

He arose a long time ago, far back in the ages, before the creation of the world.

His birth was a mere coincidence.

Veldanava, the creator god, created the seven seraphim from the Great Spirit of Light, and the shadows were born.

Those were the Seven Primordials—devil lords derived from the Great Spirit of Darkness.

He was the first of them, and he was the king who ruled the underworld, the world of darkness.

Since his birth, his power had been absolute, the embodiment of darkness.

An arrogant king who could control the demons at will.

From his perspective, even his seven separate brothers and sisters of darkness were no more than like those of his many family members (dependents).

Once in a bid for supremacy, when two of the primordials teamed up to challenge him, he subdued the two to the ground without a second thought.

To him, it was nothing but mere child’s play, but one thing did become clear at that time.

That is, the ‘primordials’ were immortal. However, if they were crushed to the core, they would be resurrected in subordination to the victor.

As mental organisms, they were subjugated to their opponents once defeated.

With the discovery of this fact, the remaining four primordials fell into a stalemate.

No.

There was one particular primordial who persistently troubled him, but his fate had been sealed once he was summoned to earth.

Whether it was a coincidence that he was called to earth or not…

There was no way to confirm it now.

However, it is true that it changed his fate drastically.

Having been summoned, he looked around.

He had spent all his time in peace in the underworld, and had no connection to the flow of time that passed on earth.

In a world that he thought was just beginning, civilization had already developed.

Instantly, he understood that he had been summoned.

It was magic, a technique that rewrote the laws of the world.

The power he had when he was in the Underworld was limited, and he could only exert the power of a newborn archdemon. Even so, it was enough for him, though it was inconvenient to be without a body.

He wondered why this was happening, and soon understood.

This was a semi-material world, not a realm of spiritual beings. In a space that was not filled with magicules, simply staying there would consume energy.

He, who had no connection with the creator god, did not understand how the world had been transformed.

‘Very interesting,’ he thought.

However, he felt uncomfortable by the presence of someone who was screaming something in front of him.

There was no one who would dare do such a reckless and foolish thing in front of him, the strongest in the Underworld.

That was why he felt like putting up with him for a while.

The wizard who had summoned him spoke very pompously.

The language is the first language, the magic language. Therefore, he understood it without any effort.

He listened to him patiently and found that he was saying some very interesting things.

There were countries in this world competing for supremacy.

There were elves, dwarves, beastmen, vampires, and humans. It seems that various races had been born and were competing for survival.

The wizard was a high human.

“You are now my servant. Follow my orders in accordance with the principles of the world.”

The man spoke arrogantly.

In order for the Super Magic Empire to unite the world, he was ordered to destroy the warring nations that were vying for supremacy.

It was very easy for him to do so.

The war, which had lasted a hundred years, came to an end upon his arrival.

All he had to do was to cast a single spell.

That magic was the forbidden nuclear magic: Death Streak.

The rampage of this large-scale destructive magic, which destroyed even the soul, transformed the largest nation with a population of over a million into a city of death.

To him, this was a natural occurrence, and was irrelevant to him.

However, there was one interesting change.

He realized that he was awakening, having acquired the souls of a large number of people. As a result, he has succeeded in incarnating using a million corpses.

Even the drowsiness he felt for the first time was pleasant, and it was a pleasure to fight against it.

This event would be the birth of the world’s first True Demon Lord.

As he gained power, he realized that he had escaped the spell that bound him.

It would have been an easy spell to destroy, but it was disappointing that it had burst without him doing anything.

Apparently, his awakening began when he had reaped the souls of about 10,000 humans. His race restriction had been lifted, and he had become a demon peer.

Even so, his power was still less than 10% of what he could wield in the underworld, but it was enough to become an unrivaled presence on earth.

He wondered with interest what would happen if he gathered a larger number of souls.

There were some who were just perfect for the experiment.

Those who had thrown all the chores at him should return the favor accordingly.

He returned to the first city and killed everyone in sight one by one. He refrained from using mass destruction spells so as not to involve the man he was after.

At this point, he felt the screams of the dying being etched into his soul.

Giiyaaa!!

Screams like this.

Hearing this, he suddenly thought.

Yes, perhaps that is a good ‘name’ for me.18

And that was that.

The change was dramatic.

Guy had evolved further.

He became a “devil lord” and regained all the power he had when he was in the Underworld.

The souls he acquired had given him strength.

The maximized vessel was filled to the brim, and his magicule amount was fully restored.

But that was where the changes ended.

At that point, there was no meaning for Guy to work anymore.

He summoned the two pillars (primordials) that followed him and gave them orders.

‘Wipe out the Super Magic Empire from the face of the earth.’

Guy was feeling very generous now that he had awakened as a demon lord and gained a name.

Even that insignificant wizard wasn’t worth his trouble to torment, and was even wiped from his memory.

“H-How?! How did you escape from my secret arts…?!”

But Guy didn’t even pay any mind to him. It was the wizard’s good fortune that he was killed by the demons without understanding anything.

On that day, tens of thousands of years ago, the largest and most powerful nation in the history of mankind, which had been caught in a divisive struggle, disappeared from the earth with ease.

The two pillars summoned by Guy had, after all, deteriorated to the level of archdemons.

That was the law of this world. When one crosses from the underworld to the semi-material world, they lose most of their power.

Crossing the world was no problem for a spiritual life form, but in this world, even just maintaining an existence was extremely draining.

Therefore, they needed a physical body.

Only by incarnating and evolving could they take root in this world.

Understanding this, Guy waited for his followers to evolve.

But strangely enough, no matter how many human souls he collected, the two of them never evolved.

So he gave them the honor of incarnating a corpse.

That act alone was the best evidence that Guy was in a very good mood.

The two pillars were the Green Primordial (Vert) and a Blue Primordial (Bleu).

Their forms were of two beautiful women.

Looking at them kneeling in front of him, Guy pondered.

There was no point in even incarnating if there was no way to further strengthen them.

They could be trusted with miscellaneous tasks, but their power was too fragile.

So Guy decided to be generous and give them names.

Remembering that he himself had evolved with a name, he thought that the two of them might evolve in the same way.

“I will give you a name. My pride will not allow you to be weak while you are under my control.”

Guy declared as such.

To the Green Primordial (Vert), the name “Mizeri” came from the mournful cries of the grieving.

To the Blue Primordial (Bleu), the name “Raine” was given because it was raining that day.

