

DEMONIC 1001

Chapter 1001 1001. Body

It had been too much. Since Noah stepped into the heroic ranks, the world's political environment had limited most of his actions.

An organization was stronger than a single cultivator. That was impossible to deny. However, those high enough in the cultivation journey could reach the point where they could ignore any limitation and threaten entire forces with only their power.

Noah wasn't there yet, but the situation in the hidden world was different. The cultivators there were scattered and enslaved, and their leader was nothing more than a bag of bones capable of releasing a powerful aura.

An attack with power in the sixth rank was a threatening ability, capable of reducing into ashes virtually any existence in the lower ranks. Yet, Noah wasn't a simple no one. His hybrid state gave him the best natural defense in the world, and his techniques put him in a realm of his own.

The experts in the fifth rank around him felt the need to help their leader, but Noah's sudden reaction made them take a step back. They couldn't even begin to understand how a liquid stage cultivator could have access to so much power.

The black metal that made the palace bent and screeched as the powerhouse's aura tried to suppress Noah's techniques. Snore's figure became smaller under that pressure, but its body turned into smoke that protected the parts casting the attacks.

Noah felt no pressure at all from inside the Demonic Form and his Blood Companion. His six blades were steadily held above his head, ready to unleash the second form of his martial art.

"You sure are strange!" The female voice resounded again in the hall as the rank 6 aura became more intense. "Rank 5 cultivators must have become so delusional on the surface!"

Noah didn't even mind those words. He had understood long ago that powerhouses didn't care about anyone in the lower ranks unless they needed something.

The skeleton would have already attacked Noah if she didn't need anything from him. However, her aura didn't even take the form of a spell. It was only becoming more intense as if she was trying to scare him into submission.

Noah activated the Divine Deduction technique and observed the flow of the "Breath" in the area. The inscriptions on his mind's walls helped him evaluate the situation more accurately, which led him to a simple conclusion.

"You can't cast many attacks, do you?" Noah asked in a rough voice mixed with growls.

There had to be limitations due to the powerhouse's poor state. Unorthodox techniques usually had harsh repercussions and endangered the overall power of a cultivator when abused.

The skeleton had abused anything that could prolong her life, which probably left her with little more than a trace of her hold aura.

The natives of that world exchanged glances before assembling in a battle formation around Noah. A few more cultivators arrived and joined the technique as soon as they understood the situation.

Noah ended up surrounded by eight rank 5 cultivators of various stages, but his eyes never left the skeleton. He didn't tilt his weapons either. His sole stance was a threat against the seemingly powerless powerhouse in front of him.

"You'll die!" The skeleton said with her usual childish voice.

"Kill me in one blow," Noah replied, "Or his pretense of a revolution of yours will end once for all."

Noah and the skeleton didn't back off and remained in that stalemate as they analyzed each other. Meanwhile, the cultivators surrounding him remained still as they waited for the situation to evolve.

Their unwillingness to attack made Noah crack a smile. Their hesitation was proof that they feared what he could unleash on their leader.

The powerhouse found it hard to believe that her instincts told her to avoid a direct contrast with Noah. She knew that her condition was beyond what the word poor could describe, but she still had access to attacks with power in the sixth rank.

Something on that level should be unreachable for cultivators in the lower ranks. She could understand that existences at the peak of the fifth rank could give her the feeling of having a chance to survive, but that sensation was astonishing when it came from Noah.

"What are you?" The female voice echoed again, but it sounded far more aged at that time. There weren't the childish exclamations anymore, but only a deep and profound tiredness.

Noah didn't answer. There was only one way to give hints about his species in that tense situation, which wasn't through words.

A crack appeared on the fuming helmet as Noah spread his mouth and lifted it to the ceiling. The world lost its light for an instant before revealing a column of ethereal and pale-white flames.

The natives almost broke their battle formation at that sight. They could accept that the giant snake had access to different kinds of attacks, but the ethereal flames came directly from Noah!

They had understood by then that Noah had a darkness aptitude. Yet, those flames made them aware that there was far more about his power that they didn't know. Moreover, there was one existence in the hall who recognized that fire.

"How can you possess the fire of the Light-devouring Dragons?" The skeleton said in her aged voice. "A giant snake as a puppet, darkness with various structures, and flames coming out of your lungs. What are you?"

Her aura slowly dispersed during her words, and her underlings broke the battle formation when they saw that. It was clear that their leader had silently decided to talk with the foreigner.

Noah inspected the experts around him and dispersed the Demonic Form when he sensed no more danger. Snore retracted its attacks too, but it resumed a solid form and coiled itself around Noah in a protective stance.

"Light-devouring Dragons," Noah said as he sat cross-legged on his Blood Companion, "I didn't know the name of their species. Heaven and Earth cursed them so many years ago that there aren't records about their past anymore."

The skeleton and her underlings remained silent as they watched Snore lifting Noah in the air.

"I fused with one of their kind," Noah revealed to make his figure as an inscription master more appealing to that force. "I'm the first artificial hybrid in the world."

Those Mortal Lands had never been aware of hybrids before King Elbas opened a portal to the other world. It was only normal that the cultivators trapped in those regions would have never thought that something like that was possible.

Yet, someone among them could immediately understand the benefits behind a hybrid body and how it could improve her situation.

"Can you fuse me too?!" The skeleton said a few instants after Noah revealed his hybrid status. "We have plenty of beasts here, and there isn't much left of me to fuse!"

Noah revealed a cold smile when he heard the childish voice resounding again, and he couldn't help but reply in an aloof tone. "I believe you need to offer something first."

Chapter 1001 1001. Body

It had been too much. Since Noah stepped into the heroic ranks, the world's political environment had limited most of his actions.

An organization was stronger than a single cultivator. That was impossible to deny. However, those high enough in the cultivation journey could reach the point where they could ignore any limitation and threaten entire forces with only their power.

Noah wasn't there yet, but the situation in the hidden world was different. The cultivators there were scattered and enslaved, and their leader was nothing more than a bag of bones capable of releasing a powerful aura.

An attack with power in the sixth rank was a threatening ability, capable of reducing into ashes virtually any existence in the lower ranks. Yet, Noah wasn't a simple no one. His hybrid state gave him the best natural defense in the world, and his techniques put him in a realm of his own.

The experts in the fifth rank around him felt the need to help their leader, but Noah's sudden reaction made them take a step back. They couldn't even begin to understand how a liquid stage cultivator could have access to so much power.

The black metal that made the palace bent and screeched as the powerhouse's aura tried to suppress Noah's techniques. Snore's figure became smaller under that pressure, but its body turned into smoke that protected the parts casting the attacks.

Noah felt no pressure at all from inside the Demonic Form and his Blood Companion. His six blades were steadily held above his head, ready to unleash the second form of his martial art.

