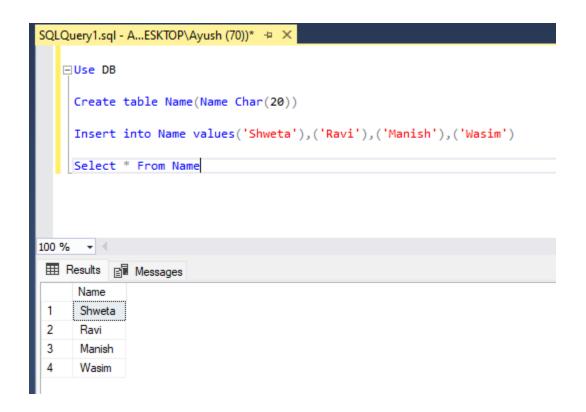
File folder

File folder

Step 3: Configured a new database on the PROD instance.



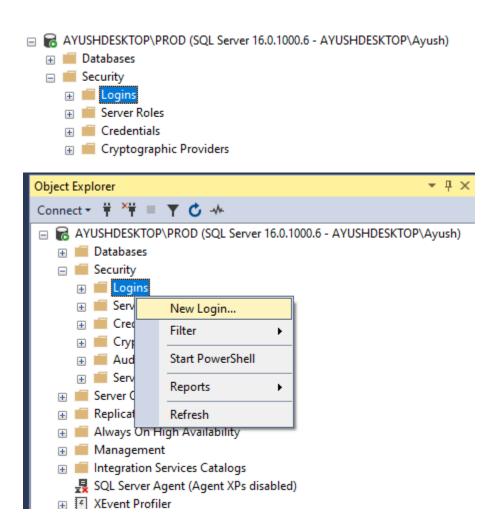
Step 4: Populated the database with tables and preliminary data.



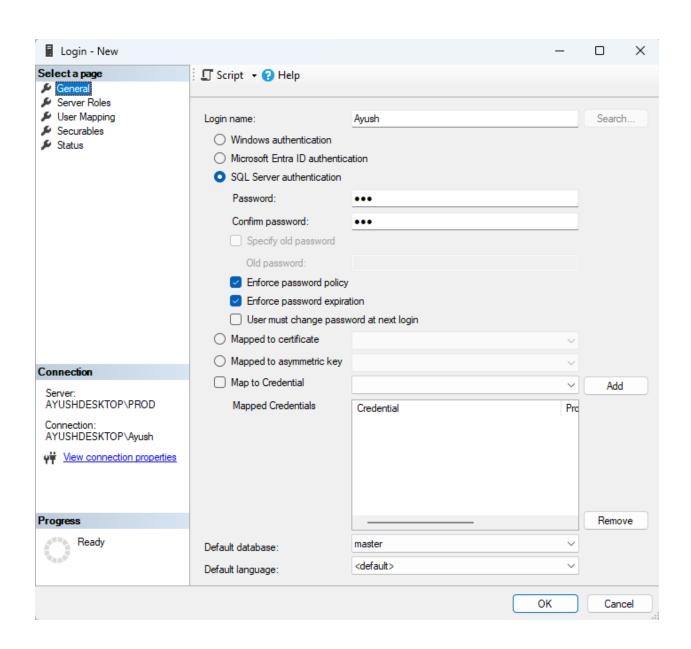
Steps 5 & 6: Set up instance-level logins and database-level users, assigning specific permissions to control database access effectively.

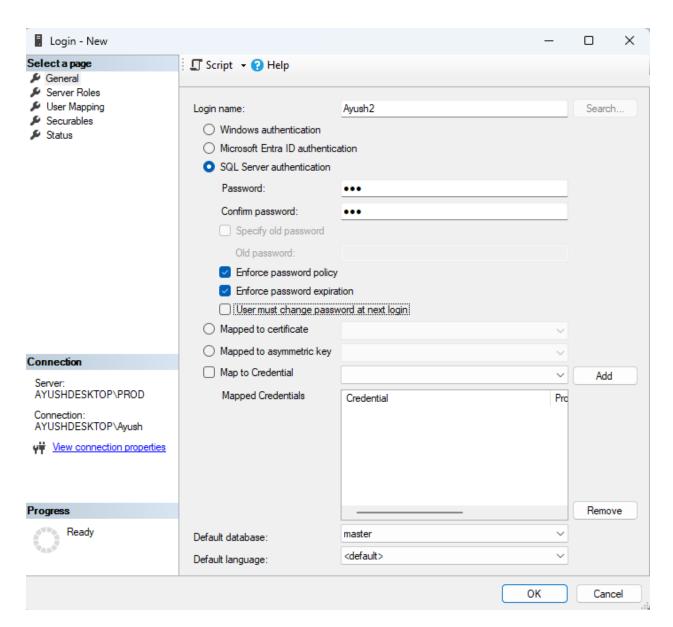
Select the PROD Instance – Expand Security – Right Click on Logins

- Select New Login



Give, Login name and the necessary permissions.





❖ Important Note

In SQL Server, when you create a new login, it is automatically assigned to the public server role. The public role is a special default role to which all logins belong. It serves as the baseline security level for every user in the database system. Here's what it entails:

Permissions

• **Default Permissions**: The public role comes with a minimal set of permissions that allows users to connect to the server and its databases, but

- with very restricted access. For example, members of the public can see the existence of objects within the database but may not have the right to read from or write to them unless explicitly granted.
- Cannot Be Changed: You cannot alter membership in the public role, nor can you change the permissions assigned to the public directly. Instead, you manage access by granting or denying specific permissions to the public role on individual objects within the database.

