

DEMONIC 1051

Chapter 1051 1051. Last rebels

Noah's dantian had reached its limit, and even his incredible body had begun to feel tired. His mind wasn't better off since Noah had jumped in the battle right after his long travel.

Pieces of the corpses in his ring came out and ended up in his mouth while he stared at the departing creature. He couldn't do anything about the last Steeled Octopus.

He had suffered too much during the battle and due to the after-effects of his new techniques. Moreover, fueling the dark star only helped his body, so his other centers of power needed rest and traditional training to recover.

However, Noah had managed to stop the rebellion and save the dimensional portal, other than gathering a total of eight corpses belonging to hybrids in the sixth rank. He could only feel satisfied with that outcome.

Snore's layers of protection eventually shattered, and it reformed around him. The Blood Companion had managed to remain in defense of the tunnel while Noah fought the leaders, but it couldn't resist anymore after the dark matter in its structure lost its power.

The solid form taken using the water and earth element was the only reason it didn't shatter immediately. Those abilities had to break before it felt forced to return in its master's range.

Noah descended toward the city as cheers welcomed him back among the loyal forces. Those ecstatic cries faded a bit when the weaker assets saw his cold expression and dirty figure, but the Elders of the Hive continued their cheerful hymn.

Noah didn't have the grand and pure aura of a hero. His clothes weren't flashy nor clean. His appearance was that of a fiend that scanned the environment with cold eyes.

Blood and pieces of internal organs covered his entire figure, and his black robe had become nothing more than a pile of rags that barely remained on his body.

Everyone understood his true nature at that sight and accepted the truth. No hero had risen to save them, but a Demon did, and his performance had been spectacular.

Noah gazed at those cheerful troops feeling nothing but coldness. Creating his first technique had made him happy, but he still couldn't shake off the bitter taste caused by Luke's betrayal.

'Killing the past to take another step into the future,' Noah thought as the loyal forces opened a path for him, 'What a bitter way to improve.'

His mind became calmer as he accepted that outcome. Every cultivator had a personal path, and they often clashed with each other. Luke's decisions had happened to go against Noah's agenda, and he had died because of that.

That had happened many times already, and Noah knew that he would face it again in the future. His path had always been about cutting every hindrance that appeared in his way. The nature of his journey didn't change since his childhood, and he didn't regret it in the slightest.

Noah walked until he reached a group of cornered rebels arrayed in a defensive formation around a cultivator at the peak of the solid stage. The man at the center wore golden armor and had similar facial features to Angela's, with the only difference being his short golden hair.

"You should have helped us!" The man shouted when he saw Noah approaching the group. "You have become one of them!"

Noah didn't want to waste time with those rebels. The man in the solid stage appeared to be the leader of a faction, but he was nothing more than an ant cursing his life after his plans had failed.

Noah's consciousness expanded, ready to kill the rebels in one blow. Yet, chains appeared on their bodies and space-rings when they sensed a threat approaching.

"I have the best findings of our studies on my possession," The man shouted, lifting his palm to show the space-ring inside it. "Not even a powerhouse can stop me from destroying them."

Noah recognized those tattoos. They were the same inscriptions that he and the Demons had been unable to stop when they captured Angela.

The man showed a satisfied smile when he saw Noah's consciousness halting its advance and began to state his conditions. "My name is Ebano Elbas, last leader of the rebels. I want a safe passage toward the end of the continent and an oath that no one will hunt us for the next one thousand years."

"In exchange for those studies, I bet," Noah said as his aura became calm.

Ebano was right. Noah had long since lost his status as a lone cultivator, and he had even accepted other people in his life. He had become a core part of the organizations that had once suppressed him too.

However, that change had made him stronger. He would express only destruction if he didn't become able to make his individuality accept life too. He wouldn't have higher energy nor most of his creations.

Power couldn't come only from destruction. Ravaging Demon had walked on that path and failed miserably.

"No," Ebano said, "We are better than the research teams in the main world. We will slowly trade our studies for resources once established the oaths."

The loyal troops' faces twisted, revealing angry but helpless expressions. They had already pillaged the other rebels, and they had confirmed that Ebano's group owned the most valuable studies.