"You sure are strange!" The female voice resounded again in the hall as the rank 6 aura became more intense. "Rank 5 cultivators must have become so delusional on the surface!"

Noah didn't even mind those words. He had understood long ago that powerhouses didn't care about anyone in the lower ranks unless they needed something.

The skeleton would have already attacked Noah if she didn't need anything from him. However, her aura didn't even take the form of a spell. It was only becoming more intense as if she was trying to scare him into submission.

Noah activated the Divine Deduction technique and observed the flow of the "Breath" in the area. The inscriptions on his mind's walls helped him evaluate the situation more accurately, which led him to a simple conclusion.

"You can't cast many attacks, do you?" Noah asked in a rough voice mixed with growls.

There had to be limitations due to the powerhouse's poor state. Unorthodox techniques usually had harsh repercussions and endangered the overall power of a cultivator when abused.

The skeleton had abused anything that could prolong her life, which probably left her with little more than a trace of her hold aura.

The natives of that world exchanged glances before assembling in a battle formation around Noah. A few more cultivators arrived and joined the technique as soon as they understood the situation.

Noah ended up surrounded by eight rank 5 cultivators of various stages, but his eyes never left the skeleton. He didn't tilt his weapons either. His sole stance was a threat against the seemingly powerless powerhouse in front of him.

"You'll die!" The skeleton said with her usual childish voice.

"Kill me in one blow," Noah replied, "Or his pretense of a revolution of yours will end once for all."

Noah and the skeleton didn't back off and remained in that stalemate as they analyzed each other. Meanwhile, the cultivators surrounding him remained still as they waited for the situation to evolve.

Their unwillingness to attack made Noah crack a smile. Their hesitation was proof that they feared what he could unleash on their leader.

The powerhouse found it hard to believe that her instincts told her to avoid a direct contrast with Noah. She knew that her condition was beyond what the word poor could describe, but she still had access to attacks with power in the sixth rank.

Something on that level should be unreachable for cultivators in the lower ranks. She could understand that existences at the peak of the fifth rank could give her the feeling of having a chance to survive, but that sensation was astonishing when it came from Noah.

"What are you?" The female voice echoed again, but it sounded far more aged at that time. There weren't the childish exclamations anymore, but only a deep and profound tiredness.

Noah didn't answer. There was only one way to give hints about his species in that tense situation, which wasn't through words.

A crack appeared on the fuming helmet as Noah spread his mouth and lifted it to the ceiling. The world lost its light for an instant before revealing a column of ethereal and pale-white flames.

The natives almost broke their battle formation at that sight. They could accept that the giant snake had access to different kinds of attacks, but the ethereal flames came directly from Noah!

They had understood by then that Noah had a darkness aptitude. Yet, those flames made them aware that there was far more about his power that they didn't know. Moreover, there was one existence in the hall who recognized that fire.

"How can you possess the fire of the Light-devouring Dragons?" The skeleton said in her aged voice. "A giant snake as a puppet, darkness with various structures, and flames coming out of your lungs. What are you?"

Her aura slowly dispersed during her words, and her underlings broke the battle formation when they saw that. It was clear that their leader had silently decided to talk with the foreigner.

Noah inspected the experts around him and dispersed the Demonic Form when he sensed no more danger. Snore retracted its attacks too, but it resumed a solid form and coiled itself around Noah in a protective stance.

"Light-devouring Dragons," Noah said as he sat cross-legged on his Blood Companion, "I didn't know the name of their species. Heaven and Earth cursed them so many years ago that there aren't records about their past anymore."

The skeleton and her underlings remained silent as they watched Snore lifting Noah in the air.

"I fused with one of their kind," Noah revealed to make his figure as an inscription master more appealing to that force. "I'm the first artificial hybrid in the world."

Those Mortal Lands had never been aware of hybrids before King Elbas opened a portal to the other world. It was only normal that the cultivators trapped in those regions would have never thought that something like that was possible.

Yet, someone among them could immediately understand the benefits behind a hybrid body and how it could improve her situation.

"Can you fuse me too?!" The skeleton said a few instants after Noah revealed his hybrid status. "We have plenty of beasts here, and there isn't much left of me to fuse!"

Noah revealed a cold smile when he heard the childish voice resounding again, and he couldn't help but reply in an aloof tone. "I believe you need to offer something first."

Chapter 1003 1003. Material

Everything trembled inside Noah's mind, but he managed to make out Skully's words before the world around him disappeared. His consciousness pressed on his walls to stop the tremors, but the violent pressure continued to make a mess of his sea of thoughts.

The sea under his half-transparent figure raged, and waves surged. They slammed on the floating runes and Snore's ethereal shape, flinging them away toward the walls.

The impact gave birth to more tremors, which slowed down the stabilization of the sea of consciousness. Noah feared that cracks would form soon, but the walls' sturdiness managed to suppress the shaking before any injury happened.

Luckily for him, he didn't resort to the innate ability of his mental energy yet. His mind was at the peak of its sturdiness after it underwent a long training period with the spherical rune and the Kesier Ape in the sixth rank.

Noah took a while to stand up, but Skully waited patiently. She didn't speak, and the cultivators at some distance didn't even mock him for his poor performance.

There was only a helpless understanding in their expressions. It was as if they knew what it was to be in Noah's condition.

Noah stood up and coughed a couple of times before all his functions returned to normal. His face was a mixture of disbelief and greed, and Skully's words echoed in his mind as if they were a perpetual mental message.

'The Seventh Kesier rune!' Noah shouted in his mind. What Skully had revealed didn't concern only the most desired item in the lower planes. It also opened the chance for a real victory against the Ape God!

"What do you mean by a piece of fur?" Noah asked in a hurry. "Don't tell me that this is the actual Seventh rune of the Ape God."

"It sure is!" Skully said with her childish voice. "I was there when that monkey took away its fur and fused it with the magma to create the black sky! It's almost poetic that it would be the first piece to fall!"

"It's not even close to its full power then," Noah replied as calculations appeared in his mind. He recalled every piece of information and legend concerning the Kesier species in a few seconds, and they all led to the same conclusion.

The Kesier Apes' power depended on the number of runes on their fur. If the Seventh rune was there, then the God should have a rank 6 battle prowess!

"Don't let your mind run so fast," Skully said in her ancient voice. "I was here when the first trail of magma gave light to this world. I saw the Seventh rune fall, but the God touching everything with its mental waves anyway. I think that its peculiar ascension has eliminated some of the known weaknesses of the species."

Skully's speech made sense, and Noah understood it almost immediately. The Ape God wasn't a normal divine entity. It had ascended through the sacrifice of multiple beings, shifting its evolution process on a different path compared to ordinary beasts of that species.