The two evolved to demon peer, as Guy had intended.

That was the beginning.

It was the first day Guy and the others had left their mark on human history.

Guy wandered from place to place, enjoying this world.

He had his share of annoyances, but Guy didn’t mind.

Mizeri and Raine were always with him, taking care of him.

“You two can live your life the way you like.”

Guy told them so, but their answers were always the same.

“No. My mission is to be of service to you.”

“That’s right. You are the king, and we are your subjects. That is the eternal and immortal truth.”

And so, the three of them continued their journey.

At the same time, Mizeri and Raine were summoning their own dependents and secretly building up a sphere of influence.

All in order to provide Guy, the ruler, with all the wealth and pleasures of the world.

Unlike life in the underworld, where one spent all their time fighting and refining the strength of their soul, this world was full of excitement.

There was no stagnation, and it was constantly developing.

Cooking, music, performing arts, dance, fine arts, and many other things kept Guy and his friends interested.

“Hey, isn’t this kind of thing fun?”

Guy, who was dancing at a festival in a minority village, smiled at Mizeri and Raine.

Faced with the rare smile of their Lord, Mizeri and Raine’s joy reached its peak.

“How wonderful. I thought human beings were fragile and worthless, but now there is something useful.”

“Everything in this world is Guy-sama’s property. A tool is only meaningful if used skillfully.”

In this way, the girls were also changing their perception.

Mizeri and Raine learned many things in their travels to please Guy. Their experiences became the basis for them to become all-round maids—cooking, washing, singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments.

This, too, was growth.

In the underworld, the weak were weeded out. All races other than demons had been exterminated, and only slaves who had been found worthy of use were employed.

But in this world, even the weak held value.

‘Once I understood that, it seemed a shame to destroy the world.’

Guy put it that way.

“Humans are cute, aren’t they? Stupid, but I don’t hate it.”

Some people were stupid, but some people were wonderful.

Ugly emotions were disgusting, but beautiful emotions were very tasty, and for Guy and the others, they were the perfect meal.

From Guy’s perspective, there were too many individual differences in the creatures known as a ‘humans’ to make a generalization about them.

At that time, Guy was very kind to humans.

He exterminated the fearsome magic beasts that threatened settlements all over the world, and destroyed the evil sorcerers (maja) who were thought to be the survivors of the super magic empire, and his various actions were praised and passed down to future generations, becoming myths and legends.

Guy was enjoying his days of peace and quiet, but his senses were always sharpened.

That’s why it was immediately obvious.

That being was Veldanava, the Star King Dragon who created this world.

“If you’re a real god, then show me your power!”19

Guy laughed fearlessly.

He did not doubt that he was the strongest and challenged Veldanava as a matter of course.

The result was a crushing defeat.

Guy was left on the ground without a chance to fight back.

His pride, which had never doubted that he was the strongest, was shattered into a million pieces.

In accordance with the law that defeat is servitude, Guy was supposed to be Veldanava’s servant.

But Guy’s pride would have none of that.

“Kill me. I am satisfied. I now understand that in this world, there is a higher power. There is no end to it, and I, too, am part of an unbroken line of reason. O’ great being, I am proud to have lost to you.”

The defeated Guy spoke proudly.

Veldanava laughed bitterly.

“Little one. I love the existences that I have created. This world that used to be boring is growing richer and richer. Wise beings have arisen and evolved to the point where they can communicate with me. Now there is even a strong man like you who can fight me to the level of battle.”

“Ha, well said! My attacks didn’t even hit you once, and you just attacked me once and this is how I have become.”

“Fufu, but didn’t you still take it? No one could even challenge me, and yet you did. That alone is more than enough to make me happy.”

“Well, let’s just keep it at that.”

“Yeah, let’s do that. And while you’re at it, I have a request for you.”

“A request?”

A pleasant sense of satisfaction filled Guy.

That is why he listened to Veldanava’s voice.

“Yes. If this rate of growth continues, the world will be doomed in less than a few thousand years. Humans are fallible creatures. Sometimes the right actions are not righteous, and sometimes, evil actions can save the world. But it is this imperfection that makes it so lovely…It is not my intention to let this world fall.”

‘So help me keep the world from falling apart.’ Veldanava said.

It reminded Guy of the Super Magic Empire he had destroyed.

Foolishly fighting each other despite being of the same race, Seduced by the lust for dominance and power.

I see. That was indeed ugly. If it had been left unchecked, the world might have been destroyed.

Guy was convinced, but one question remained.

“Hmm. Your preconception is the same as mine, but I don’t understand.”

“What is it?”

“You’re the Creator, aren’t you? If you’re the god who created us, then you should be able to bring the world to the outcome you want. Why do you need to rely on me?”

“Hahahaha, because I am not omniscient nor omnipotent. When I was born, all I had was my will. At that time, I was satisfied. The world was perfect and lacked nothing when I was the only one—in other words, it was boring, right?”

I see, Guy thought.

He understood.

Veldanava had given up being ‘omniscient and omnipotent’ by his own free will.

Of course he did. It would be so boring to be able to see all the outcomes.

In light of his own experience, he found it boring to only fight battles that he could win.

In the Underworld, everyone was afraid of Guy, except for one person.

Any demon who wanted to challenge him to a fight had long since disappeared.

Even Guy, who was no match for Veldanava, was afraid of him, so it was no wonder that this god had abandoned his omniscience.

“I don’t hate this world, so I’m gonna help you.”

No need to hesitate.

Guy also loved this world.

Regardless of servitude, Guy was genuinely willing to help.

Veldanava nodded happily.

“Thank you. I want you to be my agent, as a mediator, and watch over this world.”

“Huh? A mediator? Is it okay not to give me an order?”

“Of course. I told you, didn’t I? It is not my intention to force you to do anything, no matter what.”

“Okay. So, what do you want me to do?”

“Stay put. You can roam the world as you are, or you can set up your base and reign. Anything to keep mankind from becoming prideful, to let them know that there’s a threat to this world.”

Pride.

Hearing that word, Guy realized that he was suited to his role.

“Right. In that case, I’ll reign as a demon lord, feared by mankind. If there is an absolute enemy, there will be no time for humans to fight each other.”

“That’s interesting! I’m going to have to put you in a very uncomfortable position, but I’m counting on you.”

“Yeah, leave it to me.”

And that was that.

Guy’s heart form materialized, and he gained the Unique Skill ‘Pride.’

