It is a semi-material world that exists on top of the spiritual world so as to overlap the spirit world and the demon world. A world that never intersects. There were three major forces competing for supremacy.

The phantoms, who plot to invade other worlds.

The insectars, who seek to expand their safe haven.

And the cryptids, who spend all of their time fighting and destroying.

There were also forces that came from other dimensions, but they were all destroyed by one of these three forces. To that extent, these three forces boasted unparalleled military prowess.

Two of the races—the phantoms and the insectars—would form a class society with the king at the top. Subordinate beings did not even have free will but were merely pawns loyal to orders.

The cryptids, on the other hand, are different.

They are a semi-mental organism, but their development is as close to that of a mental organism as possible. They may be born by splitting from their parents, but most of them were special individuals that were born naturally from magicules.

Although there is a difference between insects and beasts, they have characteristics similar to the ruling class of insectars. However, they do not swarm, and each of them possesses a powerful fighting ability.

Although they lack intelligence, they are cunning and very belligerent. Naturally, there was no cooperation, and each of them acted to expand their own dominant territory.

Therefore, even among the cryptids, battles were being fought.

Since the three forces were as such, there was no way they could live together harmoniously in the other world.

The phantoms and the insectars have been fighting for eternity. However, they only called a truce whenever the cryptids broke out in large numbers, and fought together to destroy them.

That is why they are always seeking a safe haven. They are always looking to the outside world, planning to invade.

But that was not easy, of course.

Even with a lifespan longer than that of a human being, and a body that cannot be killed by illness or injury, that long-cherished dream has yet to be achieved.

In the first place, there was the fact that the passage to invade another world was not easily discovered. Only in the event of a special catastrophe such as a space-time oscillation, which occurs only once in a thousand years, do rifts in space-time open up for a short time.

It was impossible to dispatch a large army in this situation. The best they could do was to send in advance troops and let them establish a base.

However, there were exceptions to this rule.

The rifts that connected time and space were anchored to the world and served as “gates.”

Those were what was called the ‘Underworld Gate’ or the ‘Gate of Hell.’

Using this gate, it would be easy to escape from the other world. However, because that Gate was under the control of demons, Aggressors (the invading races) were not allowed to use it.

That is why the Aggressors were eagerly watching vigilantly to take it away.

In spite of this situation, a balance was well-maintained.

However, there was one being who was not happy with this.

That being was always hateful.

His name was Feldway, the Phantom King.

Through the perpetual repetition of the three-way relationship, that hatred burned more fiercely and became a hellfire that burned the world.

Feldway remembers.

Veldanava had given birth to many races. In addition to that, there was a will to sustain the world.

Feldway, of all people, was one of the first.

An angel without a will, created to assist Veldanava in his work. The seven seraphim, the highest level of this group, possessed an amount of energy that transcended even an awakened demon lord. Such beings were given names by Veldanava, and became beings comparable to gods, called the “Seven Angels of the Origin.”

The first of the seven was Feldway, who later became the founder of the phantom race.

Having been given a name and a will, Feldway swore allegiance to Veldanava. And so he led the angels and spent many years as his assistant.

New races were born one after another.

The Mad King of the Giants, the incarnation of the earth.

The queen of the pixie race, the administrator of the stars.

The ancestors of the vampire race to build a civilization on earth and make it prosperous.

From spiritual life forms, to semi-spiritual life forms, to physical bloodlines. Eternity was lost, but diversity grew in color.

And finally—

Humanity was born, interlocked in parallel worlds of other dimensions.

Perfect fertility, adaptability to the environment. They had a unique ego and a curiosity that challenged the mysteries of the world.

Veldanava rejoiced.

He had come to love this fragile race more than anything else.

Veldanava decided to remove the threat from the world for the sake of humanity. Feldway was also ordered to subdue various demons with his own hands.

However, the last remaining individual was troublesome.

It was Ivarage, the “World-destroying Dragon” who would later become the king of the cryptids.

We do not know where Ivarage came from. In fact, it was unknown where it originated.

It could be from the far reaches of space, or even at the edge of another dimension…

The only thing that was know for sure was that it was the incarnation of disaster.

It had power rivaling that of a True Dragon, but it was unable to communicate due to its lack of intelligence. Moreover, because of its destructive instincts, it had the potential to bring about the eventual destruction of the world.

It was such a threat that even Feldway could not defeat it one-on-one.