The Ape God might have retained some of its original power even after losing the Seventh rune.

Noah felt that he understood the rebel's hopes now. As long as the rune remained away from its original owner, the God would keep on losing power, and destroying the black sky quickened that process.

"I'll perform the procedure if you help bring it back to my organization," Noah said after thinking about it for a moment. "I need to warn you. The mortality of the fusion is quite high, and I can reach a positive percentage only when it's on myself."

"I turned myself into a skull to stay alive," Skully said. "I sacrificed my dantian and gave up to any feeling or ability to move only to remain alive and guide the new generations. I know the price of power. What I need is a chance to fight. You can take the damned rune if you give me my revenge."

It seemed that Skully's condition was far worse than Noah had predicted. However, he respected that such an old monster still had the will to fight. Only really talented cultivators would last for so long in that condition without giving up on their ambitions.

Noah activated the Divine Deduction technique as he neared the throne. A pale light came out of his vertical pupil as he analyzed the old bones to inspect how much of the original cultivator had remained after many millennia.

The rank 5 experts in the distance felt the need to intervene at that sudden act of disrespect, but Skully's aura stopped them from moving further. She knew how an expert worked. Noah was treating her as nothing more than a material now.

'She has sat on this throne for so long that her bones have gained part of its properties,' Noah thought as countless ideas filled his mind. 'I might be able to fuse some of the metal in her to improve her foundation before the fusion.'

"Is it possible in my condition?" Skully asked in her mature tone, but her voice carried a hint of worry. She feared that the only hope found in so many years would fall apart so soon.

"It's not impossible," Noah said while continuing his inspection. "Hard, dangerous, suicidal if you will, but possible. I would probably need to perform multiple procedures before approaching the actual fusion, but I should be able to try at least."

Noah was speaking the truth. There was hope for the ancient powerhouse. However, he still needed more data.

"I need a list with your preferences, tastes, and various details about your personality," Noah said, "You must be honest about everything. The slightest discrepancy between you and the specimen can cause the failure of the procedure."

"There is no need for that!" Skully said. "I've spent so much time studying the Kesier Apes that I've learnt to behave like them! I've lost my old personality, my name, and most of my memories, but I've created a new one by living in this slavery! Only those Apes can be my match."

Noah thought about it for a while before agreeing with her. She even lacked a dantian and focused everything on her mental sphere. Both she and the Apes had a wind aptitude too.

There was only one problem, and Noah had to request something from the native forces to solve it.

"Your body is a rank 6 material," Noah said. "Even in this destroyed state, it still retains the qualities of that level due to the unorthodox techniques applied over the years. I can't fuse you with a magical beast on a lower rank."

Skully remained silent for a few seconds before answering in her childish voice. "I guess you need to hunt a rank 6 Kesier Ape then."

Chapter 1004 1004. Hun

Any living being would become an unparalleled existence once reached the sixth rank. That was the peak of the heroic ranks and the power limit of the lower planes. Divine beings would usually leave the weaker worlds unless they were in peculiar situations.

Magical beasts in the sixth rank would be easier to hunt compared to cultivators and hybrids on the same level, but that didn't make them simple prey at all. Moreover, the forces in the hidden world weren't ideal for the task.

However, a hunt was different from a regular battle. Hunters could prepare the territory and their weapons before approaching their prey. As for studying the target, the cultivators in the hidden world had dealt with the Kesier species for ages. Each one of them was akin to an expert when it came to those Apes.

Noah stared at a simple mountain peak surrounded by a series of red waterfalls. That region was close to the rebel's headquarters, but it was still inside the range of the Ape God's mental waves.

According to Skully, the black sky helped the God spread its influence, so the rebel forces mined it. The lava lake where they lived was a blind spot in the divine beast's sight, and its summoning didn't reach there.

Skully had confirmed that the best target would be there. Those were the edges of the Ape God's domain. Any reinforcement would take at least a day to arrive, giving Noah and the other forces enough time for their plan.

Noah had eventually agreed to fuse Skully with a rank 6 Kesier Ape, but he had taken his time to prepare. More than fifteen years had passed since that agreement, marking Noah's twenty-first year since his discovery of the hidden world.

That period had been necessary to complete all the preparations needed to hunt a magical beast in the sixth rank. Yet, Noah didn't feel confident even after fifteen years spent plotting and training.

A rank 6 Kesier Ape in the lower tier lived in the mountain, and Noah had studied its habits and the terrain for almost five years by then. The creature was a perfectly healthy female specimen that came out of its lair twice a month.

Planting traps with such a predictable schedule was easy, but Noah knew that they wouldn't be enough to kill the Ape.

The plan saw him and other cultivators at the fifth rank's peak exploiting the traps to attack the creature. Still, their target was a magical beast in the sixth rank. They had to consider themselves lucky if they managed to hurt it.

The real killing force was in three disposable weapons that Noah had managed to create in those years. He wouldn't even have agreed to actuate the plan that day if it wasn't for them.

'I hope they are enough,' Noah thought as he stared at the mountain. 'I almost emptied their stash of black metal to complete these three.'

Three needles appeared in his hands, and Noah inspected them with the utmost attention. He had done that multiple times already, but he never felt that it was enough when it came to facing a creature in the sixth rank.

The needles were quasi-rank 6 items that Noah had forged after years of failures. Their core material was the black metal imbued with the Ape God's mental waves and processed for months in Noah's dark matter.

They were the best that Noah could do with his current expertise and power. His darkness needed to reach the solid stage for him to do better than that.

Of course, Noah was ready to fail. Yet, there was a slight chance that the plan could work. The only issue was that their strategy saw the Ape eventually getting tired, which was one of the most unlikely outcomes when dealing with a magical beast.

"I was wondering," Carl, one of the peak rank 5 cultivators that had joined the mission, said, "Do we have to be careful of its runes? I don't want to ruin the leader's body."

Noah turned toward Carl and saw that even the other four cultivators in his team looked at him with similar worries in their expressions. His eyes couldn't help but cold at that sight, and his aura became violent.

"If I catch any of you holding back," Noah said as growls fused with his human voice, "I'll switch to plan B and use each one of you as bait."

There were five peak rank 5 cultivators in his team, but all of them felt a lingering fear rising from the back of their mind. They didn't show any surprise at that feeling though. They had become used to the fact that Noah could scare them even if his centers of power were on a lower level.

A silent nod from their side ended the matter, and the group of six returned to stare at the mountain from their hiding spot nearby, waiting for their target to appear.

A tall Ape with six white runes on its fur eventually came out from one side of the mountain and floated toward the ground as expected by its usual routine.

The beast landed and walked toward a hole in the terrain. That was the entrance to a tribe's underground home. The Ape had the habit of taking a bite from one of the humans living under its domain.