Guy declared.

“As the demon lord of this world, if mankind becomes prideful, I will judge them for you.”

Guy’s pride had been shattered, and his mind had grown deeper because of it.

As a result, the demon lord was born with power rivaling that of a god.

Veldanava laughed.

“How reliable. Let’s keep working together, my friend!”

“Ah, I’m sure we’ll have fun.”

Thus, Guy and Veldanava recognized each other and became friends on equal terms.

To relieve his boredom, he kept watch over the large settlements that were beginning to pop up around the region. Eventually, they became villages, and the villages gathered and grew into nations.

It was a poor civilization compared to the super civilization of the past, but the magic and technology that had been passed down in secret were recreated, and it developed at a reasonably fast pace.

It was interesting to see how humans worked.

Before long, a number of nations were born, and once again, small-scale skirmishes began to take place.

Guy wondered if he should take action, but instead of worrying about it, he decided to just do it.

As a warning, he wiped out any country he saw.

People feared Guy as a visible threat—the demon lord.

In response to this threat, they cultivated a spirit of unity.

That’s fine. As long as it doesn’t get on my nerves, I won’t destroy you.

As a “mediator,” Guy was satisfied with his work.

In the meantime, Mizeri and Raine had taken control of a great power with their men. They defeated the local gods, demons, and majins, and steadily gained recognition.

Mizeri also began to infiltrate human society and engage in espionage. By scrutinizing the information he obtained, he was able to uncover those who needed to be purged.

The purpose was to create a sense of tension in human society by instilling a moderate level of fear.

The “demon lord” was established as a system.

In this way, there was nothing for Guy to do.

He wandered the world and enjoyed fighting at will.

Even Veldanava’s followers, the Seven Heavens20, had difficulty in subduing the giants.

The battle against Ivarage, the World-destroying Dragon commissioned by Veldanava, was also a pleasure. His fighting instincts were fierce, much to Guy’s satisfaction.

There were problems, though.

They were so close in strength that they had to fight for three months. Moreover, he eventually escaped to the other world.

Also, as a result of Guy’s rampage, the land had become a wasteland as far as the eye could see.

He had learned a valuable lesson—Next time you get serious, you need to think about where you’re fighting.

Guy looked over the continent from above.

Then he spotted a castle that looked familiar to him.

It was the Imperial Castle of the Super Magic Empire, the place where Guy had been summoned to this world.

Thinking that this was some kind of destiny, Guy decided to make the castle his home.

Raine quickly dispatched her men to create a livable environment. With the help of magic, the castle was rebuilt in no time at all.

And then.

A white dragon challenged Guy.

It was a beautiful dragon with blue diamond eyes.

He didn’t know what she misunderstood, but her first words were belligerent—

“My brother may approve of you, but I don’t!”

—and then she attacked Guy.

Guy had learned his lesson from before and understood how to choose his battles depending on the strength of his opponent. Nevertheless, the dragon sent a blizzard of ice and snow above the castle.

At this point, there was no time to worry about the damage.

Those who survived had already evacuated and the castle could always be rebuilt. Raine and her subordinates would have a difficult time, but that didn’t matter to Guy.

Guy was frustrated because he Ivarage, the World-destroying Dragon, had escaped. With the appearance of a new enemy, he was in a high mood.

Wanting to have some fun, Guy took his opponent seriously.

But then…

Despite his best efforts, the battle could not come to an end.

The dragon was Velzard the Frost Dragon, sister of Veldanava the Star King Dragon and eldest sister of the True Dragon Race.

At the time, she had the second greatest amount of magicules after Veldanava, and even Guy was unable to defeat her.

However, in Velzard’s opinion, Guy was the one who was the anomaly.

“Hah! That’s because I’m strong.”

“Don’t be ridiculous! My brother gave this power to me, not you. That’s supposed to be proof that I’m more useful than you!”

“That’s not quite right. He offered me his power, but I refused. I would’ve accepted it if I chose to become his servant, but I wanted to be on equal footing with him. So I—”

Wanting to be recognized by her brother, Velzard jealously challenged Guy. And it was right there in front of her that Guy demonstrated the evolution of his power.

Seeing Veldanava’s power had given him a kick in the pants. And now, through the fight with Velzard, he understood just what an Ultimate Skill was.

“This is how I’m going to get to the ultimate level through my own strength.”

And at that moment.

The Unique Skill ‘Pride’ evolved into the Ultimate Skill ‘Pride King Lucifer.’

When Velzard saw this, she was speechless.

“Well…I guess that’s why my brother likes you so much. In that case, I’ll keep watching to see how far you’ll take yourself, right up until the end.”

It seems that Velzard’s real purpose was to test Guy. It was unclear whether he passed or not, but the two of them had been moving forward together ever since.

That was how Guy and Velzard met.

After three days and three nights of fighting, even the earth’s axis had shifted.

But this time, Guy had made exquisite changes. The permafrost, which had been uninhabitable until now, had been turned into a land of everlasting spring. In its place, the continent Guy had chosen as his base had become an uninhabitable frozen ground.

“Well, I guess that’s acceptable.”

“That’s great, Guy-sama!”

“There should be no problem. There was some damage to mankind as well, but with all nations working together to deal with the natural disaster, casualties were kept to a minimum.”

For the people who lived there, it was a disaster. But to Guy, it was nothing more than a laughing matter.

As for Raine and Mizeri, as long as Guy was happy, they were happy.

Guy’s castle, which had been covered with ice in the aftermath of the battle, had turned out to be beautiful.

“That’s nice. Let’s keep it as a memento.”

“Then I’ll take care of it. I can at least help you with this.”

The temperature in the surrounding area dropped to an extreme level due to the demonic energy leaking from the Velzard. From then on, the castle had become too frigid for the weak to invade.

Living in the castle, Velzard’s dragon form was inconvenient.

When Guy pointed this out, Velzard easily transformed into human form.

In her adult form, Velzard had complete control over her youki, but instead, she chose to maintain a slightly younger form.

In this way, the youki that leaked out would become cold air, and the castle’s defense would be perfect.

Although, there was no one who would attack the castle in the extreme cold, where not even monsters could easily survive…

“How about this?”

“Well, it’s good, though it’s not my style.”

“Jeez! You’re so mean.”

Velzard complained outwardly, but deep down, she was actually quite fond of Guy.

Deep in her heart, she secretly vowed that one day she would win Guy over with her charm.