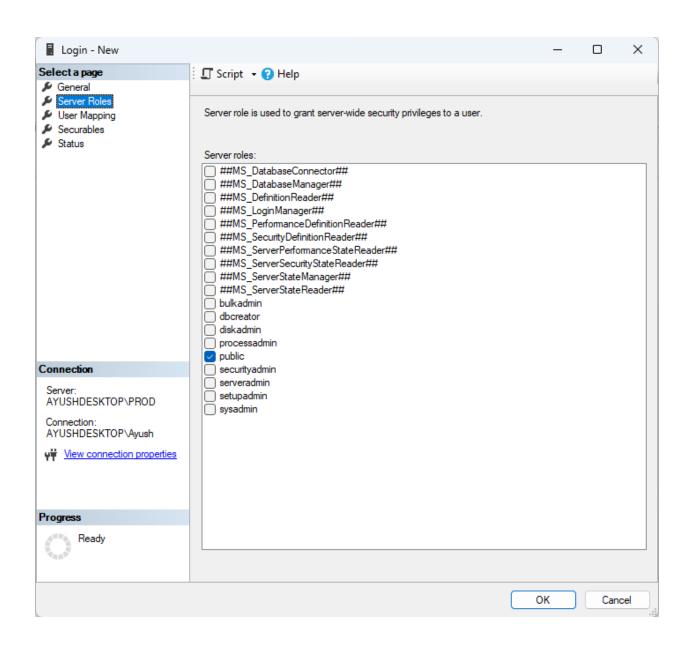
Security Implications

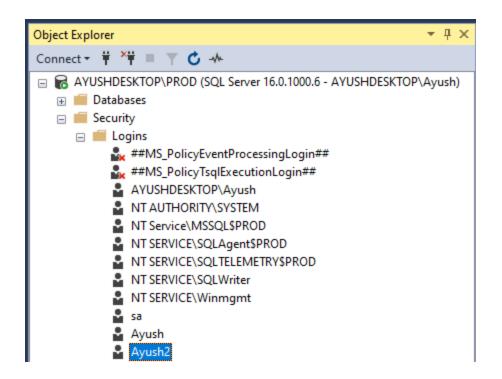
- **Initial Access**: Any new login will have the default access provided by the public role, ensuring that no login has more permissions than necessary unless specifically granted by a database administrator.
- Role of public in Security: This role acts as a security measure, ensuring that new users do not inadvertently receive broad access. It is up to the database administrators to elevate permissions based on the user's role and necessity.

Best Practices

- Use Specific Roles and Permissions: It's best practice to use roles and explicitly defined permissions to manage what each user can and cannot do. Depending on the needs, administrators should create more specific roles and assign users to these roles, rather than relying on the public role for permission management.
- Audit and Manage Permissions: Regularly auditing who has what permissions through roles like public is important for maintaining security integrity. Ensuring that unnecessary permissions are not granted to the public can help minimize potential security risks.

The concept of public access in SQL Server is foundational for maintaining a secure and well-ordered database environment, especially in systems where multiple users interact with various databases and servers.





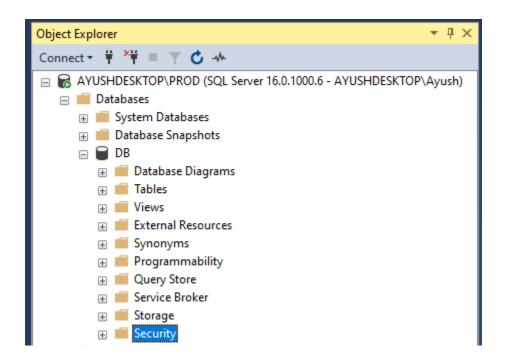
***** Important Note

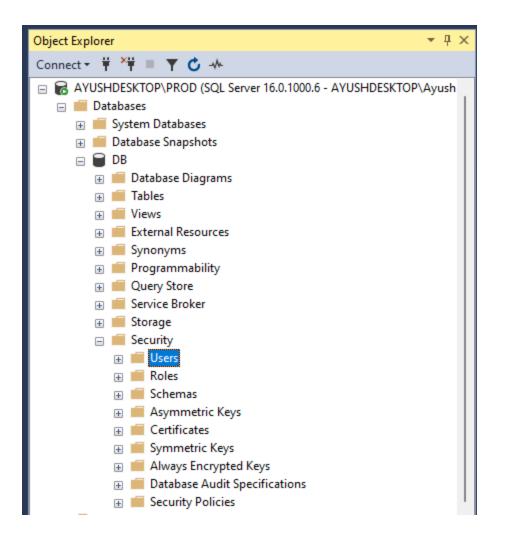
Creating users in a SQL Server database serves several important purposes:

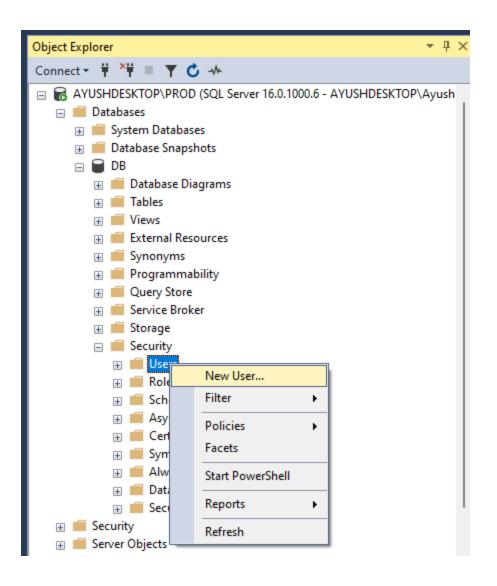
- 1. **Security Management**: Users help in managing access to database resources. By creating specific user accounts, you can enforce security measures, ensuring that only authorized individuals have access to sensitive data and operations.
- 2. **Role-Based Access Control**: Users can be assigned roles that define their permissions. This simplifies the management of privileges, as you can manage permissions at the role level rather than at the individual user level.
- 3. **Auditing and Compliance**: By having distinct user accounts, you can monitor and audit user activities more effectively. This is essential for compliance with various regulations and standards (like GDPR, HIPAA, etc.).
- 4. **Separation of Duties**: Creating different users allows for a clear separation of duties among database administrators, developers, and end-users, minimizing the risk of errors and fraud.
- 5. **Customization of Permissions**: Each user can have specific permissions tailored to their role or function. This granularity allows for better