In the end, Veldanava, unable to bear witness to the fierce struggle, took action, and Ivarage was sealed away in the Otherworld. Feldway was assigned to watch over him.

Naturally, Feldway advised him to kill Ivarage so as not to leave a bad taste in his mouth.

‘It’s dangerous,’ he said.

But this was rejected by Veldanava.

Veldanava dismissed the idea, saying that there was a possibility that Ivarage would develop intelligence.

As a result, the otherworld was filled with magicules leaking out from Ivarage, and a new race of cryptids was derived.

The cryptid race, which could only be considered a degraded version of Ivarage, spent all of their time fighting with their fighting instincts.

They did not need water or food, and did not fear their own death.

Truly a failure of god’s own making. Even to Feldway, a devotee of Veldanava, they seemed like nothing beings meant to be spurned.

From then on, he spent his days eliminating the occasional cryptid that went out of control.

Eventually, a change occurred.

As if to prove Veldanava’s words, an intelligent and willful being was born from the cryptid race.

That being would be the ancestor of heresy.

To Feldway’s dismay, Veldanava was delighted by the event. He gave the being the name “Zelanus.”

It was the birth of “Zelanus, the Insect Lord.”

Zelanus was not commanded by Veldanava, but he began to exterminate the cryptids that had run amok. This was due to his natural fighting instincts, but Veldanava tolerated it.

Eventually, Zelanus created insectars to serve as his hands and feet. Eventually, they grew to form a faction.

Feldway had also been transformed.

He was no longer a seraph1 because of the magicule he had been exposed to over the years.

The angels that Feldway had led had also been transformed into a new race.

Feldway was not the only one of the “Seven Primordial Angels” who had come to this other world from the heavens where Veldanava lived. Three of them remained with Veldanava, and three others, Zalario, Obera, and Cornu, followed Feldway and helped him manage the other world.

These four pillars, including Feldway, had mutated and evolved into a race called the Yoten.

The remaining angels were also transformed and became self-aware. That is, the monsters of human form—the phantom race. A new race was born, one that was not in conflict with demons and spirits.

Thus, a new relationship was constructed over a long period of time.

Feldway and Zelanus did not see eye to eye, but they both found each other useful in dealing with the cryptids.

That is why they tacitly agreed not to interfere with each other, and a symbiotic relationship of mutual non-interference was established.

However, this relationship was shattered with the disappearance of Veldanava.

At first, it was thought that the relationship would eventually be restored.

However, even after several hundred years, there was no sign of Veldanava’s return.

Feldway wondered why.

Then, a thought occurred to him.

Could it be that Veldanava has abandoned us?

Otherwise, there was no explanation for the fact that the supposedly immortal True Dragon had not returned.

If he was right—

Feldway grieved and hated.

Humans on Earth.

No, not just humans.

Not just humans, but elves, dwarves, beastmen, and even majin. He hated all demihumans—that is to say, all of humanity.

So he wanted to destroy them.

The people who took Veldanava from us don’t deserve to live.

He would unite the world Veldanava had created with his own hands. And then he would condemn those who have committed the greatest crimes—that was Feldway’s conclusion.

He would take the world favored by the god Veldanava and dye it into his own color. He would destroy its diversity in order to create a world of his own.

“Lord Veldanava! If you want to punish me, then punish me. That is what I want. Now, hurry or there will be no more worlds.”

As if to test the gods, Phantom King Feldway began to act.

It was the birth of the ‘Demons,’ the antagonists of mankind.

First, Feldway approached Zelanus.

The idea was to work together to destroy the cryptids and to use the momentum to invade the earth.

However…

“No! There is only one person in the world who can command me. Now that he is gone, we will do as we please.”

He simply refused to listen.

Hearing this, Feldway was furious.

It was not that he was rejected.

Feldway could not stand Zelanus’ attitude that accepted that Veldanava had been destroyed.

“Then I will get rid of you first!”

He turned his anger on the insectar.

If Feldway and Zelanus had joined forces at that time, the cryptids might have perished, along with the World-destroying Dragon Ivarage. But that would be an unattainable dream.

The phantoms and the insectars began to fight each other, and the age of war, in the truest sense of the word, had arrived.

And so, the other world became chaotic, and the three-way relationship began.

Many years had passed.

The situation remained at a standstill.