The days had been unchanging, but one day was different than usual.

Guy, bored out of his mind, had a visitor.

It was a party of three people.

That small group breezed through the harsh cold where no one could enter.

Guy was interested and watched them closely.

Then, a blonde-haired, blue-eyed young man standing at the front of the group shouted.

“I am Rudra Nasca, the crown prince of the Nasca Kingdom and the ‘hero’ of all the people’s hopes! You evil demon lord, I will destroy you with my sword! Also, give me all the treasures you are rumored to be hoarding!”



But, on the contrary, Guy liked this unabashed desire.

“Brother Rudra, I can’t tell which one of you is the demon lord when you act like this!”

“Yeah, you’re really no good, Rudra. You’re already blinded by greed. If you want money, I can just earn it for you.”

“Honestly! Sister Gryn, please stop spoiling Brother Rudra. If this continues, he will surely suffer the consequences of his failure!”

Right in front of Guy, the three of them were having this kind of conversation.

Was this bravery or stupidity?

Only one thing was for certain.

Standing before Guy meant that they had defeated Mizeri and Raine.

If that was the case, then this ridiculous trio possessed a considerable level of strength.

Also, Guy saw that one of the three had the same presence as his friend and partner. That’s why he couldn’t blame Mizeri or Raine for their defeats.

This, like the laws of nature, was only the expected ending.

What he was more concerned about was…

‘Hero?’ What’s that?

It was the first time he had heard that word, and it sounded so sweet.

It gave Guy the feeling that his boredom would soon melt away.

Guy happily turned to the young man who called himself Rudra.

“Interesting. Let’s see what you’re made of, ‘Hero!’”

Guy decided to accept Rudra’s challenge.

“Hmph! I’m the strongest, and don’t need any help. Demon lord, I will fight you fair and square, let’s go one on one!”

Rudra was handsome, but his smile was a bit vulgar.

It seems that his goal was not to defeat Guy, but rather to snatch the treasures.

But that was what Guy thought made him truly human.

Without desire, people would not work.

It was the desire for a better life that drove people to work hard.

Rudra was truly a human being.

A human being with the type of sweet emotions that Guy loved.

“Hah! Let’s see what you can do!”

And then the battle began.

Guy watched as Rudra approached him.

It was a sharp and fast blow, but it was not serious at all. The fact that he was taking a chance on him was irritating to Guy.

Rudra was protected by an elaborate full-body magic armor.

It seemed to be quite expensive, so Guy decided to destroy it first.

As someone who seemed greedy for money, he probably would not like to have his belongings destroyed.

In short, the point was to harass him.

He evaded Rudra’s sword with ease, and cross kicked him in the side with a feint that looked like a knee kick.

Rudra was trying to avoid it just in time, so he couldn’t react to the feint, and his armor was shattered.

“Ahhhhh!! A year’s worth of national budget armor is—!”

“Are you okay, Brother?”

“Rudra is such an idiot. If we had all fought together from the start, the armor wouldn’t have been destroyed.”

“Shut up! This—This is a necessary expense!”

Rudra became teary-eyed, so it must have been more effective than he thought. Guy realized this and smirked.

Next time, I’ll smash his sword and make him cry.

Thinking this, Guy observed the three of them.

But then…

“Brother! At least let me use some support magic—Holy Blade!!”

The platinum-pink-haired girl, whom Guy had initially judged to be the most harmless of the three, performed an outrageous magic.

The sword Rudra was holding began to glow.

It was a jaw-dropping divine, evil-destroying light.

That’s not good. That light seems to have the power to cut through my Barrier.

He should have stopped it before it was launched, but Guy was enjoying this fight, so it would have been tactless to interfere.

“Huh, if I just think of it as my sister cheering me on, then it’s acceptable—but Lucia, you can’t do anything else!”

Rudra was more concerned with results rather than pride.

He was not ashamed to accept help from his sister.

This guy, what a character.

While not yet at the point of crisis, the situation was certainly worsening.

And yet, for some reason, Guy was enjoying it.

“That’s not even a handicap. If you want, you can all come at me together.”

“Take things seriously! I’m getting serious from here on out, so prepare yourself!”

Rudra was as honest as he said he was, hiding his abilities. The speed of his sword increased, and he closed in on Guy.

Guy had seen this coming.

He laughed and picked up his beloved sword, ‘Tenma,’ just for the fun of it.

“Ah? What kind of demon lord uses a weapon like that? How dirty!”

“Huh? I don’t know what your values are, but I’ll give you credit for making me pull out my sword.”

In fact, Rudra’s swordplay was brilliant, and it was natural for him to use a sword, since even Guy would be hurt if he touched it.

Guy was a proud man, but he had no interest in going easy on him.

“Hah! I’m not happy to be praised by a demon lord!”

“I see. Then I won’t praise you.”

“…Wait, I’ll keep listening.”

Rudra was actually pretty happy to be praised.

“Not only did you make me draw my sword, but there’s only a handful of people who can actually fight with me. Rudra, wasn’t it? You should be proud that I remembered your name.”

Guy was in a good mood, so he complied with Rudra’s request.

Rudra smiled happily and responded to Guy.

“You’re pretty good too. I didn’t expect the demon lord to pass over my evil-destroying sword. Thanks for remembering my name. I’ll take your name too before I destroy you.”

“You’re quite arrogant for a human, but I like you, so I’ll tell you. When you get to the Underworld, you can tell them my name. I am Guy, because any man in front of me will scream ‘Giiyaa!’ That’s why I shortened it to my name.”21

Hearing Guy’s answer, Rudra froze and gave him a puzzled look. Then he came back to his senses and shouted in a panic.

“…Wait a minute! That’s not a name! How is that a name?! If I defeated a Demon Lord with such a funny name, it would be so uncool. It would be better to record the story of my bravery with a cooler name!!”

“Ahn? The name doesn’t matter!”

“How can it not matter?! All right, I got it, just hold on, let’s not fight right now. I’ll come up with a better name for you first.”

With that, Rudra stopped fighting without permission.

Guy had no reason to obey him, but there was no way he was going to kill off a rare fun time with a sneak attack. Since he wanted to have some real fun anyway, he decided to accept Rudra’s offer.

Besides, I’m a little interested.

Rudra and his group started discussing in a circle.