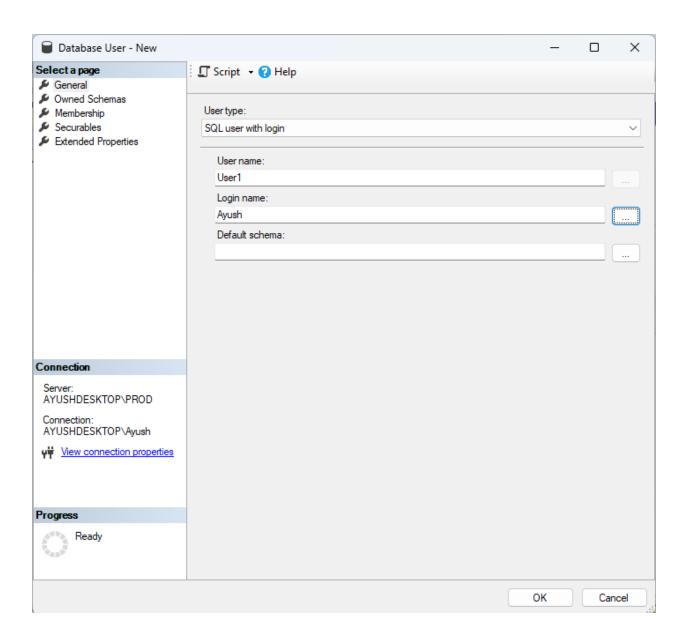
- management of who can read, write, or execute certain actions in the database.
- 6. **Management of Database Resources**: Users can be created for different applications or services that interact with the database, allowing for more efficient resource management and troubleshooting.
- 7. **Improved Collaboration**: In environments where multiple people or teams are accessing the same database, having distinct user accounts helps facilitate collaboration while maintaining security.

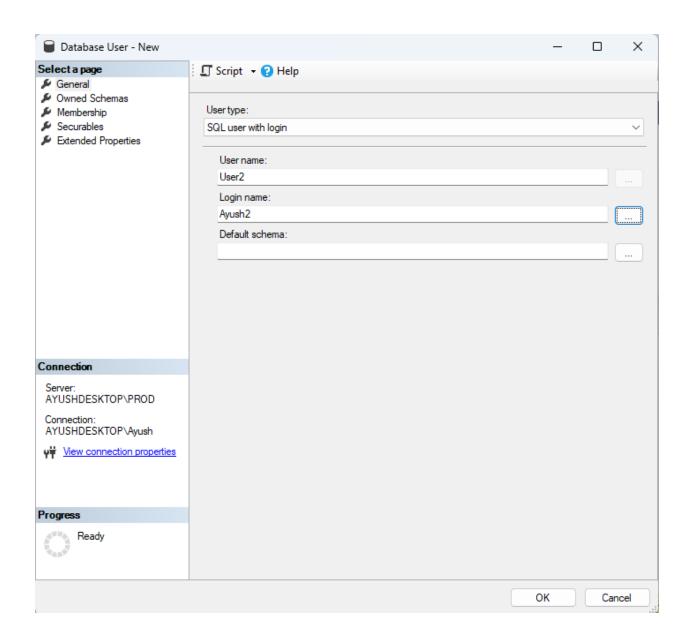
By implementing a structured approach to user management, you can enhance the security, efficiency, and integrity of your database systems.

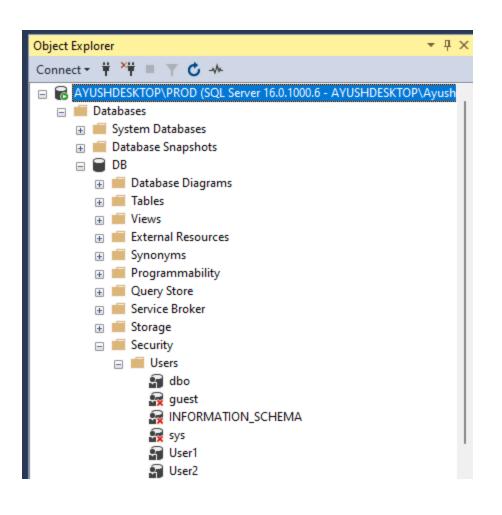


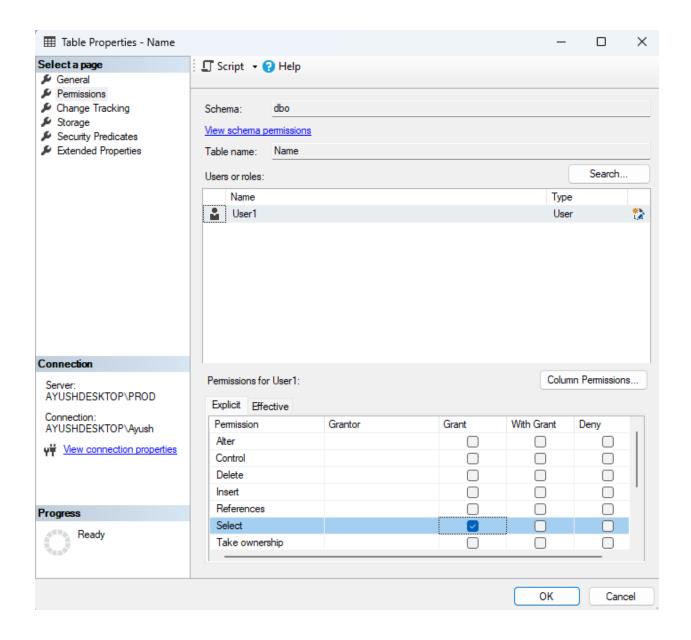












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SQLQuery2.sql - AY...OD.DB (Ayush (64))* -> X

Use DB

Select * From Name

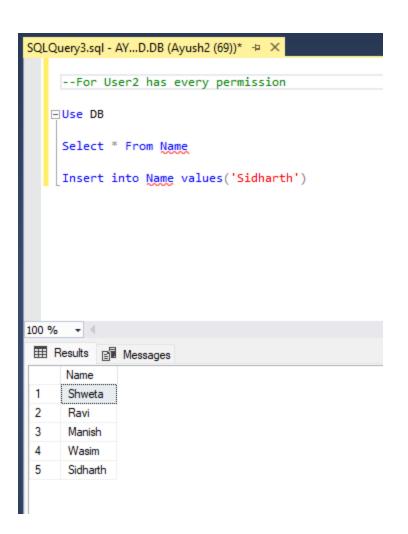
Insert into Name values('Haroon')

