**[b]Soul Power**

**[/b]**Zesuon stepped off his ship, sniffing the air as he did so. To most people this backwater little planet was nothing special, but Zesuon was not most people. The wolf stood at a bulky 10ft tall, his shirt filled out with muscle and a confident grin spread across his face. It was the grin of a conqueror, of a predator - Zesuon had ravaged his way across the universe, searching for one thing and one thing only: power. And that search had led him here.

He looked around, taking in the lush plant life, the spectacular scenery consisting of mountains floating around him. Some oddity of the planet’s magnetic field reacting with elements in the rock - not that he particularly cared. Most planets didn’t survive his visits, and if he found what he was looking for then this one would be no exception. The legend stated that once there was a great and terrible dragon, one whose wings stretched across the stars and whose voice trembled the heavens. The disciples of the light fought him, and managed to destroy his body, but as punishment his soul was bound to this realm, imprisoned for all eternity on a hidden planet. Powerless without a body, but still containing the essence of that monstrous creature, still containing all of its strength. Zesuon knew that he could absorb that strength - he had done the same to other souls in his time, and his current body was the result of his endeavours.

At first glance the wolf was big, sure, but it was when he got closer that one realised the true extent of his size. Each of those arms were gigantic trunks of muscle, so thick with mass that they wouldn’t flex all the way, restricted by his own size. They led into a torso that looked like a sack full of boulders, the entire shape of his body marked by the curve of muscle here and there, as if his skeleton was shaped by muscle rather than the other way around. Each of those pecs was like a boulder strapped to his chest, sticking so far out that you could barely look over the crest of each one. Underneath them were abs like literal bricks jammed into his stomach, punching outwards with unreal hardness and definition. His legs were not to be outdone either, both of them pistoning into the ground like redwood trees, not an ounce of weakness anywhere to be found. Each of his foot paws were the size of dinner plates, and with each step they sank deep into the ground, his footprint stamped into the earth not by will, but simply by sheer weight. This all coalesced into a wolf that was nothing short of terrifying, a hulking behemoth of power and might that had thus far shredded anything that even dared to get in his path. That wasn’t even to mention the magic he had accumulated over the years, spells from eldritch dimensions and alternate realities, magic that splintered existence just by being cast. He held real power, far beyond that of what any mortal should have been able to possess. Even just standing on this planet he could feel reality bending around him, the trees and flowers leaning towards his body, the surface of the planet curving slightly to meet him. It was the consequence of having that much power in one place - mass is just a function of energy, and thus an accumulation of energy is equal to an accumulation in mass. Stockpile enough energy and you generate a gravitational field, literally bending reality around you. Not that Zesuon cared - he just knew that power felt good, and more power felt better.

Speaking of which, he walked up to the structure he had landed next to, which looked like some kind of abandoned missile silo. The door had rusted shut but Zesuon simply grabbed the metal like it was paper and ripped it off, shoving his way inside. It led into what looked like a large crater dug into the ground, the sides bristling with what had once been sophisticated equipment but was now naught but rust and mould. And there, right in the middle, was a glass chamber. The wolf could barely contain his excitement as he walked towards it, cracking his knuckles in anticipation. Again the keypad was rusted, but he had no intention of using it - instead he cranked back a fist and slammed it into the glass. Shards exploded everywhere as he destroyed the front half of the capsule, and what looked like purple smoke poured out. This smoke eventually manifested itself into the shape of a dragon, but a big one: at least as big as Zesuon if not more so, massively muscular and adorned with spikes and horns. A pair of wings flashed out behind it, and the spectral creature leered down at Zesuon.

“You’re not the first to come here.” The ghost said, crossing his arms over his chest. “My name is Won, and you are the latest in a line of those trying to claim my power. Not one has survived the attempt.”

“Do I look like some pathetic explorer to you?” Zesuon replied sharply, flexing a bicep that was almost as large as his head as an example. Won grinned upon seeing it.

“You look like you might just make it. I guess we’ll see.” Won settled into a fighting stance, his fists held out and his body ready.

“I’m going to fight….a ghost…” Zesuon chuckled. “So what, if I beat you then you’ll join with me?”

“Oh I'm planning on taking your body anyway. If you beat me, then I’ll know you can handle my full power.”

Zesuon grinned as he settled into his own stance. “Good enough reason for me.” he said, before launching himself at the spirit.