“His hair is a beautiful red color…”

“Wait a minute, if you’re talking about red, then that’s just like me who is the ‘cardinal.’ That is non-negotiable, okay?”22

“I know! I mean, you’re obsessed in a weird way. Your hair color is blue.”

“It’s not because of that!”

“Oh, yeah. I remember.”

“You don’t know much about women, do you? Sister-in-law Gryn will abandon you if you keep acting like that.”

“Huh? No way!”

“Huhuhu, don’t worry, Rudra. I will never abandon you.”

“Right? Then I’m relieved. Anyway, I’ll give him another red—Crimson! How’s that? You don’t mind, do you?”

“Yeah, I’m fine with that.”

“I don’t have a problem with it either, but are you sure? Is it really okay to have a demon lord be name by a hero? The people might be worried that you have become so familiar with each other.”

“It’s okay! No one is watching, and if we don’t tell them, then they won’t know!”

It wasn’t Guy’s place to interfere, but Rudra seemed to have a rather sloppy personality.

It was enough to make Guy realize that, and he became more worried the more he listened.

“Did you get your story straight?”

“Oh, I’ve kept you waiting! As of today, your name will be Guy Crimson!”

Thus, the demon lord Guy Crimson was born.

As a side note, the moment the name was said, Rudra lost consciousness. It was obviously taboo to name a monster, but he selfishly decided that it would be fine because he was a demon lord.

Instead of magicules, Rudra’s spiritual power was greatly depleted, and he wandered between life and death.

Needless to say, Rudra’s sister Lucia and his lover Velgrynd, the Scorch Dragon, were very angry with him after he woke up.

And so, the showdown with Guy was lost…This was the moment when the strange fate of Guy and Rudra was born.

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However, the outcome was never decided.

And after that, Guy and Rudra dueled many more times.

Worthy of being the self-proclaimed hero, Rudra was very strong.

Rudra, the awakened hero, and Guy, the awakened demon lord.

Rudra, the technically brilliant, and Guy, who fought only with his strength and talent.

The fights were close, but it was only natural that Guy would gradually gain the upper hand.

There were three women who looked blankly at these two men with dismay.

They were Lucia, Velgrynd, and Velzard, the Frost Dragon.

Velzard seemed uninterested at first, but as the fights grew more heated, she began to enjoy the competition.

“Well, it looks like Guy’s getting stronger again.”

“Yes, Sister. But Rudra isn’t too far behind either.”

“Yeah, it makes me wonder if he’s even human.”

“There’s no doubt. He’s strong of course. Rudra is the apprentice of Elder Brother after all. He’s been given her ultimate power, so he’ll grow even stronger.”

“Oh? That makes sense. Then, I’m convinced.”

“As for me, I think it’s best if no one gets hurt…”

Like this, the spectators were peacefully at ease.

“The tea is ready.”

“The winner will be decided soon, so we’ve prepared tea for Guy-sama and Rudra-sama.”

It was Mizeri and Raine’s job to serve them.

At some point, this had become an everyday thing.

On other days, fights broke out between the sisters that made it impossible to compete.

Velzard and Velgrynd were on good terms, but sometimes they disagreed over the direction of education.

Their newborn brother, Veldora the Storm Dragon, seemed to be very capricious and was constantly running amok.

As for the reason for the conflict—

“—Sister is too strict! Why can’t he be pampered more?”

“Don’t be silly. I care about Veldora-chan and I love him very much! In order to make him more mature and stable, I’ve had to clean him up a few times.”

Velzard’s words about “cleaning him up” was the ridiculous method of physically disposing of Veldora and reincarnating him.

Velgrynd didn’t like that.

“I’m saying that you are wrong about all this! You have to tell him with words, and not with violence. You can’t help it if he can’t control the situation, so this is the way to make the kid understand us better.”

“Oh, come on! As always, Velgrynd-chan is so naive. In that case, why don’t we just beat him half to death from now on so he can become more knowledgeable?”

“I’m not talking about that! I’m talking about kindly teaching him more gently about how to live in the city as a person, and how to fight the enemy.”

“Velgrynd-chan…I think it’s better to say that you’re more about spoiling than being sweet. You’re the kind of person who ruins things by giving too much attention. If you keep that up, you’ll ruin that young man Rudra, too, won’t you?”

“No, I won’t! Rudra and I are the best of partners. Therefore, if I train Veldora, I know he’ll grow up to be a great brother who respects his sisters. So this time, let me take care of him.”

“Hey, no. I can train him better than you. Rather, I should be doing that all along.”

“Don’t be ridiculous! You’re saying it’s too much for me, aren’t you?! This time it’s my turn!”

They blamed each other, saying that Velzard was too strict and that Velgrynd was too lenient.

Guy personally thought they were both to blame.

Moderation is best. The True Dragon sisters really don’t understand the meaning of restraint, do they?

Guy was unspokenly disgusted.

“H-Hey, that’s not our duel to deal with.”

“Yeah. With them fighting over Veldora, it’s probably best not to get involved.”

Guy and Rudra quickly fled to stay out of it.

When Guy and Rudra are fighting, Velzard and the girls would come to maintain the ‘Barriers,’ and when Velzard is fighting, Guy would be the one to hold up the ‘Barrier.’

If they didn’t, the continent would sink.

Even though they were used to it, Guy and Rudra still wanted to fight where they wouldn’t get themselves into trouble.

As they say, “one who can see themselves can tell what is right and wrong”—but Guy and Rudra were treating it as if they had nothing to do with it.23

And then, one day…

“Damn it, you’re here again?!”

“Shut up! This game’s not over until I win!!”

Nowadays, a duel between these two people was as usual as a greeting.

They began fighting as always, and the fight ended once they were both exhausted.

Because the fight was always a draw, the usual bickering started once again…

“You said you were fair and square, but you’re just dirty, aren’t you?”

As Guy said, Rudra was dirty.

He deserved to be blinded.

It was not unusual for him to set up a ‘holy barrier’ to reduce Guy’s power to an abnormal conditional the moment the duel started.

Guy did not check for traps until the duel began, but Rudra saw through Guy’s character and took advantage of it as much as he could.

In addition, his arguments were terrible.

“Winning is justice! No, rather, if you don’t win, it’s not justice at all! That is why I’m going to win no matter what!”

No matter the cost, just win—Rudra boasted thus.



“Don’t be ridiculous! I don’t mind if you do it, but at least stop talking about justice and fairness!”

Guy had a good point.

But Rudra just snickered and replied.