100 % 

Messages

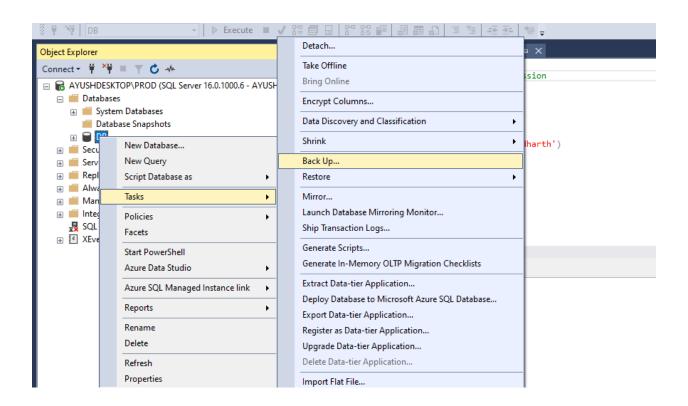
Msg 229, Level 14, State 5, Line 6
The INSERT permission was denied on the object 'Name', database 'DB', schema 'dbo'.

Completion time: 2024-09-25T17:23:14.1877076+05:30
```

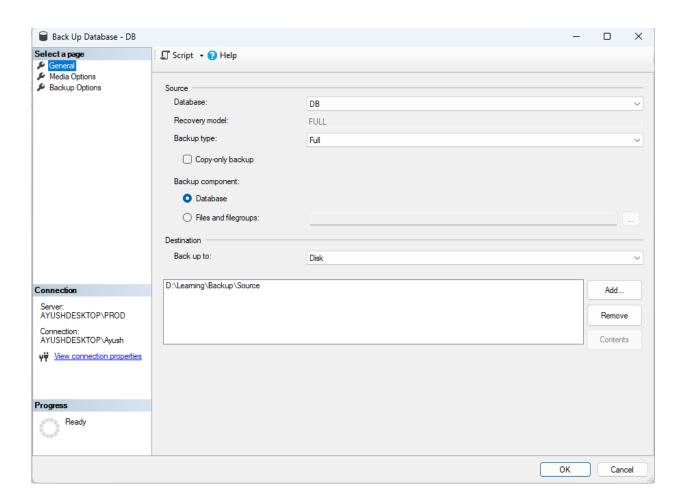


Database Backup and Restoration

☐ Backup Process: Utilized SQL Server Management Studio to create backups of the database, specifying compression and other parameters to optimize the backup operation.

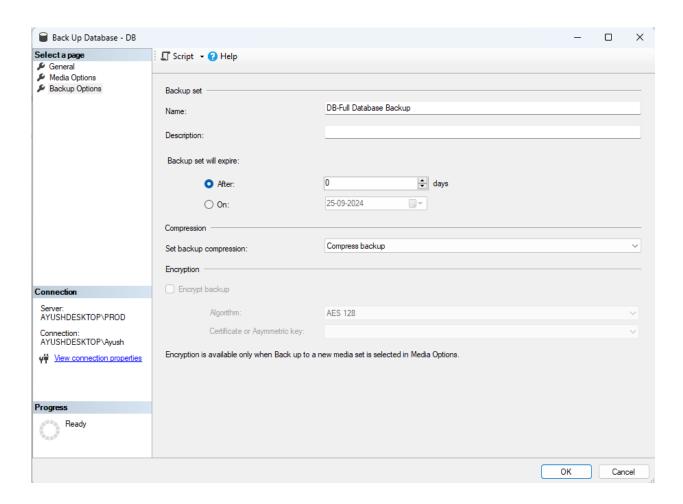


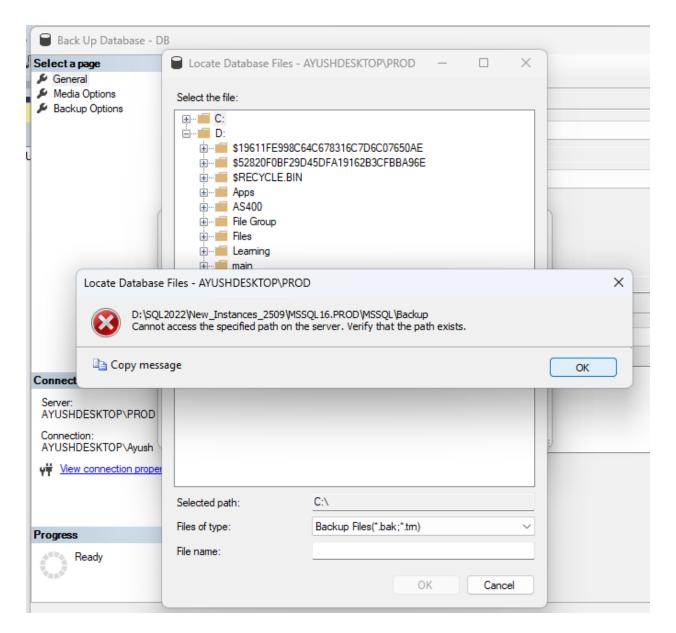
In SQL Server, the **full backup option** refers to a specific type of backup operation that creates a complete and comprehensive backup of an entire database at a specific point in time.



***** Important Note

In SQL Server, the **compressed backup option** allows you to create backups that take up less disk space than standard backups.

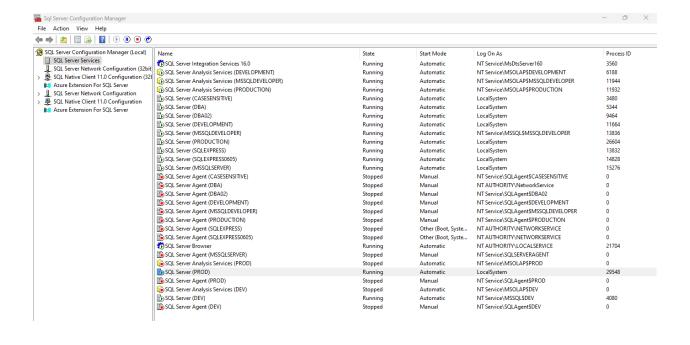




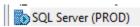
Challenge 1: Database File Location Error

- Problem: Received errors regarding inaccessible database file paths.
- **Solution:** Modified the SQL Server service properties to run under a local system account that possesses necessary file system permissions.

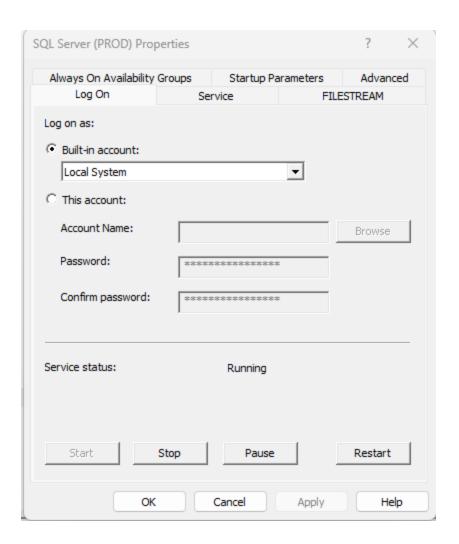
☐ Open SQL Server Configuration Manager

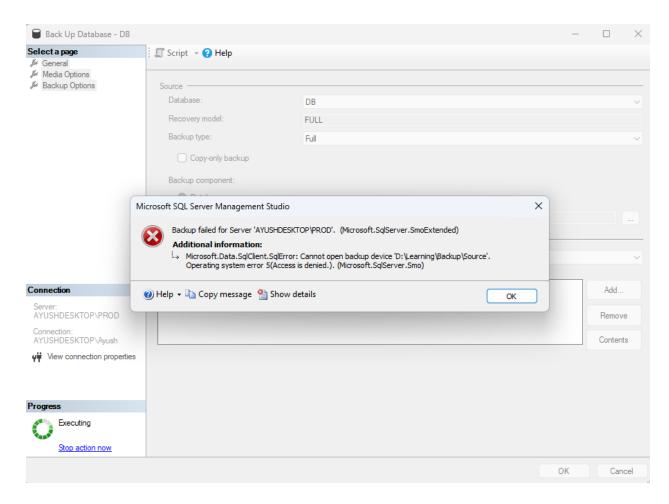