A peak rank 4 Elder of the Hive informed Noah about that fact, and Ebano couldn't help but announce the contents of his rings happily. "Do you want to know how to trigger the transformation? Are you interested in the brainwashing method? Do you desire an item capable of deactivating any formation? I have far more in my rings!"

Worried gazes landed on Noah's back as the negotiation continued. The loyal assets knew that Ebano's threat was real since Noah had yet to end that situation.

Noah had to admit that the other world's research teams had achieved incredible successes during the centuries spent there. He felt interested in what they had found, but he didn't see any way out of that situation.

His mouth opened, and black flames surrounded the group, reducing the weaker cultivators into ashes in less than an instant. Ebano lasted a full second before his entire body burned.

The tattoos had activated as soon as the flames touched their bodies. The space-rings of the group shattered, and no items came out of them. A starry sky had taken the place of the last rebels.

Many buildings crumbled as Noah's attack spread through the city, but the defensive formations eventually stopped it. Yet, the loyal forces stared at him in shock.

Noah had just destroyed the studies that had almost taken control of a world. No amount of Credits would have been enough to buy them. Years of progress vanished in his merciless fire.

No one dared to contradict him. His aura was so sharp that they feared to get close to him. After all, his flames had barely avoided hurting anyone.

Chapter 1052 1052. Intimacy

The loyal troops of the Elbas family shot toward the ashes of the rebels after the flames dispersed. They madly searched through the remains of Noah's destruction, but there was nothing left in the area.

Their angry gazes shot toward Noah when they realized that they had lost those studies forever. The Elbas family's factions had invested a lot in the research, and now everything was gone.

However, they didn't complain. The Royals could only lower their gazes when they met the cold reptilian eyes. It was as if Noah was waiting to have an excuse to kill them.

"Restore the teleportation matrices," Noah said as he turned to leave. "I want to see everything that you have retrieved."

The fact that he was the only powerhouse there made him the ruler of the entire world. No one could oppose him, so he could exploit the situation as much as he wanted.

He didn't decide to destroy the studies due to a whim. Ebano's plan was solid, and it would have forced the three ruling organizations to waste resources and share the trades' gains.

Yet, the Hive didn't have much to lose. Actually, obtaining and sharing those studies would have weakened its position in the main world.

The Hive was the only force that could deploy hybrids efficiently and without risking a revolt. Obtaining the studies would have improved its understanding of the compound, but it would have also taken away its advantage.

If every organization were to learn how to produce and control hybrids, the Elbas family would soon surpass both the Hive and the Council regarding knowledge in that field.

The Royal Pool wouldn't be the only problem of the alliance. The Elbas family would obtain the perfect method to weaponize magical beasts and improve its cultivators' overall power.

The Hive and the Council could do the same, but they didn't have as many experts as their enemy. Sharing that knowledge would slowly make them fall behind in the political environment.

Instead, now that the studies were no more, the Hive could continue to hold the monopoly over obedient hybrids and living weapons, making it a threatening force to face. The Council would benefit from the trades with its ally, while the Elbas family would have to restart their research.

Noah didn't believe that he could restrain the Royals forever, but his decision had made his organization gain more time.

Only the higher-ups of the other world's forces understood the reasons behind his actions, and they couldn't help but fear his ruthlessness. Noah had decided to destroy studies capable of changing the cultivation journey forever to preserve his organization's advantage.

He had made the whole world suffer only to benefit a bit more from his current position.

Noah sent a series of mental messages through his inscribed notebook while he occupied the fortress's best training area. His mind was too busy handling his bitter mood and his excitement toward his potential to care about his image.

He had accepted that he couldn't do anything to stop his negative feeling. They were inevitable since they were the consequence of his wide path.

'Men can truly appreciate happiness only after they experience sadness,' Noah thought as he let his mind wander while cultivating inside the training area. 'I appreciate strength because I know weakness. I appreciate life because I know death.'

Killing Luke made him feel as if he had negated part of his past, but he had taken steps toward the future.

That mindset had helped him during the travel. Those bitter feelings had sharpened his mind, allowing him to complete his movement technique in a little more than two months.