“Are you kidding me? That’s you! The move you just used is the same one I used last time. Do you have any idea how many years I spent learning it?!”

A secret technique of distraction.

This was one of Rudra’s special techniques to avoid accountability by subtly changing the subject.

Because Rudra was educated as royalty, he excelled at such ingenious speaking skills.

“Was it three weeks?”

“Yes. Even Veldanava-sama praised it.”

Overhearing the conversation, Guy was taken aback. The technique he had said he had gone through a great deal of trouble to learn was surprisingly easy for him to master.

Guy looked sideways at Rudra and let out a big sigh.

Rudra was still complaining that Guy was the dirty one for stealing people’s skills, but he had his own reasons.

His words and actions were actually the result of Rudra’s impatience.

Although they were still on par in terms of ability, Rudra had been getting a bit overwhelmed lately. Rudra was more aware of this than anyone else, and thought that it would not be good if things continued as they were.

If I could win in a fair fight, I would have done so too!

Rudra wanted to say that out loud.

What he said at first seemed to have nothing to do with things now, but the status quo was that he had to use all he had to win.

Although Guy looked stunned, he saw right through Rudra’s sentiment. Moreover, secretly, he was enjoying his quarrels with Rudra.

Therefore, Guy tolerated Rudra’s tactics no matter what they were.

It was also because Guy agreed with Rudra’s belief that winning was justice.

By now, Guy had accepted Rudra.

Just knowing that there was someone who could compete with him was enough to make Guy happy.

Besides…

Rudra was right, Guy’s strength was growing the more he fought. The Ultimate Skill wasn’t just something he acquired; it was something he could use to its full potential.

Guy learned this through his duels with Rudra.

Although he was now fighting with only a sword to match Rudra, Guy was still beginning to overwhelm Rudra. If he added Skills and Magic to his arsenal, Guy would surely win.

And yet, Guy did not do so.

Before he realized it, he had begun wanting a draw, and not a win.

That’s why Guy welcomed Rudra’s little tricks.

But it was only a matter of time.

Thus, Guy asked the question.

“Hey…The first time you fought me, why didn’t you all kill me then? If you hadn’t named me then and really tried to kill me, you might have won, right?”

That was the question that Guy couldn’t understand.

Guy was too proud to admit that he might have lost. Admitting it would be tantamount to a defeat for a mental life form.

So for all this time, Guy tried not to think about it.

He did not think he was being merciful, nor did he want him to be.

If that was the answer, Guy might have killed Rudra in a fit of rage.

Just as Guy had ‘Pride King Lucifer,’ Rudra had ‘Justice King Michael.’ If Rudra had been serious from the beginning, it would not be clear who would have won.

There is no doubt that he would have been wounded, and there is no denying the possibility that Guy could have been defeated.

At Guy’s serious question, Rudra replied with a smile and a, “Oh, you mean that.”

“You’re an idiot. There’s no point in just beating you! I have to make you realize how great I am, so you’ll change your mind and become one of us.”

“Huh?”

Guy couldn’t understand, so he asked back again.

“Fufu. I am the man who will conquer the world. That’s what I promised my friend and mentor Veldanava, the Star King Dragon.”

Guy knew that Rudra was Veldanava’s apprentice, he had said so himself, and he had no intention of doubting it.

However, he had no idea that Rudra had ambitions to conquer the world.

“You know, Veldanava asked me to do a job for him, which was to stop idiots like you from trying to take over the world.”

“I know. That’s why Veldanava asked me to find a way to gain your approval.”

Hearing that, Guy thought to himself.

Veldanava, you got tired of the trouble and just pushed it on to me!

That’s the answer.

Show him what is reality—Guy could almost hear Veldanava telling him that.

Rudra had been sent away by Veldanava to deal with Guy.

But Guy was already in Veldanava’s clutches.

Since he knows that he took a liking to Rudra, Guy had no choice but to go along with him until the end.

If he didn’t like Rudra, he would have killed him from the beginning, so now it was too late for him.

Yeah, this guy’s still an asshole.

Rudra spoke to Guy, who was thinking in a good mood.

“I mean, the truth is…I couldn’t control ‘Justice King Michael’ with all my might during the first battle. Even now, I can only control it for a few dozen seconds.”

It was a surprising admission, and Guy couldn’t hide his surprise.

“What? You can’t be serious, can you?”

“No, that’s the truth. After all, this power is on loan from Veldanava.”

Rudra shrugged and began to speak.

Guy listened to Rudra’s story, and thought it felt irrelevant, he was convinced of Rudra’s strength.

If it was a part of Veldanava’s power, then it was no wonder that he was capable of defeating him.

However, as he listened to Rudra, he realized that there was a misunderstanding.

“This is a secret, but I’ll tell it to you. What I’ve acquired through my abilities is called ‘Covenant King Uriel,’ which is the crystallization of my beliefs, my vow to unite the world, and the thoughts of my friends who responded to that vow. It is manifested as my ultimate skill.”

While he claimed to have done it on his own, he actually had help from Veldanava. Even so, it was quite amazing, and ‘Covenant King Uriel,’ the embodiment of Rudra’s heart, was of a higher power in the angelic system.

“So, I borrowed the ‘Justice King Michael’ in exchange for it, but this was also troublesome. My ‘Covenant King Uriel’ was simple and easy to use, with the powers to ‘destroy’ and ‘protect.’ But this ‘Justice King Michael’ has the mysterious power of domination.”

He could borrow the skills of those he had placed under his control and dominate the holders of those skills. It was a power fit for a king.

However, in the current situation where there was no one under his control, the power was not very threatening. Rudra’s strength was real because he was evenly matched with Guy despite that situation.

“That’s awesome!”

Guy said as such.

As the number of people he controlled increased, the number of powers he could use would also increase. Then, Rudra would become even more powerful.

What the heck? I thought that the differences in our strength would eventually become too different, leading to my sure victory—but it looks like this can still be enjoyed!

Looks like the fun would still continue.

Guy was very happy to realize this.

But then Rudra spoke.

“I’m not into dominating people. If I’m a man, I want to compete only with my own strength. But sometimes there are circumstances that make it impossible to say that…”

“Circumstances?”

“Yes. You’re a friend of Veldanava’s, so you should have the right to know.”

Hearing that made Guy feel uneasy.

He hadn’t been seeing Veldanava lately, though he didn’t care much because he was a long-lived species.