The two collided with tremendous force, their fists meeting with a crunch that sent a shockwave rippling out from them both. Despite the spirit’s ethereal nature it seemed just as solid as anything else, and Zesuon found himself struggling to keep it at bay as the dragon grinned and ducked down, throwing himself at the wolf. He made to go for a punch but as Zesuon went to block it he changed tack, placed a palm on the wolf’s chest and unleashed a blast of magical energy. Zesuon was thrown back, hitting a nearby wall and sliding to the ground, his shirt still smouldering from the energy. He stood up slowly, brushing himself off, and noticed the state of his shirt. With one motion he tore it off, revealing a torso that looked like it had been sculpted out of rock, and then proceeded to crack his knuckles.

“Alright then. The hard way it is.” He said, before rushing forwards. This time he was ready for Won’s punch, sliding past it and stepping in to deliver one of his own. Only this wasn’t just a regular punch - where he stepped forward the ground cracked and buckled, and the follow through was equally as destructive as he powered his fist into Won’s stomach with obscene force. He supplemented it with as much magical energy as he could blast into the dragon, so much that it exploded behind him and scorched a deep mark into the land. Trees burnt into ash, grass was scorched into little more than smoke, the very ground rumbled as the two titans clashed. Won phased into smoke upon receiving the impact, and immediately phased back into solid form behind Zesuon, pulling him into a chokehold. Now it was strength against strength, and the two of them were evenly matched. Zesuon’s neck was a thick girder of muscle, and it made him almost impossible to choke out, but Won was cranking it as hard as he could. An elbow backwards bought the wolf some space, and he flung a lane of energy behind him as he got free. Won ducked under it as it scythed through anything it touched for a couple of miles around, simply shearing through fauna and rock alike.

Once again Won came forward, and this time instead of meeting with fists they met with heads, both of them going for the headbutt and both meeting in the middle with an almighty clash. Zesuon grimaced as a rivulet of blood ran down his forehead - he was lacking the ornate horns that Won possessed, and it left him at a disadvantage. The pair of them locked hands, muscle bulging on both sides as they fought to overwhelm each other, but it was a stalemate. Zesuon eventually broke it off, leaping backwards and gathering energy in his hands. Won did the same, the grin never leaving his face as the ball of energy he was creating pulsed bigger and bigger. For almost a minute the two of them charged the greatest magical blasts they could.

Then with a yell they both released them.

The resulting explosion from this was enough to literally vaporise anything in a mile radius. By the time the blinding light faded there was just nothing left standing. No trees, no mountains - even the ground itself was a scorched black. The pair of them were left staring at each other in the bottom of a massive crater, both huffing gently in a pit of their own making.

“Well well well, looks like you’re got some strength to you.” Won was the first to talk, straightening up and letting the magic die out of him. “I had to make sure, but you don’t disappoint. You’ll make a worthy host for my power.”

Zesuon chuckled. “About damn time. So how does this work, is there a ritual, or…”

“Like *[i]this[/i]*.” Without warning Won dived forward, only instead of hitting Zesuon’s body he phased right into it. The wolf instantly screwed his eyes up in pleasure as he felt an influx of power unlike anything he had ever experienced. He couldn’t help but immediately roar as he crackled with power, magic swelling in him until he felt like he was going to burst. He had underestimated the spirit, he thought the power he gained would be additive - in fact it was multiplicative. The immense stockpile he had amassed was being multiplied many times over, until there was so much raw energy coursing through his body that it was burning off him in a dark aura. The colour of it changed too - where Zesuon’s magic had originally been a light cerulean, and Won’s magic an insidious red, the combination of the two resulted in a sickly, purplish black, the colour of**[b] real[/b]** magic.

Then he began to grow larger. All over his body muscles swelled with size and power, strength flowed into him seemingly without end as he roared and flexed, the peaks never lowering even after he released the tension. The ground shook as insane levels of power was pumped into the earth, simply an overflow from his body being unable to hold his own strength. Immediately cracks began to appear in the ground, seemingly only gouges gashed into the rock, but actually indicative of something far deeper. The energy Zesuon was passively releasing was pouring into the ground and breaking apart the tectonic plates, worming into cracks and forcing them apart. Just his existence was already causing a planetary cataclysm, and indeed he could see little gouts of lava start to spurt up from the ground around him. But he didn’t care because he was focused on the growth.