However, a loud explosion happened as soon as it stepped on the edges of the hole. The detonation shook the earth and opened large cracks that spread toward the mountain, spreading tremors even on its rocky surface.

Noah and the others had come in contact with the tribe by digging long tunnels during the years of inspection. They had used the underground area to plant Instabilities at the peak of the fifth rank during the last week to minimize the chances that the Ape could notice their actions.

A storm of saber-shaped runes came out of the black cloud that formed after the explosion. They raged in every direction, but clinking sounds echoed from inside the corrosive smoke.

Noah had improved the Instabilities before the hunt. He had added the threatening properties of the Demonic Form and the Black Mark to increase their power.

The core material used was the black metal once again. There seemed to be nothing that it couldn't withstand, so Noah had used it in all his creations.

The cloud suddenly froze, and its smoke began to condense into a small sphere. The figure of the rank 6 Kesier Ape became visible again, and the hunting party could see that the explosion didn't even burn its fur.

The sphere descended into the hole, and the ground under the Ape's feet opened as if moved by an invisible force. The beast wanted to punish the humans that had dared to rebel, but it soon discovered that there wasn't anyone in the underground structure.

When Ape expanded its consciousness to look for its assailants, all the tunnels detonated, engulfing it into a vast cloud.

Chapter 1005 1005. Traps

Skully's knowledge had been crucial in the preparation of the plan. She knew how the Kesier Apes acted better than anyone else. She had even memorized the layout of their packs and the exact range of their consciousnesses.

Through the years, Skully's forces had come in contact with multiple tribes and had learnt how their rulers acted. In Noah's target case, the Ape didn't even bother scanning the region while remaining on the mountain.

Noah and his team had been able to plant many traps between its strolls. There were disposable items hidden everywhere and in numbers that could make any force flee in fear.

Carl nodded, and the group stood up to launch a series of long-range spells toward the massive cloud. The attacks didn't have any offensive property. They aimed to lock the Ape in place so that the smoke could affect it.

Ethereal barriers, walls, tall magical beasts, and puppets of various elements appeared around the cloud and isolated its form.

Seconds of silence passed among the hunting team. The six of them remained still as they waited for the powerful creature to show signs of life and reveal if it had suffered any damage.

The various spells around the cloud broke as an invisible pulling force made the smoke converge in another dark sphere, revealing the rank 6 Kesier Ape.

Noah's eyes scanned the creature, analyzing its body down to the smallest detail that he could see at that distance. His vertical pupils constricted as soon as he noticed the detonation had burnt some of its black hair.

There was a small black spot on the skin under its fur too. The Black Mark spell had managed to infect the creature, but it seemed unable to spread further.

That result made Noah happy. He had finally confirmed that there was hope in defeating that creature!

The hunting team had revealed their position during the last attack, and the rank 6 Ape didn't fail to sense the origin of those spells. Its head turned in the direction of the group, and it took a step on the air toward them as the two spheres floated behind its back.

Noah and the others felt their instincts screaming in fear when the Ape's focus went on them. There was a rank 6 creature coming in their direction, and all they could think about was to escape.

Noah had it even worse than his allies. Magical beasts had innate respect toward the power hierarchy, and sensing the aura of the Ape made him want to kneel.

However, his mind was superior to both human and magical beasts. That pressure wasn't enough to make him crumble, especially since he knew what the Ape would experience.

The Kesier Ape stepped on the ground once it crossed the hole formed after the detonation, but that action triggered another explosion. An even vaster cloud appeared in that spot, and a storm of saber-shaped runes filled the area.

"Again!" Noah shouted, and his companions relaunched their restrictive spells, constricting the corrosive smoke in a fixed form.

The spells remained in place a few seconds longer at that time. Yet, a cry suddenly resounded from inside the cloud, and both ground and smoke shot in every direction.

Noah felt his ears ringing as he stabbed his hands on the ground to resist the shockwave. The cultivators next to him used spells or clung on trees nearby to prevent losing their foothold.

Their hiding spot was a small patch of short trees near the mountain, but the shockwaves eradicated most vegetation between the group and the creature.

Another black spot had appeared on the Ape's skin, and another small patch of its fur was gone. The group's traps were slowly affecting the mighty creature, but they had made it furious in the process.

'Not yet,' Noah thought as Snore materialized behind him. The Blood Companion launched flames, sword-shaped lightning bolts, and a chilling gale as its wings unfolded and started to absorb the primary energy accumulated in the area.

Power at the peak of the fifth rank wouldn't be enough in that situation. Noah needed to push the limits of his mind and puppet at least half a step above that level.

Snore's attacks fell apart as they flew toward the Ape. An invisible force made the flames disperse and changed the trajectory of the gale. Only the lightning bolts managed to move a bit further and catch the beast in their range when they exploded.

The Ape barely noticed that some black sparks landed on its fur. Snore's attacks didn't follow the usual ranking due to the higher energy in their structure, but they could only reach the solid stage in terms of power.

A being in the sixth rank barely had to act to fend them off. Yet, Noah didn't attack to hurt the creature. He aimed to trigger the other traps in the area.

The destroyed ground lit up when the black sparks landed on it. Noah and the others had planted layers of various disposable items in the area. The bombs had different effects too and targeted multiple parts of the Ape.

The cloud that filled the region after the sparks triggered the explosion appeared different from the previous ones. The smoke flew in a circular motion and created a condensed area of destruction in the form of a sphere.

Noah had hidden a weapon capable of unleashing the Black Hole spell's effects among the various improved Instabilities. The smoke could focus on a smaller area in that way, and its density would increase, enhancing its destructive properties.

The experts at the peak of the fifth rank reinforced the black sphere with their spells and waited to see the result of that offensive. There was hope in their expressions since they could understand how many weapons the sparks had detonated in that spot.

Noah had mass-produced disposable weapons in the past years because he knew exactly the kind of threat that he was going to face. He had emptied the rebel's stash of black metal, but that had allowed him to create countless items.

The sparks had triggered more than two hundred disposable weapons at the peak of the fifth rank at the same time. The amount of power amassed in the rotating sphere was immense and shook the entirety of the region.

The restrictive spells slowly crumbled after a while, and the sphere began to show signs of instability. Another beast cry then sounded in the area and dispersed the entirety of the smoke.

The Kesier Ape reappeared in the open, and anger was everywhere on its face. Its expressions were remarkably humanlike, so everyone on the scene understood the intensity of its emotions.

A series of sharp feathers shot out of Snore's wings at that point. Most of them had power at the peak of the fifth rank, and only a few of them gave off the feeling that they had taken a step toward the next level.