“Did something happen to that guy?”

“Well, it’s supposed to be a happy thing.”

“Hmm?”

“That guy and my sister, Lucia, were united. It’s called marriage. Lucia’s pregnant with Veldanava’s child, so they’re a real family now.”

“A child, you say? A True Dragon?”

It was truly an amazing story, that was sure.

But Guy agreed that it was also possible for a being like Veldanava to seek imperfection as the ‘all in one.’

“Well, I suppose anything could happen.”

“Yeah. Well, if that was all, I’d just congratulate them. But here’s the thing…”

After that, Rudra told him something more important, making it impossible to stop at mere surprise. Guy couldn’t help but stand up and ask Rudra, “Really?”

It seems that Veldanava had now become almost indistinguishable from human beings.

He was also said to have laughed and told Rudra that he was now bound by a “life span” that he had never had to deal with before.

The truth was too heavy for Rudra to simply brush away on his own.

That’s why he confided in Guy now.

“It’s just like that guy, but what are you going to do…?”

“I don’t know. That’s what I’ve been wondering about, but I’m pretty sure I can’t keep playing with you like this.”

“Well…”

The two couldn’t help but look at each other and sigh at the same time.

Guy liked Rudra in the first place, and if he was a friend of Veldanava, then he was also a friend of his own.

It was inevitable that he could not fight Rudra seriously from the start.

However, he still had to do his job as a “demon lord.” That was the role Veldanava had asked him to play.

As a ‘mediator,’ he could not allow the scales of the world to tip.

When Guy looked Rudra in the eye and said as such, Rudra also looked straight back at Guy and responded.

“In that case, why don’t we play a different game?”

“A different game, huh?”

Rudra nodded.

He didn’t smile coyly as usual, but instead began speaking with a serious expression.

“Yeah. You and I won’t be fighting directly. This time we will be using only our pawns to compete for world dominance.”

“Hmm.”

“To be honest, I don’t want to use this ‘Justice King Michael,’ but I can’t say that now. Veldanava gave me this power in support of my dream to unite the world. So I will continue to increase my men and will become stronger along with it.”

“I’m sure you will.”

Guy nodded, agreeing with that assessment.

“I don’t want to kill you either. I told you, didn’t I? I said that I’d make you accept me. I want—no, I believe that the human race can be united. Veldanava wanted diversity, but that doesn’t mean we have to fight each other. People with different opinions should respect and get along with each other. If one can’t accept the other person’s opinion, then just pull away. Different races, different nations, if they are too armed, they will end up in war, but if they become a unified nation, they can settle everything through discussion, right?”

“I don’t know about that. As far as I’m concerned, people are stupid, aren’t they?”

“I know. But, you know, you and I get along, right? Even demon lords and heroes who were supposed to be each other’s natural enemies can get along, so it should be easier for the same race to understand each other!”

‘There is no need for a mediator’ Rudra insisted.

However, Guy couldn’t agree.

“That’s naive. Humans are greedy creatures. It’s not necessarily an evil thing, and that desire is necessary to pursue greater possibilities. That’s why, as long as interests are at stake, even those who are close to each other will start fighting even amongst themselves. In this respect, the monster without wisdom knows better, right?”

The magical creatures that evolved from animals into magical beasts would not kill again as long as their appetite was satisfied. They were not cunning and resourceful enough.

They would not think about securing food for tomorrow, but rather live each day with pleasure.

However, humans were different.

Humans always thought about the future, became anxious, and tried to accumulate wealth so that they could withstand any situation. That was their natural instinct, and Rudra’s vision of the world was a pipe dream.

It was very difficult to lead people with words alone.

In the first place, how difficult was it to convey one’s true intentions in words to others without misunderstandings…

Guy understood this, which was why he felt that Rudra’s dream would never come true.

“Well, perhaps. I get it, and Veldanava laughed at me for being so idealistic, but…even so, I convinced him, and now he supports me. He told me, ‘The probability is close to zero, but just do what you want.’ Between you and me, the Justice King has the power of the Army of Angels, ‘Armageddon,’ and can summon an army of angels to destroy everything. I will use it to save people. I will destroy only military power and civilization and suppress the growing desires of men. At the same time, I will unify the world and build an ideal world for sure!”

‘So, cheer me on’—Rudra asked Guy to support him.

Stop killing people, and value their potential.

“Hah! It’s not like I’m into slaughtering people. I just get rid of those I don’t like. I don’t care if they’re a good guy or a bad guy. If I like them, I let them live. If I don’t like them, I kill them. That’s all.”

“That’s what I’m saying. Just wait for a bit!”

“Hmph! I don’t have the patience to wait for those who do harm to the world to realize their mistakes. Hate the sin, not the sinner? Punishment is necessary for sin, asshole. You should be held accountable for your actions!”

“You’re right, I agree! But I want them to have a chance to change their ways.”

“Hah! Then don’t worry. I’ll just send the souls of the guilty to the underworld and give them a proper punishment.”

“That’s not what I meant!”

At this point, Rudra stopped narrating and carefully began to speak his mind once again.

“I’m not trying to be some great king, I just want to make people smile. If there is a safe place to live and people to talk to, there will be fewer people who will commit crimes, right? I want to eliminate poverty and inequality, and create a world where everyone can live with a smile. That’s what I want! Of course, there will be fools who can’t help themselves, but I’m going to try to make as few sacrifices as possible.”

Rudra spoke of his ideals, not knowing that one day in the distant future, similar words would come from the mouth of one of his own opponents.

Guy, hearing this, shook his head in disgust.

“No wonder Veldanava was laughing at you. I didn’t know you were that naive. But…okay? Just tell me more about this game.”

“Really?”

“I was bored anyway. It might be fun to play a game like that.”

It wasn’t that Guy had accepted Rudra’s point of view.

He didn’t want to deny Rudra’s ideals, he just wanted to see how it ended. His stubborn friend would never be persuaded by words alone.

Rudra was trying to persuade others with words alone, even though he himself could not be. It was a contradiction in a sense, and it was only natural that he would fail.

When that happened, he supposed that Rudra would finally wake up.

On the chance that he succeeded, it would only mean less work for Guy.

So no matter how things turned out, Guy decided that there would be no loss.

There was also no particular benefit, but if Rudra was willing to give up his reckless plan, that was enough for Guy.

“Is my ambition just a game to you?”

Rudra laughed.

Then he carefully explained the rules.