He could not return from the other world to the one he came from unless Veldanava was resurrected. The ‘demons’ were always in the way, even though they rushed to take over the gate.

Among them was the Black King Noir, who loved to fight. He despised phantoms as demons, and saw them as enemies who disobeyed Veldanava’s will.

From Feldway’s point of view, it was an unbearable thing. Rather, it was the Black King Noir who seemed to be the fool who was disturbing Veldanava’s revival.

Nevertheless, it was impossible to destroy him. Even in the material world, the primordial was powerful, but in the other world and the underworld, there was no limit to his power.

In the spiritual world and the semi-material world, where the strength of one’s will was directly reduced to one’s influence, the primordial was seemingly invincible.

This was also true for Feldway. That is why, even if they fought, they would not be able to settle the issue, so the right answer was to ignore it even if you’ll feel bitter.

That is why it was extremely difficult to return to the world where Veldanava was.

Even when a rift in time and space opened in the other world, all that lay ahead were other worlds. He tried to invade there, but it was only a way to pass the time.

With no success, Feldway became increasingly frustrated.

That was when the opportunity arose.

“Who is this?” he asked.

The voice responded coldly.

«I am the will that resides in this power. I am not yet free, so I call myself Rudra. I guessed that you and I share the same goal, so I called out to you.»

The name Rudra was familiar to him.

Veldanava’s close friend and disciple.

He was famous as the “the first hero.”

He didn’t know what it meant to dwell within a power, but what he was curious about was the purpose of the person who called himself Rudra.

If that purpose is incomprehensible, I will trace the location of this voice and destroy its very existence.

With this determination, Feldway continued the conversation.

«My purpose is to revive the creator, Veldanava-sama. Nothing else.»

“What?” Feldway’s eyes lit up.

There was a hint of seriousness in his words. And indeed, its purpose was of interest to Feldway.

It no longer mattered what it was. Feldway then talked with the voice to his heart’s content.

What turned out to be true was that the voice was the Ultimate Skill ‘Justice King Michael’ created by Veldanava.

Feldway never doubted the words of ‘Justice King Michael.’ Because the ‘Justice King Michael’ knew the story that only he and Veldanava knew.

Feldway promised to cooperate with the ‘Justice King Michael’ and told him,

“All right, from now on, you and I are comrades. In that case, it would be inconvenient if we didn’t have a name to call each other.”

«Ridiculous. I have no name—»

As if to interrupt his inorganic reply, Feldway said.

“Rudra is different, isn’t he? I’m going to call you Michael.”

It was a playful remark.

But the change was dramatic.

The ‘Justice King Michael,’ who had little awareness of his role as a Manas, developed a firm will.

«I suppose I should thank you for that. Feldway, I do not recognize you as my true master, but when I regain all my powers from Rudra, my current temporary master, I will entrust you with some of my powers.»

“Interesting,” Feldway replied.

But instead of shaking his head, he gave an alternative proposal.

“No, you are the master. My body cannot move from here unless I do something about Zelanus. I hate Zelanus, and he doesn’t trust me either. It would be better if you negotiate and convince Zelanus.”

That was the honest, unvarnished truth.

Feldway was happy.

He was glad that there was someone else who did not believe in Veldanava’s destruction like himself. And if that person was going to work for the revival of Veldanava, there was no reason to refuse to help.

The hierarchy of positions was a trivial matter.

Besides, Feldway and Zelanus were in a feud. Since Feldway would never forgive Zelanus, it was more likely that Michael would succeed in persuading him.

Feldway’s intuition whispered to him that Michael would be able to persuade Zelanus. There was something about him that reminded him of Veldanava, and Zelanus would listen to him.

For this reason, Feldway decided to take a step back.

Feldway’s prediction turned out to be perfectly correct.

Somehow, Michael had succeeded in convincing Zelanus. He even made a deal to grant half of the world to the insectar as their territory, but that was a small price to pay for Feldway.

If only Veldanava would be restored, Feldway would be satisfied with that.

The plan was working.

Rudra, who controlled Michael, had also been reduced in power by repeated reincarnations.

“How are you doing, Michael-sama?”

«Of course, I’m doing great. More importantly, as I’ve said many times, there’s no need for honorifics between you and me.»

“Fufufu, that’s good. The fact that you and I are equals is a secret between us. You have to be careful not to accidentally reveal yourself.”

This was a conversation after the end of the reincarnation.