Chapter 1006 1006. Brain

The Ape roared in anger again, and an invisible force slammed on the incoming feathers, crushing many of them in the impact. Still, there were hundreds of them, and some were more powerful than the others.

The stream of feathers engulfed the beast and slammed on its body, releasing clinking sounds that echoed in the area. Most of them shattered when they touched the fur, but a few of them managed to leave white marks on the skin underneath it.

One even pierced its skin when it hit the spot affected by the Black Mark. The poison in the disposable items had spread further after the last detonation, successfully weakening the Ape's body by a bit.

There were now sensitive spots on its skin, and the poison could only keep on spreading since the hunting team didn't give the beast any time to recover.

The Kesier Ape roared in anger when it saw the feather stabbed on its chest. The wound wasn't deep, but it felt humiliating to allow weaker beings to hurt it.

Its mental waves went crazy and released shockwaves that spread everywhere around it. The ground and the sky fell apart when that violent force swept them, and the trail of feathers either crumbled or changed direction during that chaos.

Nevertheless, a slim figure maintained its trajectory even among the storm of mental waves and landed directly in the Ape's right eye.

The beast was still roaring when a black needle stabbed its eye and exploded as soon as it found a body tissue that it couldn't pierce. The mental waves stopped raging at that point, and Noah could control the remaining feathers to aim them back at the Ape.

He had hidden one of his quasi-rank 6 disposable weapons in the gale of feathers and managed to decide accurately on its trajectory thanks to Skully's knowledge. If it weren't for her telling him exactly how the Ape would react when attacked, Noah would have never hoped to land such a precise blow.

Noah and his allies didn't waste that chance and launched their most potent spells toward the stunned creatures. A trail of multicolored spells flew together with a fuming six-armed dragon and crashed on the defenseless Ape.

The ground never stopped trembling during that battle, and the sky struggled to close the cracks that the many abilities caused. The last attacks worsened that situation, especially since the Ape released a condensed beam made of mental energy toward the hunting team.

Noah and the others were ready for that reaction and left their spots. Yet, the beam was too fast, and Carl's right leg vanished as he performed his evasive maneuver.

The expert clenched his teeth and shot a glance toward Noah, who had eyes only for the creature in the distance. Seeing him in one piece made Carl breathe a sigh of relief. After all, the plan would be a failure without him.

Noah kept his gaze on the Ape while a cold smirk lingered on his face. His aura became sharper whenever he saw a new injury appearing on his prey. He couldn't help but enjoy seeing that his power was finally allowing him to fight beings in that realm.

The Ape sensed his challenging gaze and launched another dense mental beam before shooting forward. Noah performed another evasive maneuver and commanded Snore to cast lightning bolts aimed at the creature's path.

Snore's attacks triggered more traps, and the same rotating sphere made of corrosive smoke and threatening saber-shaped runes appeared around the Ape. The rest of the hunting team quickly reinforced it with their spells and grouped again as they prepared themselves to activate the next traps.

The Ape roared to no end as it struggled to destroy the sphere. The smoke eventually dispersed due to its mental waves, but more black spots had appeared on its body by that time.

The hunting group retreated and triggered the traps planted beforehand as the Ape chased after them. Noah had created enough disposable weapons to arm entire nations in those years, and he had deployed most of them to kill the rank 6 specimen.

Cycles of explosions, spells, and retreats repeated themselves as Noah, and the others weakened the beast. Almost a thousand bombs with power at the peak of the fifth rank had exploded by then, but there seemed to be no end to it.

A second quasi-rank 6 needle eventually found its way toward the creature's left eye and exploded after it stabbed the organ deeply. Noah had managed to predict the precise moment when the Ape vanquished the smoke to catch it by surprise.

Another series of powerful spells landed on the Ape right after the needle detonated inside its skull. The hunting team wasn't giving it any time to breathe, which prevented it from attacking.

Noah and the others could remain safe most of the time in that way, and the Ape was slowly reaching its limits. The beast's fur was a mess, and only the six runes had remained intact. Its skin showed numerous cuts, some even deep enough to reach its internal organs.

However, the vitality of a beast in the sixth rank was immense. The Ape still charged and destroyed attacks without the slightest effort. Only Noah's attentive eyes could notice the small changes and delay in its reactions.

The plan was working, but they needed the third needle to deliver the finishing blow. The first two had managed to hurt the Ape quite severely, but not enough to kill it.

Noah's eyes became resolute when he realized how deeply the poison was affecting the Ape. There was a high chance that he could create an opportunity for his allies.

"Aim for the brain," Noah said as he passed the last needle to Carl and shot toward the Ape.

A layer of black ice and rocks covered his figure before the corrosive smoke turned him into a fiend. Snore's figure enveloped him too as he marched toward the beast.

The Ape unleashed a gale of mental waves when it sensed Noah's presence, but those ethereal attacks weren't enough to pierce his defensive methods. Also, the beast was nowhere near its peak, which affected the power of its attacks.

More traps detonated, and more spells landed on the creature as Noah marched forward and released roars. He was challenging it to a physical battle right on that spot.

The Ape's mind was a mess of anger and pain, and Noah's roars triggered its most basic instincts, making it shoot directly at him. It didn't even bother to use its mental waves during the charge.

Noah executed the second form of his martial art, and a deep cut appeared on the Ape. Still, the beast didn't stop its charge and used its long fingers as claws as it slashed its arms at him.

Noah quickly raised his arms and blocked the blows, struggling to resist the immense force trying to reduce him into pieces. He didn't even have any remaining power to launch flames.

Yet, the Ape suddenly went limp and kneeled in front of him, showing a fuming hole on the back of its head.

Chapter 1007 1007. Procedure

Noah stared at the corpse of the rank 6 Kesier Ape for only an instant before storing it inside his second space-ring.

That wasn't the time to lose himself in the overwhelming pride that was filling every corner of his body. There were still many procedures to perform, and he couldn't let the material suffer even more damages.

Carl's couldn't help but tremble in excitement as he watched the Ape disappear from his sight. It had taken all his determination to approach the beast from behind, and he almost didn't believe that the small needle had dealt the fatal blow.

His hands shook at the thought that he had killed a being in the sixth rank. He was a powerful expert, but he had always known that he was ordinary for his level. The success of the hunt made him feel something that he had never experienced before.

There were deeper emotions hidden under that intense sensation of power, and the other four experts felt them too.

Since birth, the natives had lived under the Kesier Apes' rule, and now they had managed to kill one of their strongest specimens. That achievement made them feel as if their revolt was finally starting.

Noah's spells dispersed, revealing the poor state of his robe. Even with all his protection and the Ape's weakened status, the last attack had affected his body.

The skin on his forearms showed large bruises, and his arms felt sore. His shoulders let out cracking sounds when Noah moved, and his waist felt stuck in place.