- ☐ SQL Server Configuration Manager (Local) SQL Server Services
- ☐ Select Instance name



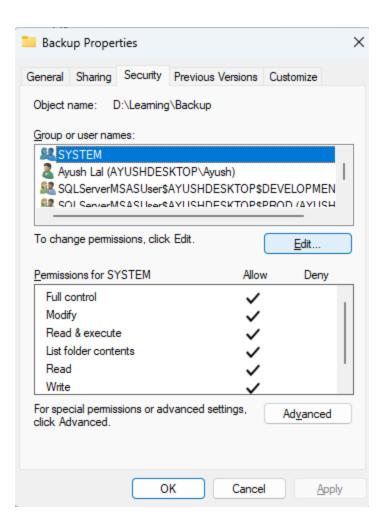
- ☐ Right Click Properties Select Built in account Select Local System
- ☐ Apply Ok



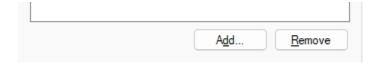


Challenge 2: Access Denied Error

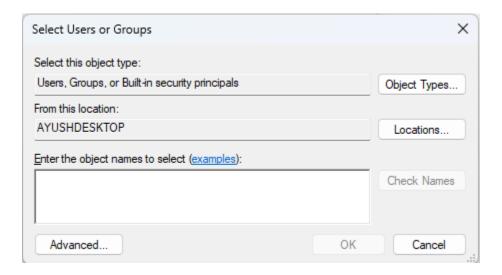
- **Problem:** Encountered an 'Access is denied' error while attempting to back up the database.
- **Solution:** Adjusted folder permissions to allow the SQL Server service account access to the backup directory, ensuring the service had full control.
- ☐ Right Click Backup Folder Properties Security Tab Click Edit



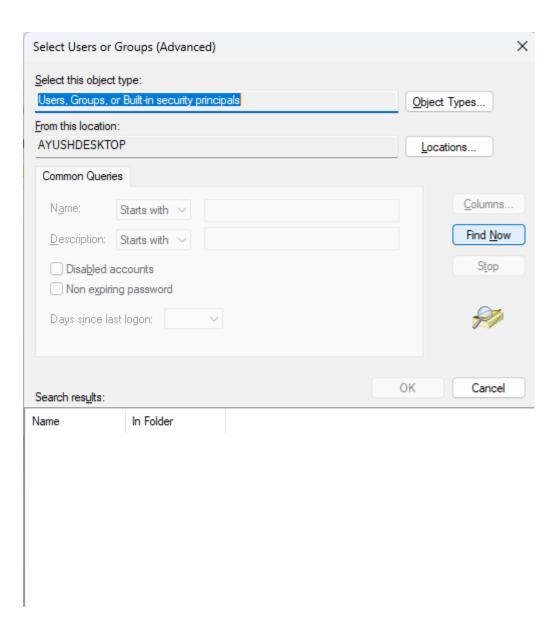
☐ Click Add



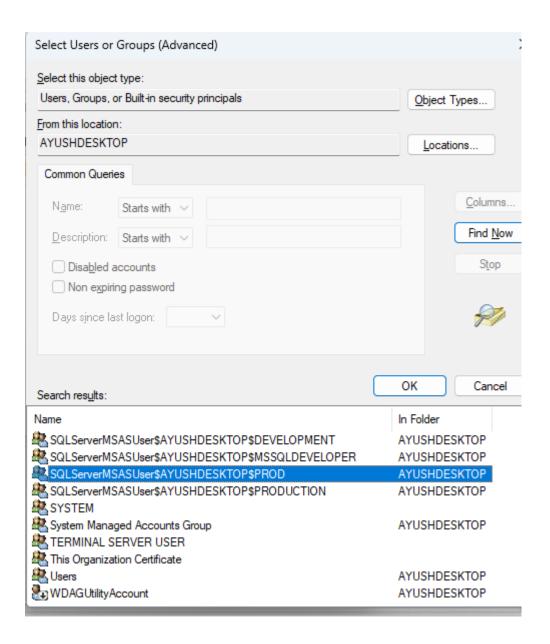
☐ Select Advanced



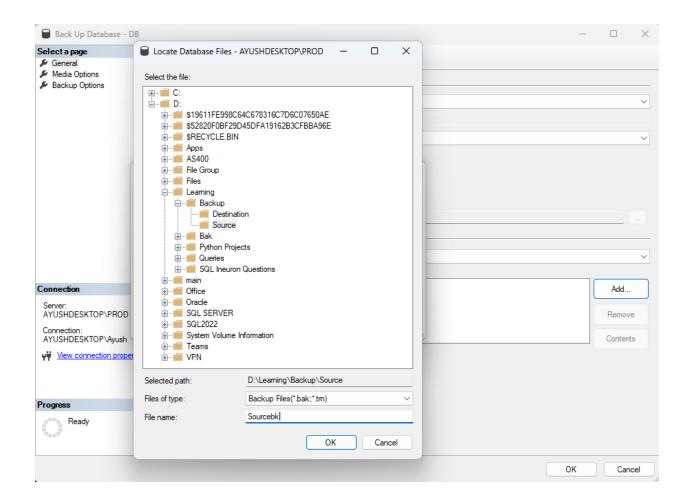
☐ Select Find Now

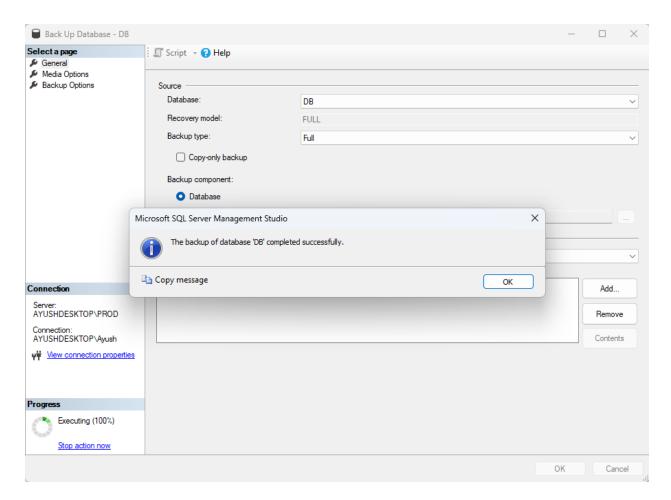


☐ Select Instance Name:



- \Box Ok Ok Select Full Control Apply Ok
- ☐ Proceed with the remaining Backup Procedures





SCRIPT FOR BACKUP

BACKUP DATABASE [DB] TO DISK =

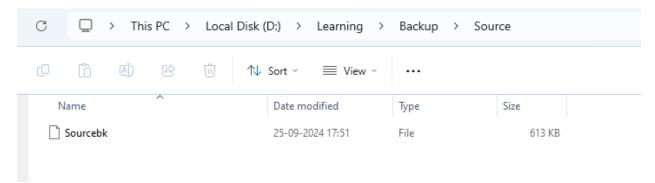
N'D:\Learning\Backup\Source\Sourcebk' WITH NOFORMAT, NOINIT,

 $\label{eq:normalized} NAME = N'DB-Full\ Database\ Backup',\ SKIP,\ NOREWIND,\ NOUNLOAD,\ COMPRESSION,\ STATS = 10$

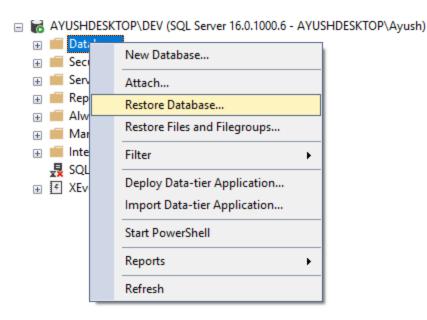
GO

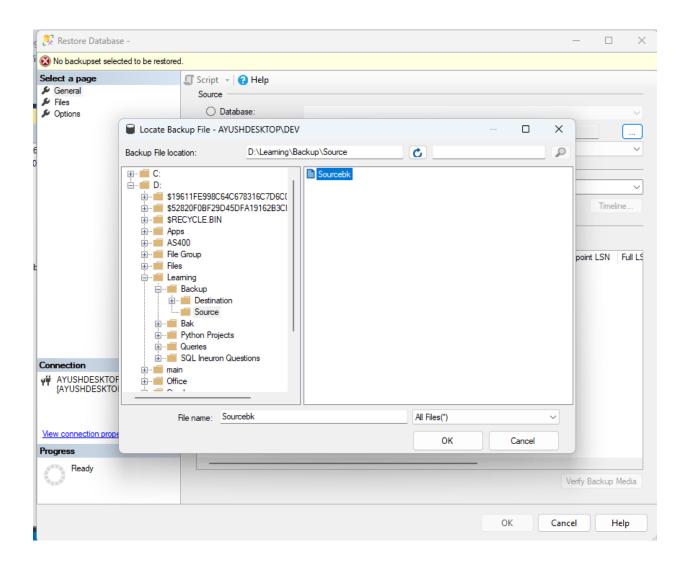