The rules were simple.

‘Players keep their hands to themselves and only let their men compete.’

That was it.

In other words, there was no direct confrontation between Guy and Rudra.

If all of Guy’s men fell, Rudra would win. If that happened, Guy would follow Rudra.

But until that happened, Guy was free to do as he pleased. He was also free to fulfill his role as “mediator” in accordance with his agreement with Veldanava.

There were few restrictions on Guy, but from Rudra’s point of view, this was useful enough.

His original role as a Hero was to stop the demon lord, a threat to humanity and a regulator, from running amok.

Guy’s thoughts were calm, but his power was too strong. Once he made a move, the damage would be too great.

Rudra was there to prevent that from happening, but that would not fulfill his dream. He needed to stop Guy’s movements in order to start working towards the unification of the world.

After reading Rudra’s intentions, Guy spoke.

“Fine. I promise I will not do anything. I’ll gather up some demon lords to take my place and leave the direct punishment of mankind to them.”

“And I will stop them. I will unite the world before the demon lords take over!”

“But that’s a difficult road, isn’t it? Even the good-natured Veldanava has given up on some of his ideals.”

Veldanava was not just a dreamer, but also a perfectionist. He had the rationality to perceive ideals as ideals and the unrealizable ones as unrealizable.

Veldanava’s desire for change had led him to give up his omniscience and omnipotence, which made it no longer possible for him to realize his ideal society.

But for Veldanava, it was the right thing to do. He believed that a world that was completely at his disposal was not interesting at all.

It was because he understood Veldanava’s feelings that Rudra exclaimed.

“But even so! I want to make him feel assured. He is bound by his lifespan and has no more power than a normal human. And yet, he was so happy that he could even die with Lucia…But…But the truth is, he was worried about the future of this world! More than anything, he was worried about the future of their children…”

“Mm?”

“That’s why I need to give him peace of mind and create a world where everyone can live happily, where he won’t have to worry at all when he dies. And I want him to be satisfied that the world he created has matured into a wonderful, harmonious world.”

Rudra swore to Veldanava that he would establish a unified nation.

He also wished to make his sister Lucia happy and resolved to rid the world of all unhappiness.

“Let us decide the affairs of the human world with our own hands. You, who do not have a life expectancy, can be the judge and see things to the very end.”

“I see…”

Guy couldn’t think of anything to say in response to Rudra’s words.

In his head, he determined that it was impossible. However, he could also understand Rudra’s feelings, so he hesitated to say something negative.

What the hell, asshole? Doesn’t that just make you the one who has to carry all the responsibility…?

He hated his mind for being so emotionally intelligent.

Guy, although prideful, was kind to those he liked. That kindness was not enough to stop Rudra’s reckless challenge.

Guy was at a loss for words to say to this foolish man who was also his beloved best friend.

Your challenge is sure to fail.

Guy’s brain calmly calculated the results.

The success rate was so low that it was ridiculous to even use the word “probability” to describe it. And yet, Rudra, whom Guy considered his best friend, would never give up.

A Hero was someone with an unbreakable spirit, and Rudra was a true Hero who was willing to bear all hardships in order to realize the ideal world.

That’s why, if it was this guy, just maybe—Guy thought so.

There was something about Rudra that made him think like that, and Guy bet on that tiny possibility.

However, the result was…

The first tragedy occurred just after Veldanava and Lucia had their child—Milim.

A terrorist attack took place in the Nasca Kingdom, taking advantage of Rudra’s expedition. It was the work of a warring enemy, and resulted in the deaths of both Lucia and Veldanava.

At that moment, Rudra’s dreams came crashing down.

‘I…I just wanted Veldanava to feel reassured, to accept us…’

Rudra killed his heart, knowing that his lamentations could no longer be heard.

All that was left as ideal that had lost its purpose.

“You still want to do this?”

“Yes. All I have left is this game with you. Your approval is the only thing I have left.”

“All right then. I’ll keep playing with you.”

And so, the game continued…

The next tragedy befell Milim, Veldanava’s daughter.

Milim had grown up without knowing her own parents’ faces.

She didn’t even know that she was related to Rudra.

Milim’s only family member and protector, her pet, was killed in some state plot.

Milim lamented in grief and burst into a rage. It was decided that Guy would do everything in his power to appease Milim.

If he hadn’t stopped her, many nations would have perished.

“You still want to do this? If I had acted sooner, Milim wouldn’t have been sad, would she?”

“It’s my fault. But even so, if we stop now, all the sacrifices we’ve made up until now will be for nothing. As Emperor, it is my responsibility to make to not give up now.”

“I don’t think so, but whatever. I’ll stay with you until you’re satisfied.”

If he stopped here, Rudra would break.

So Guy had no choice but to delay the conclusion.

An unhappy future was guaranteed. That’s what he believed, but it was not yet certain.

And so, the game continued…

Repeated tragedies.

The ugliness of the human world at hand.

With each reincarnation, his holy power slowly depleted and Rudra gradually lost his qualification as a Hero.

Even so, Rudra remained a “Saint” because of his desire and dedication to his ideals.

But even so, there eventually came a limit.

At some point unknown to him, Rudra’s mind corroded and his original ideals were lost.

As was the habit of those who had lost sight of their purpose, he was willing to use any means necessary to defeat Guy…

Ruthless and cruel.

Defeating Guy was all that mattered, and in the end, more blood would be spilled.

It was just how Guy had judged it.

Finally, the day had come.

Guy bet on the last possibility, all according to the rules of the game.

He entrusted the most unknown and hopeful of his pawns, Rimuru, to be the final judge.

In all honesty, he wanted to make the move himself.

But Guy obeyed the rules to the end.

As a result…

In the distance, the breath of his friend vanished.

I’m sure it’s not just Rimuru who could have done it—Guy couldn’t help but sigh.

There was no bitterness or regret.

There was only mourning for the man who was his best friend.

“That’s why I told you, asshole. Like this, this kind of thing is only right for us as demons, who have never been emotionally shaken…”

Muttering this, Guy did not notice the tear running down his cheek.

He just prayed silently for Rudra’s soul.

And just like that, the millennia-long game between Guy and Rudra came to an end.

While maintaining his usual fearless smile, Guy’s heart inwardly sank with grief.

Blue diamond eyes stared coldly at Guy.

A small, twisted smile forms on her lips…

The game was over, but the seeds of conflict were still smoldering.