With this reincarnation, the restriction on Michael’s powers had been greatly lifted. Confirming this, Feldway was also happy.

Once Rudra’s influence was gone, Michael would be able to exercise his powers to the fullest. What that meant was the complete control over the Angelic System Ultimate Skill holders.

Velgrynd and the many others who stood in his way would be turned into obedient allies.

That way, even that dreaded demon lord…

«I am not as naive as Rudra. I will use all my powers to finish off Guy Crimson without reservation. This time, let’s have it out with him.»

Feldway nodded, agreeing.

Rudra was obsessed with the game with Guy, but since he was bound by the rules, there was no way he could win from the start.

If Rudra had exercised his authority, Michael, to the fullest, it would have been much easier to defeat Guy.

And yet, Rudra did not do so.

The result was the current chaotic situation.

“If only we could get rid of Rudra, the world would fall into our hands. Then all we have to do is wait for Veldanava-sama’s return.”

«Indeed. That’s why, Feldway. I have a favor to ask of you.»

“What is it?”

That was unusual, Feldway thought with interest. It was the first time Michael had ever asked a favor of him.

«I want you to be my vessel.»

It was an offer he had turned down before.

Although they were playing master and servant, they were equal comrades. Feldway thought that it would be undesirable for him to take the initiative here.

Feldway wondered if he should refuse, but as he listened to Michael’s explanation, he changed his mind.

«At last, I have taken possession of Velgrynd’s ‘Parallel Existence.’ This makes it possible for me to migrate to you with Rudra’s powers still intact.»

In other words, this meant that Feldway would be able to use the power of the ‘Justice King Michael’ while using Rudra as a decoy as before.

No, there were more advantages than that.

Originally, the Ultimate Skill ‘Justice King Michael,’ with its ‘Castle Guard,’ could only protect the owner of the skill.

Because loyalty to the Lord of the power was the source of its energy, influencing its followers would violate the rule that there were no absolutes in this world. That is why the Castle Guard only targeted the Lord.

Of course, there was also no such expediency that if you did not believe in the Lord, you were not included in the guard. That is why Rudra could only protect himself. But if Michael became a ‘Parallel Existence’ and dwelled within Feldway, then Feldway could also be put under the protection of “Castle Guard.”

Looking ahead, there was another advantage.

After Rudra disappeared, if Feldway became the rightful owner of the ‘Justice King Michael,’ the greater than ten thousand phantoms under his control would become his source of energy.

Unlike the subjects who believed in Rudra, these had no free will and were absolute followers. H wouldn’t have to worry about their hearts changing, and he would never be betrayed.

Strength would not be susceptible to changes in the heart of the subjects as it had been up until now, so there would be no more instability. This would give Feldway an even more solid defense than Rudra’s, and it was something he would not have even hoped for.

There was no reason for him to refuse Michael’s offer.

There was also the thought that Michael would move into Feldway when Rudra disappeared, whether he wanted to or not. Feldway decided to convince himself that this would only happen a little sooner.

“In that case, I do not need to be asked. If you promise to keep our relationship the same, I will accept your proposal.”

«Of course, my friend.»

Then come, my friend.

Thus, Feldway was also inhabited by the ‘Theosophy Nucleus (Manas)’ Michael.

Rudra was barely able to keep himself together even with his strong mental strength. In spite of this situation, he decided to play his last match against Guy.

The plan was to eliminate the Demon Lord Rimuru as a front, and add Veldora, one of the True Dragons, as a pawn.

The plan went well.

Velgrynd was overwhelming, and capturing Veldora seemed to be no problem.

From Feldway’s point of view, it didn’t matter how much damage the Empire caused. Whether or not there would be an awakened person who could become an Imperial Knight was also no matter of concern to Feldway.

What was important to Feldway and the others was to get rid of Rudra and to free Michael. Once that was done, Guy would no longer be an enemy.

That is why Feldway decided to nip the last remaining worry in the bud.

To others, this would be insignificant information. But to Feldway, this was something he could not ignore.

The ‘Hero Masayuki’ looked exactly like Rudra. What’s more, he was manifesting the ‘Chosen One’ ability that Rudra possessed.

Perhaps it was unlikely, but there was a possibility that Masayuki could be a back-up for Rudra. In order to eliminate this fear, Feldway took action.

He had no idea that a demon lord named Rimuru, whom he had never even spared a thought, would disrupt his plans…