Approaching a rank 6 magical beast had been a reckless move, but Noah had done his math. The Black Mark had given him a general understanding of the Ape's condition, and his many spells had ensured his temporary safety.

It was a calculated risk that Noah had been willing to take to create an opening in the creature's defense and test his current prowess. Now he knew that there was still an abyss between him and the sixth rank.

However, he had understood that it wasn't out of reach. It would be enough for any of his centers of power to experience a breakthrough to shorten that distance by a lot.

Noah quickly suppressed the thoughts concerning his power to focus on the impelling issue. He had obtained the corpse needed for the fusion, but Skully was unable to undergo the procedure.

"Noah!" Carl shouted before the other experts aligned next to him. "You have my deepest gratitude!"

Carl bowed toward Noah, and his companions did the same. Their gesture was a simple demonstration of gratitude toward the expert that had made such an incredible feat possible.

"It's a pity that you have so little black metal," Noah said as he turned toward the rebel's headquarters. "We could have started a proper invasion otherwise."

The hunting group remained speechless at that claim. They had helped Noah planting the many disposable weapons, so they knew how many resources they had used to kill a single rank 6 magical beast.

Noah had used most of the black metal that the natives had mined since they first rebelled to create the inscribed items deployed that day. He had kept a few of them for himself, but everything else had gone into the hunt.

However, Noah didn't seem to care about the expenses or the dangers of the hunt. He acted as if he could repeat that extraordinary deed easily as long as he had enough resources.

There were a few unexploded traps in the area, but the hunting team could take care of them. Noah had to return to the headquarters to prepare the rest of the procedures.

The road back to the black palace floating on the lava lake was uneventful, and Noah went directly inside the room that he had used in the past years during his experiments. It was one of the palace's sturdiest areas, and the black metal that made its walls managed to absorb any shockwave caused by Noah's experiments.

The metal had power varying between the peak of the fifth rank and the middle tier of the sixth. That depended on how much time it had spent on direct contact with the sea of magma above.

The longer the magma tempered it, the harder and more powerful it became.

Noah had to rely on his dark matter to loosen the metal before he could use it during the forging. The procedure wasn't too tricky with the parts at the peak of the fifth rank, but it took time when it came to the more challenging pieces.

The same went for the Kesier Ape's corpse that he had just obtained. Noah didn't have the power to mold it as it was. He needed to loosen it up before he could make the necessary modifications.

The modified version of the Black Hole spell appeared in his palm, and Noah threw it toward the center of the empty room as he poured his darkness into the environment. The area's temperature was high already, so Noah only had to release enough "Breath" to create a dark star right in the center of the room.

The gravitational pull was intense, but Noah had become used to working in that environment by then. The corpse of the Ape appeared in his hands, and he threw it directly inside the star.

The dark matter moved as the corpse entered the sphere and began to float at its center. It remained suspended mid-air, right where the higher energy had the highest density.

That was the method that Noah had used in the past to loosen up the black metal. The dark matter was peaceful at the star's center, but the gravitational pull imbued it inside the materials.

In that way, Noah would have some control over the processed items' internal structure, and he could use them even if his level wouldn't usually allow that.

Noah walked through the dense dark matter and inspected the Ape's corpse. Most of its black fur was gone, and even its six Kesier runes showed some damage. Its skin was a gory mess, and its eyes were beyond saving.

The brain had suffered heavy damages too, but the higher energy was already filling the hole on the back of the beast's head.

Noah's dark matter was a pure expression of his creation. It could theoretically replace any material and enhance its natural properties. However, that didn't apply to materials on a higher level of the dark matter. Noah's higher energy couldn't create something stronger than itself. Still, it could make some patches.

The patches had to find harmony with the material's structure, which was harder to do when it came to something as complex as a rank 6 magical beast.

Noah didn't know how much the dark matter could fix those injuries, but he had another pressing issue now. He had to prepare Skully's body for the fusion.

Chapter 1008 1008. Reinforcing

"So," Skully said as Noah inspected her bones from various angles, "I won't be able to see with my new body."

The two of them were alone in the throne hall, and Noah had just finished explaining to her the damages that the rank 6 Kesier Ape had suffered during the hunt.

Organs as the eyes and the brain were above the dark matter patching abilities, and Noah couldn't recreate them at his current level. Skully would have to adapt, but he knew she wouldn't complain at all once fused with the Ape.

Noah had to fix the frailty of what remained of her body before approaching any form of fusion. Still, his inscription methods were too harsh for her, so he had to find a way to make the process more natural.

Luckily for him, he had already found a material that worked perfectly for her, which could help in the forging.

Skully had sat on that throne for who knew how many centuries. Her mental waves had interacted with it for so long that its black metal was part of her.

She had used the other Mortal Lands' natives' inscription method unconsciously and had turned the entire throne in a material that reflected all her shades. Noah couldn't imagine using anything else to improve her skeleton's structure.

"Your mental abilities will be stronger," Noah said as he distanced himself to get a clear picture of her overall condition. "I'm quite curious to see by how much. Yet, you might take a while to get used to it since we destroyed the Ape's brain."

"That's fine!" Skully said in her childish voice. "I missed the training during the years stuck in this form!"

Noah could only sigh at the sight of that excitement. The powerhouse didn't know how many things could go wrong when using the Elemental Forging method, and she had to undergo two of them.

Moreover, there were polishing sessions on both bodies to complete. Noah couldn't leave them in the way they were, mostly since there were many incomplete body parts.

"Carl," Noah said in a soft tone, and the expert in the fifth rank limped inside the hall, "Prepare the team to move her. I need to work on this throne."

Carl performed a bow and limped back outside the hall. He could fly, but he needed to become used to his regrowing leg.

There were only a few alchemists among the natives of the hidden world, but their level of expertise was far below average. They couldn't concoct drugs powerful enough to heal Carl's leg in just a few days.

The cultivators in the black palace had initially been doubtful about Noah's presence among them, but the recent hunt had improved his status by a lot.

Moreover, the news that he was giving another body to their leader had improved their mood. He wasn't a foreigner anymore in their eyes, but they wanted to know if he could do what he claimed before worshipping him as a savior.

Carl returned with a group of peak rank 5 cultivators that used their most soft spells to lift Skully's skeleton and empty the throne. Noah waited for them to leave the hall before processing the throne's black metal with the small star made of higher energy.

All he had to do now was waiting for both Ape's corpse and throne to absorb part of the dark matter and give Noah some power over their structure.

It took a few months for the throne's fabric to give up and let the higher energy affect it. Noah sensed it immediately and prepared himself for the next phase of his plan.

The expert at the peak of the fifth rank prepared a room where they laid Skully on a metallic table. There were old traces of inscriptions around it, but they were too consumed to work.