```
SQLQuery4.sql - A...ESKTOP\Ayush (58))* - ×
   ■BACKUP DATABASE [DB] TO DISK = N'D:\Learning\Backup\Source\Sourcebk' WITH NOFORMAT, NOINIT,
    NAME = N'DB-Full Database Backup', SKIP, NOREWIND, NOUNLOAD, COMPRESSION, STATS = 10
100 % → ◀ ■
Messages
   11 percent processed.
   21 percent processed.
   31 percent processed.
   41 percent processed.
   51 percent processed.
   61 percent processed.
   71 percent processed.
   81 percent processed.
   91 percent processed.
  100 percent processed.
   Processed 576 pages for database 'DB', file 'DB' on file 1.
  Processed 1 pages for database 'DB', file 'DB_log' on file 1.
   BACKUP DATABASE successfully processed 577 pages in 0.030 seconds (150.048 MB/sec).
   Completion time: 2024-09-25T17:51:32.5955501+05:30
```

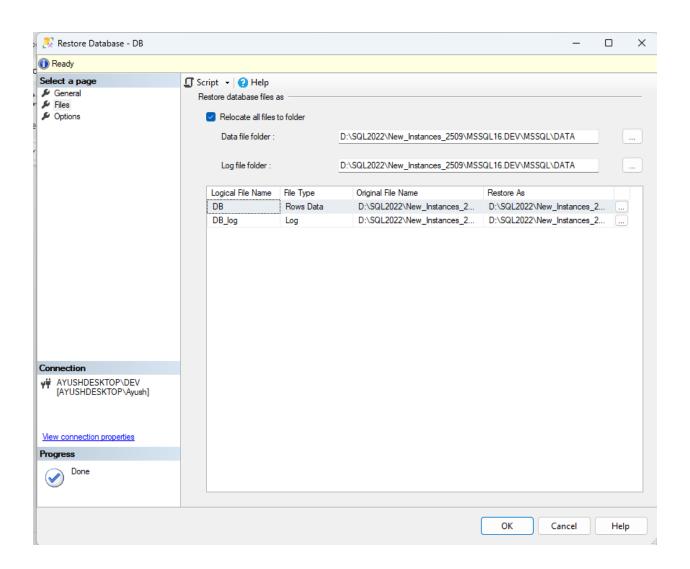
Backup Taken

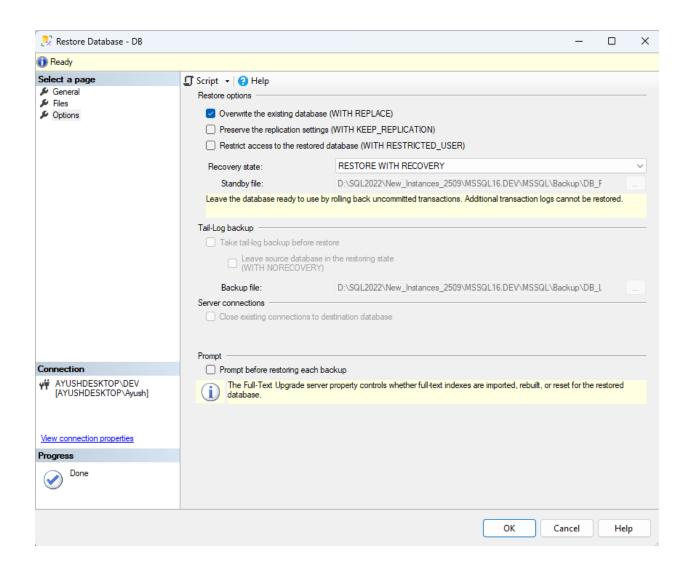


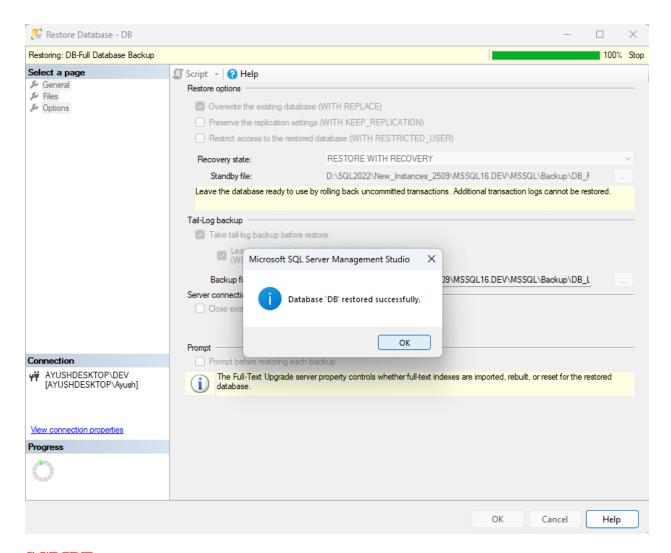
□ **Restore Process:** Restored the backup to the DEV instance, adjusting file paths and ensuring environmental consistency.











SCRIPT

USE [master]

RESTORE DATABASE [DB] FROM DISK =

MOVE N'DB' TO

 $N'D:\SQL2022\New_Instances_2509\MSSQL16.DEV\MSSQL\DATA\DB.mdf',$

MOVE N'DB_log' TO

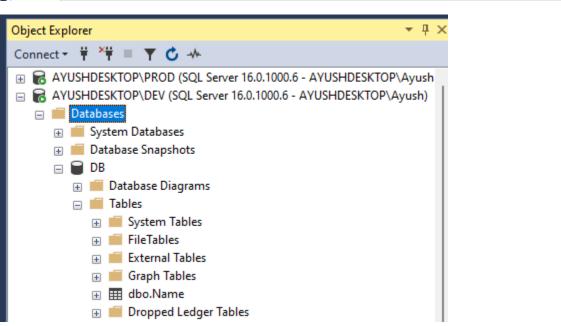
 $N'D:\SQL2022\New_Instances_2509\MSSQL16.DEV\MSSQL\DATA\DB_log.ldf',$

NOUNLOAD, REPLACE, STATS = 5 GO