Zesuon was going from behemoth to complete and utter monstrosity. The biggest change was of course the height, but it was more a case of everything scaling up. He went from 10ft tall to a monstrous 25ft, towering over the landscape like some monolithic god, purple thunder crackling around his body. All of that extra height was filled out with beef, literal tons of mass packing itself into his frame in any available space. His arms were blasted into gigantic cannons of muscle and might, each of the biceps holding enough force to crack a moon, the shoulders like almighty boulders strapped to his titanic body. His chest surged outward in thick heaves until it was a tableau of strength, until the lines of muscularity were carved so deep into his frame you couldn’t see the bottom. Whether it was pecs, obliques or abs, everything was picked out on his body and everything swelled larger as power was force fed into the muscle fibres. His legs were not to be left out too, the thighs expanding outwards with every breath as his feet sank into the planet’s crust, his weight proving too much for the fragile planet. The crater around him was larger now, so large that he couldn’t even see where it ended - if he’d had a better vantage point he’d have realised that the difference was visible from space, that the planet was not round anymore but rather something akin to crescent shaped. His sheer mass had driven the side of the planet inwards so far that the entire structure was on the verge of collapsing.

Other traits began to make themselves known as the muscle rounded out - he grunted as his back itched intensely for a second before wings sprouted from the flesh there, the muscles thickening in order to support them. Horns punched out of his head, curling slightly as they did so. He closed his eyes for a second, and when he opened them again there were draconic slits instead of his usual pupils. And the *[i]magic [/i]*- Zesuon had never felt anything like it before, so much that he thought he would explode. Even at twice his previous size, his body exploding with raw power, godlike muscles sculpting his monolithic form, even with all that he could still barely contain it all. Just standing he could feel it burning off him, his dark magical aura slowly eating into the ground nearby.

“Heh, I could get used to this.” He said, holding out a hand to inspect it. Instead of fingers there were sharp claws, the structure looking more draconic than lupine. He looked down at himself, admiring the muscle, the sharp lines and steep hills of his new body. Then, just to test himself out a bit, he held a hand out and made as if he was grabbing something round. Magic flared, just the tiniest portion, and he felt a pressure in his hand, like he was gripping something. He squeezed, and he could feel the planet rumbling underneath him. Telekinetic claws began to crush the planet, powered by nothing but his overwhelming strength. The magic only allowed him to grip the planet, the actual destruction was all him, no energy bolstering the process. You could see the imprint of those claws slowly pressing themselves into the planet as the spherical shape degraded further, beginning to look like putty that someone had squeezed out of shape. He grinned as he closed his fist further and the planet below him began to creak. It was an intoxicating level of power, quite literally holding the planet in the palm of his hand and knowing that he could very easily crush it. Just a simple clench of the fist.

But he wasn’t here for such petty displays of power. He was here for the real deal, and he wasn’t going to get it by keeping all of this magic contained. This current form was something of a conduit, a way of keeping it in check, but what happened if he didn’t even bother? If he unleashed it all at once?

It was time to find out.

Feeling the energy well up inside him was an utterly euphoric experience before, but feeling it actually expand past him was joy on another realm entirely. He **[b]roared*[i] [/i]*[/b]**as the aura around him exploded outwards, crackles sparking around it as his body was pushed well beyond its limits. Any mortal would have disintegrated from this amount of power being forced through them, but Zesuon was far from mortal now - his body surged upwards, instantly eclipsing his former size of 25ft as his frame was dialled up all the way past 11 and then some. He blasted past 100 feet, past 200, growing all the way up to 500 feet as power seared the land around him, as the fabric of reality itself began to warp around such a dense point of energy. He was of course obsessed with watching the muscle pour onto his frame, partially because he knew just how much strength was going into him, how much raw force this body was capable of. It made black holes look like gentle dips in spacetime, it made supernovas look like hand-cranked torches. The ground around him didn’t just shatter, it evaporated out of existence as his power quite literally vaporised the very atoms themselves, tore them apart and scattered the remains.

Watching muscle grow was something Zesuon thought he’d never get bored of. Just gazing at his chest as the pecs swelled to the size of mountains, packed so densely with muscle cords that you couldn’t even pick out the individual fibres that were dappling his fur. With every inch he gained his strength increased tenfold, and he was long past inches now, growing a few feet at a time. His arms were especially noteworthy, mostly because of the enormous power being barely held at bay in each one. A simple flex caused his power to flare outwards, the muscle to explode with size, and the planet underneath him to lose a gigantic chunk as he accidentally vaporised half of it. It looked like someone had taken a bite out of the sphere, as if some god had mistaken it for an apple. Zesuon flexed a bit harder and the rest of it simply disappeared, burned into nonexistence by the application of a bit of his magic.