Noah reached the room carrying a large slab of black metal carved out of the processed throne. There was dense smoke seeping out of it, but the item appeared harder than before.

The experts backed down when Noah neared the table and placed the slab right next to Skully, who seized the chance to mock him. "Imagine killing me right in front of my men!"

Noah ignored her line and placed his hands above the skeleton and the slab. The dark matter came out of his body and created an incubating chamber around the table, isolating it from external eyes.

"It's a good thing that you can't feel pain," Noah said as he hinted that he was about to start.

"Yes!" Skully said. "Years of suffering to obtain my dreamed Ape's body! I hope it will be worth the wait!"

Noah didn't hesitate any further and began to control his darkness so that it activated the dark matter inside the slab and forced it to liquefy. An intense sense of life filled the room as soon as Noah's imbued "Breath" made its appearance. That sensation was so fierce that Carl's healing speed increased by a bit.

The liquid metal floated toward the old and destroyed bones and began to seep in their structure. Getting inside them was easy, but fixing them was a slow and methodic procedure.

Noah controlled the metal so that it filled every hole in the bones and improved their overall structure. A black layer even appeared over them, showing how more resistant they had become.

That part was relatively easy. The only side that could cause Noah any problem was the skull due to its sensitive matter inside. There wasn't a brain there. Skully had replaced it thanks to one of her unorthodox techniques. Yet, it was a sensitive spot, and Noah had to pay his utmost attention when fusing it with the metal.

Noah continued until all the slab ended. He had done his math and knew that the Ape's body could withstand the skeleton's new weight without getting affected by it.

The process ended smoothly. Skully survived the procedure, and Noah found himself closer to the laws of creation after he had done all that work. There had been times when he had to recreate entire bones to give stability to Skully's overall structure. The skeleton was too old, and it had lost most of its original power.

Skully ended up in a coma. The new bones and the different substance inside her had to find some harmony, especially since she would have to endure the fusion.

Noah wouldn't have forced her to undergo another fusion even if the Ape's body was ready. Even a few years might not be enough to make Skully gain some stability with her new skeleton.

A couple of years had to pass for both Skully and the Kesier Ape's corpse to be ready for the fusion, and Noah decided to wait a few more months anyway after that point. Then, he brought Skully and the body into his training area, ordering everyone to leave them alone.

He was going to create the second artificial hybrid. He couldn't have an audience.

Chapter 1009 1009. Fusion

Noah had turned himself into a hybrid when he was only a human cultivator. His mind had reached the heroic ranks before the experiments back then, but he didn't have to face all the issues connected with individualities.

According to his own words, it was impossible to find a magical beast that suited the individualities' uniqueness. They didn't exist in nature, so no other creature could imitate them entirely, not even if planned.

However, Skully had lost her dantian long ago, and her personality had fallen apart in those millennia spent trapped under the rule of the Ape God.

Her entire existence had become an empty vessel filled with pieces of information regarding the Kesier species, and she had acquired some of their peculiarities too. She was the only cultivator who could claim to be entirely in tune with those beasts.

Noah would feel like fusing two magical beasts with a similar species due to the absence of individualities and Skully's connection with the Apes. The only issue was with her sea of consciousness.

Unlike his fusion, Noah couldn't use Skully's body as the core item because it was nothing more than bones. He had to use the Ape as the primary material and fuse the powerhouse inside it.

That meant transferring Skully's mental sphere inside the Ape and make her use its brain once she became a hybrid. Noah knew that there might be complications in that aspect of the fusion, but he was ready to prevent them.

The procedure had required him to eliminate Heaven and Earth's will before fusing the dragon's tissues back then. Yet, Skully barely had any "Breath" on her skeleton, and Noah's expertise was on a whole higher league compared to the past.

The innate destruction radiated by his darkness had removed any trace of Heaven and Earth's will from her skeleton during the first forging. What remained to do now was clearing the remaining strands of the Ape's consciousness before starting the fusion.

Noah placed a finger on his forehead, and a ghostly humanoid figure came out of it when he pulled it away. The shape was an almost transparent will that had his facial features.

Skully inspected the scene with her consciousness as she lay on a large metal table next to the Ape's corpse. She could sense the violent energy inside the will, and the intense hunger radiated by its form, but there was something strange too.

The will didn't have "Breath" in its structure, but something far more volatile, and that worked with laws that she didn't understand.

The powerhouse couldn't possibly know that Noah had used primary energy to build that will. As the expression of his destruction, that energy was the perfect tool to eliminate the remains of the Ape's consciousness.

Noah inserted the will in the beast's body. The greed inside enhanced his mental waves' intrinsic properties and devoured any remnant of its consciousness, leaving only the laws that ruled its tissues intact.

Noah left the will inside the corpse for a few hours. Skully's mind would probably take over any remnant trace of the beast's thoughts once fused, but he didn't want to risk it. Moreover, the Ape was a rank 6 creature, which left Noah with no choice but to be thorough with that procedure.

The will came out stronger after coming out of the Ape due to the pieces of consciousness devoured. Noah could use it to improve his mind, but he limited himself to store it for now.

The dark matter came out of his heart and enveloped the large table, isolating both Skully and the Ape. Noah then lifted the skeleton and placed it over the beast as it gave the powerhouse one last inspection.

Skully's existence had harmonized with the black metal in her skeleton by then. Those dark bones were part of her and carried traces of her mind.

There was a limit to how much Noah had managed to polish both bodies. His higher energy had filled most injuries and patched eventual missing tissues, but it couldn't alter rank 6 materials too much.

Everything else would be up to Skully once she became a hybrid. It would be up to her and her evolution as a new existence to determine what she could fix and change.

"I'm going to start," Noah said as he placed his hands on the membrane made of higher energy. He was about to begin the procedure, but Skully wanted to say a few things first.

"Noah," Skully said in her ancient voice, "Don't forget about us if I die."

Noah opened his mouth to speak but eventually decided otherwise.

It wasn't the best choice to give his cold answers to someone about to experience the fusion. He had already decided that he would rely on the Hive if he didn't manage to handle the situation by himself.

Noah's darkness activated the higher energy, which forced Skully's body to liquefy and fuse with the corpse under it. He wasn't in a hurry at that time, so he could proceed slowly and double-check his every move.

There wasn't enough of Skully to fill the Ape, so he had to distribute her parts across the beast's core spots. Only her skull fused entirely with the creature's brain to ensure the powerhouse control over the body.

That wasn't a perfect fusion by far. Skully would have to slowly expand her control over her new body by using those core spots. When considering that she didn't have a body for millennia, hers was a rehabilitation.