```
SQLQuery6.sql - A...ESKTOP\Ayush (77))* → ×
   □USE [master]
   ☐ RESTORE DATABASE [DB] FROM DISK = N'D:\Learning\Backup\Source\Sourcebk' WITH FILE = 1,
    MOVE N'DB' TO N'D:\SQL2022\New Instances 2509\MSSQL16.DEV\MSSQL\DATA\DB.mdf',
    MOVE N'DB_log' TO N'D:\SQL2022\New_Instances_2509\MSSQL16.DEV\MSSQL\DATA\DB_log.ldf',
    NOUNLOAD, REPLACE, STATS = 5
    GO

    Messages

  5 percent processed.
  11 percent processed.
  15 percent processed.
  21 percent processed.
  25 percent processed.
  31 percent processed.
  35 percent processed.
  41 percent processed.
  45 percent processed.
  51 percent processed.
  55 percent processed.
  61 percent processed.
  65 percent processed.
  71 percent processed.
  75 percent processed.
  81 percent processed.
  85 percent processed.
  91 percent processed.
  95 percent processed.
  100 percent processed.
Object Explorer
```



Ensuring Security and Continuity

• Login and User Sync: Exported login details from the PROD server and imported them into the DEV server to maintain security settings.

Run this Script on PROD Environment