Being at this level of power was a strange feeling. It wasn’t just the raw strength flowing through him, the endless ocean of magic searing down every vein, filling the vast muscular space with power beyond that of the gods, beyond that of the celestials of old. Won had been a celestial, content with merely destroying galaxies and razing his way across the universe, but together they were a whole different being. He could feel the power at his fingertips, poised as if waiting for an instruction, and as he looked down he could see the aura around him tearing holes in reality. This magic was never meant to exist, not in a being constrained by a mere three dimensions, and it was rapidly eating away at the fabric of spacetime around him. It did give Zesuon an opportunity to observe his true form though, and he was not disappointed.

Power. It was nothing but 500 feet of muscle and sinew, blazing with enough power to vaporise anyone foolish enough to be in the same universe as him. He was the literal embodiment of power, a wolf-dragon hybrid so overwhelmingly strong that you couldn’t even look at him anymore - gazing upon this muscled tank of a body was a privilege offered only to those with enough power, and nobody was up to the task anymore. The magic was not hot or cold, nor was it dangerous in its own right, but at this level of sheer thaumic energy Zesuon’s slightest thoughts were carried out instantaneously. He could wave a hand and feel the universe tremble at the gesture, he could clench a fist and squeeze until existence rang with the screams of every living creature, all of them clutching their heads in agony. Reality was putty in his hands, and as a result his inexperienced touch was a little too rough to be sustained. He was destroying the universe more through accident than anything else. Still though, it was only to be expected when you wielded a body that would have made the gods themselves cry. He couldn’t even properly move his arms anymore, not just because of the biceps blocking the elbow but also because of his lats, which flared outwards so far he looked like he had a second pair of wings. There was not a single ounce of weakness in his body, not the faintest trace of it - in fact anything that was not strong to the point of insanity was obliterated, burnt away by the high requirements of the magic in him. Looking like this wasn’t the result of the power, it was merely a side effect, it was what allowed him to wield it. Without the body of a god, how could he hope to wield the power of a god?

Speaking of which, Zesuon decided that while releasing it was all well and good, it wouldn’t do to not at least attempt some kind of feat of strength, something to test his power. The trouble was testing himself was going to prove rather difficult, mostly due to the fact that there was literally nothing in existence that would even come close to withstanding his full strength. He was going to have to compromise one way or another, and so he decided to settle for the galaxy he was in. He held his hands out, wings outstretched fully, and let magic coalesce in his hands. It was all so easy - bending existence to his will should have been a herculean task, enough to make even deities leak whatever fluid they substituted for blood from every orifice, enough to turn their bodies to ash and purge their souls in magical fire. But for Zesuon it was just...simple. He wanted something to happen, and it happened. In this case he held out his hand, and watched curiously as slowly a miniature image of the galaxy formed above his hand. It ignited with a flash, and he was left with a galaxy hovering over his outstretched hand, held in place with dark purple energy. He grinned as he poked a finger into it, feeling countless suns and planets impact with the digit as little pinpricks of heat and pressure, the simple action enough to completely obliterate a chunk of the galaxy. It was an odd power discrepancy - what was just a slight movement for him was the apocalypse for those on the other end, an event of cosmic proportions, the end of times. Zesuon chuckled darkly as he pinched either end of the galaxy and slowly began to pull it apart. It had a little bit of resistance, somewhat like a rubber band in that the further it was pulled the more difficult it became, but it was still extremely easy to pull right up to the point where he ripped it in half. Around him space rent itself apart, twisting into strange shapes under his will, the wolf a conductor and reality his orchestra. He revelled in it, in the power, the scale of it all.

Above all though he revelled in himself. He was the one who had done this, he was the higher being now. His quest for power had finally reached its climax, he was witnessing the apotheosis of his search. Except this wasn’t the end, not even close. That’s the thing about power, Zesuon realised with a chuckle that reverberated throughout creation. It’s addictive. Now he could feel the universe itself, he could send tendrils of magic into every corner of creation and hunt the other souls, the celestials that had been sealed away so long ago. Won had only been the first, for once there were many of them, the gods of old that had long been forgotten. What would he be like after the next soul, after his already obscene power had been multiplied even further, when he had ascended past the need to even action his thought. What would it be like to not just reshape the universe, but to *[i]be [/i]*it? He couldn’t wait to find out.

With a snap of his fingers, the god vanished, off to claim what was his. And the universe quivered in fear, for there was nothing left to stop him.