The black skeleton eventually disappeared, and only the Ape remained. Noah fused even the internal tissues and adjusted their harmony before stepping back toward the area's exit.

He had fused everything. Skully and the Ape's tissues had become one. However, the only way to know if the procedure had succeeded was to wait for the hybrid to wake up.

"Prepare the defenses," Noah said as his back touched the door connected with the rest of the palace. "She should be weaker than our prey."

The sound of steps resounded behind him. Noah had warned the peak rank 5 rebels that the fist awakening after the fusion was usually traumatic. There might be the need to fight until Skully regained control of her mental faculties and kill her if she didn't.

"Noah!" Carl said from the other side of the door. "Black clouds are gathering inside the sea of magma. You were right. A Heaven Tribulation is coming!"

Noah smiled hearing that. He didn't want to fight another rank 6 being that he couldn't eat. The Tribulation could help them exhausting Skully until she regained consciousness.

A thick aura spread from the large table and covered the entirety of the structure. Noah sensed the aggression contained inside those mental waves and exited the room before a deafening cry resounded in the area.

Skully had woken up, but that roar didn't contain anything human!

"She's hungry," Noah said in a cold tone as he pointed at the sky. "Let's drive her upward. Let Heave and Earth handle this one."

Chapter 1010 1010. Control

Noah and the rebels had decided to use the metal palace for the fusion even if they knew that a Heaven Tribulation would arrive.

They didn't know how Skully would wake up, so they preferred to use the palace for its defensive properties. They could always bait the hybrid outside if it awakened in a violent state.

Noah, Carl, and the other peak rank 5 experts that had remained inside the palace during the fusion exchanged a glance before their auras spread outward.

The dense pressure originating from Skully's room pressed on their minds, but it didn't focus them. It was an innate act of a powerful creature in a confused state trying to become aware of its surroundings.

The cultivators' auras made it concentrate on them and press on their minds with even more intensity. Noah and the others struggled under that pressure, but they promptly retreated to escape from its range.

Another angry roar resounded from Skully's room as the consciousness of the hybrid chased after the escaping cultivators. Loud stomps soon echoed through the palace, emitting the unmistakable sound of a massive creature walking on sturdy metal.

The hybrid opened the room door and found a large hall with a broken throne placed at its center. A wave of confusion made it stagger for a few steps, but anger soon filled its mind again.

Some memories tried to take over its instincts, but they made it lose control of its body whenever they resurfaced. The creature didn't like that sensation, so it suppressed them and continued to march toward the escaping presences.

The chase eventually brought the Ape outside of the palace, but a dangerous sensation quickly enveloped its mind when it felt the outside world's fresh air. Its reactions were slow though, so it didn't manage to escape the lightning that fell directly on its head.

The Ape fell on its knees, and blood started flowing from its head. The lightning bolt had managed to hurt it, but that pain felt strangely refreshing.

The beast touched its head and sensed that a long cut had appeared on top of it. Moreover, there was a spot on its nape where the skin felt different.

Memories resurfaced as the sensation piled in its mind, but the danger of the Tribulation in the sea of magma above made it suppress them again. The survival instinct surpassed every other feeling in intensity.

Noah watched the scene from inside one of the red waterfalls that filled the area. He saw the Ape shooting in the sky and aiming for one of the larger cavities in the black layer as it went after the origin of the Tribulation.

'It's quite weak,' Noah thought when he focused on the sparks accumulated inside the sea of magma.

Noah had created a hybrid in the sixth rank, so it felt only normal that the Heaven Tribulation would have a similar strength. However, those lightning bolts were at the bottom of the sixth rank in terms of power.

It seemed that the location of the hidden world interfered with the laws imposed by Heaven and Earth. Even their Tribulations found it hard to express their full power there.

Moreover, the black sky blocked many lightning bolts, and only those that aimed for the holes in the metallic layer could hope to hit their target.

Noah didn't find anything on the expressions of the peak rank 5 experts hidden in waterfalls near him. They showed awe and fear toward that lightning storm, meaning that they didn't find anything strange with that level of power.

'Maybe the God has something to do with this,' Noah glanced at the palace before focusing again on Skully. There was a proper divine item in that world. That had to affect the laws meant for heroic cultivators.

The Ape floated in the sky before a few lightning bolts slammed on its body. Wounds opened on its chest and shoulders, and dense black smoke came out of them.

The Tribulation was threatening that newly created body's stability, dispersing part of the dark matter that had patched its previous injuries.

The impact flung the hybrid back on the ground, but it quickly stood up and relied on its innate ability to defend against other incoming lightning bolts.

An invisible barrier formed around its figure as it shot again in the sky. The Tribulation's attacks created ripples in that shield made of mental energy, and they managed to crack it only when the Ape was about to reach the sky.

The Ape fell toward the ground again, ending directly inside the lava lake where the palace floated. The scorching sensation couldn't do anything against its powerful body, but Noah felt worried when he saw the amount of dark matter dispersed after the impact.

'This won't do,' Noah thought as he stepped out of the red waterfall.

The pride carried by his aura intensified as the images of his battle against the rank 6 Kesier Ape resurfaced in his mind. That feeling peaked when he recalled the sensations felt when he managed to block its physical attack with his arms.

Carl and the others felt that Noah had suddenly become more dangerous. It wasn't his power to have changed, but the violence of his aura. They felt as if a magical beast had suddenly replaced their ally.

Noah released a roar, and the world lost its light for an instant. A pillar made of transparent white flames spread horizontally and affected some of the lightning bolts' trajectory.

The pressure radiated by the Tribulation focused on Noah at that point. He had interfered with someone else's test, so he had become a target too.

Nevertheless, another roar resounded in the area before the sparks in the magma could create attacks aimed at Noah. The cry was long, and its tone became clearer and more human as it continued.

Noah had put all his pride as a hybrid in his last cry, and he had even ordered Skully to wake up. He was weaker than her when it came to the food chain, but there was a chance that his roar could awaken her human mind.

A whirlpool formed in the lava lake after the cry and a large empty area formed right in the middle of those red waters. A figure slowly flew out of it, and Carl's group couldn't help but rejoice at that sight.

Noah saw the Kesier Ape sitting on a floating throne made of lava. The beast sat in the same position that Skully had maintained for millennia, which confirmed that the powerhouse had gained control of her new body.

Skully appeared unable to move, but she was using her innate ability quite skillfully. Her mental waves kept the throne solid, and she floated without using "Breath".

"Thank you, Noah Balvan," Skully said in an ancient voice mixed with growls. "You can step back. I have too much to remember about being alive!"

As she finished speaking, Skully shot upward, protected by an invisible barrier that the Tribulation didn't manage to pierce. Then, she crossed one of the cavities and dived in the sea of magma, disappearing from Noah's sight.