```
-- Script to extract logins from PROD

DECLARE @sql NVARCHAR(MAX) = ";

SELECT @sql += 'CREATE LOGIN [' + 1.name + ']

WITH PASSWORD = ' + CONVERT(VARCHAR(MAX), 1.password_hash, 1) + '

HASHED, SID = ' + CONVERT(VARCHAR(MAX), 1.sid, 1) + ',

DEFAULT_DATABASE = [' + 1.default_database_name + '];' + CHAR(13)

FROM sys.sql_logins 1

WHERE 1.is_disabled = 0; PRINT @sql;
```

☐ Copy the Output of this Query and Run this on DEV

***** Important Note

If some of these users (logins) already exist in the development environment, running the scripts as-is will result in an error, because SQL Server will not allow the creation of duplicate logins with the same name or SID.

To handle this situation, you can modify the script to check whether a login already exists before attempting to create it. Here's how you can adjust your script:

Modify the Script to Prevent Duplicates

You can wrap the CREATE LOGIN statement with an IF NOT EXISTS clause to check whether the login already exists.

Updated Script:

If not exists(Select 1 from sys.server_principals where name = 'sa')

Begin

CREATE LOGIN [sa]

WITH PASSWORD =

0x02002AB1DE0CE84CCD5AC794ABF229E60195388CBA809D74B124A07A F17132EE50DAD5E1D06AE8625FCFC6DD75F59F841789A1538930108A2226 340D6EBDD4AF83C7910DED19 HASHED, SID = 0x01,

DEFAULT_DATABASE = [master];

End

If not exists(Select 1 from sys.server_principals where name = 'Ayush')

Begin

CREATE LOGIN [Ayush]

WITH PASSWORD =

0x02000F2B67D155D39C0C846A109487DAF9A2F7339F66C917C58F4F8DE48 4821A048C80FD3F2E3A3B8369809AF27E5C0F4D35F9ADFE51A34C8D3C50 38EFD4ACF5E49E229B7B00 HASHED, SID = 0xC22117F72F5CA740BD175E85E2A4AB60,

DEFAULT_DATABASE = [master];

End

If not exists(Select 1 from sys.server_principals where name = 'Ayush2')

Begin

CREATE LOGIN [Ayush2]

WITH PASSWORD =

0x020053F0F073880CE2244E885BBEFCE7E2AFD59E628515173DA77B495D

AC9FB8C5CEE61A347CB4850D3280E63D95213F15DB00545EF5CC4E960C9 F4735E6089DB2EFDCC16ACB HASHED, SID = 0xCBC2F25DBAF73340AE840141D457160B,

DEFAULT_DATABASE = [master];

End

Additional Step: Fixing Orphaned Users

Even after successfully importing the logins, you may encounter orphaned users in the databases. If this happens, use the following command to remap the users to the correct login:

Use DB

EXEC sp_change_users_login 'Auto_fix','Username'

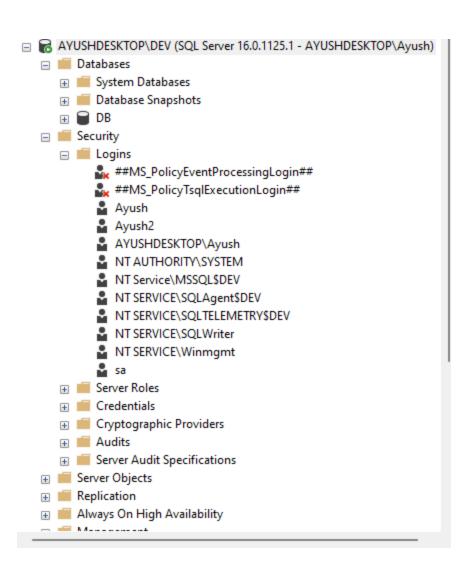
```
EXEC sp_change_users_login 'Auto_fix','Username'

100 % 

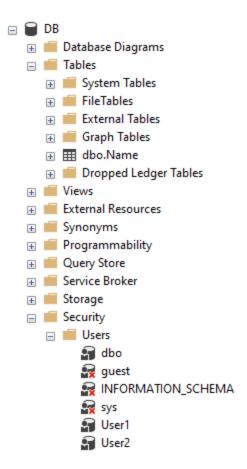
Messages
The number of orphaned users fixed by updating users was 0.
The number of orphaned users fixed by adding new logins and then updating users was 0.

Completion time: 2024-09-26T13:10:15.4882014+05:30
```

☐ Database Restore Completed



☐ AYUSHDESKTOP\DEV (SQL Server 16.0.1125.1 - AYUSHDESKTOP\Ayush) Databases System Databases Database Snapshots ■ B DB 🛨 📕 Database Diagrams Tables System Tables FileTables External Tables Graph Tables Wiews External Resources Synonyms Service Broker



Lessons Learned

This experience reinforced the importance of meticulous planning and proactive problem-solving in database administration. Key takeaways include:

- Always verify environmental configurations and permissions before initiating database operations.
- Maintain a checklist of steps to address common errors swiftly.

Conclusion

Database refreshes are crucial for maintaining the integrity and functionality of development environments. By sharing this detailed guide, I hope to assist fellow SQL Server professionals in enhancing their operations and troubleshooting skills.

Call to Action

I encourage professionals in my network to share their experiences and tips on managing database refreshes. Let's engage in a discussion to broaden our understanding and improve our practices.