The Demons eventually returned, and June came right after. Noah found truth in his previous thoughts when his lover caressed his face as if knowing that something disturbed his mind.

"You expose yourself to more sufferings as your existence reaches new levels of greatness," June said as she laid her head on his lap. "A being pursuing only destruction can't feel, but it can't improve either. An existence that can only create will feel everything, but it will never take a step for fear of hurting grass."

Her words resounded in the training area as she turned to find a comfortable position on him. The Demons left when they saw that the couple was having one of their intimate moments, and they felt that both of them needed to rest.

"An existence in the middle of both realms might go nowhere," Noah said as he caressed her hair. "His duality might crush him while he looks for what he is."

"There has never been a middle, Noah," June said. "You of all existences should know that we can't strive for balance anymore. We either take everything, or we die."

June was mostly speaking for herself, but her battle intent had always shared similar features to Noah's ambition. The two of them had both chosen difficult paths and were suffering from different backlashes.

June's Perfect Circuit couldn't contain the immense power that she had obtained, and Noah's individuality made him lose himself in thoughts concerning the nature of his existence often.

"You couldn't contain your battle intent," Noah said while wearing a smile and looking at his lover in the eyes.

"And your ambition didn't allow you to shrink your individuality," June said as a similar smile appeared on her face.

They had known each other so well and for so long that they could understand the difficulties of their respective journey even if they were approaching the laws.

"You need one last battle," Noah whispered as his hand went to untie her robe. "Succeed, and you will be able to fight forever."

"You have already destroyed a world," June said as she opened his robe to kiss his torso. "You only need to create a new one now."

Understanding flowed incessantly in both their minds. Talking with their partner cleared many doubts about the path in front of them and steeled their resolve.

The revolution had been a simple prelude to the main event. What expected Noah and June in the main world was far more dangerous, but it was necessary for their situation.

They had decided to come out in the open, but they had to complete one last deed before announcing to the world that June was a traitor and that Noah could have feelings.

The couple indulged in a long intimate moment in which Noah had to make sure to leave the restrictions made with his higher energy intact. His arousal returned as the sound of kisses and moans resounded in the training area.

Noah discovered how careful his body could be, and he learnt how to control himself as he held June's naked back in his hands.

The couple did their best to satisfy the desire accumulated for the past centuries and decided to come out of the fortress only after three months.

The time had come for Noah to contact the best inscription master in the world. June's life depended on whether King Elbas would believe his lie.

Chapter 1053 1053. When?

Noah and the Demons left the other world when they set every matter. The studies they had retrieved from the rebels were mostly incomplete, but they increased the inscription and hybrid fields' overall knowledge.

Yet, they couldn't take them. The studies had to remain in the other world, among the various forces.

June remained behind, and she would wait a few months before returning to the main world. She and Noah had already planned their next moves, and they had even chosen to have a communication method at that time.

Their decision was final. June would either die during the next mission or survive and join the Hive with her family.

A horde of experts waited for Noah and the Demons on the other side of the dimensional tunnel. The loyal forces had warned the main world's assets about their return, so many inscription masters had gathered in front of the tall portal to intercept the elusive Demon Prince.

Noah saw heroic cultivators of the Council, Elbas family, and even Shandal Empire waiting for him when the sunlight illuminated his face again. They were all experts in the fifth rank dressed in their most luxurious robes and wearing polite expressions.

The experts didn't hesitate to bow when Noah came out of the dimensional portal. The fact that he had destroyed the studies didn't seem to affect their respectful attitude.

Noah didn't know if that was the usual respect given to a powerhouse or if they were in awe of his deeds in the other world. Yet, that sight didn't faze him, and he kept his cold expression as he announced his intentions to the crowd. "I will speak only with the leader of the Elbas family."

His announcement left the experts speechless. The cultivators of the Empire could understand that he would ignore them, but the others had mixed feelings.

The Council was his ally, so its Elders should prioritize the assets of their common enemy. A list of complaints appeared in their minds as they silently decided to report the matter to Great Elder Diana, but Noah silenced those thoughts with his next phrase.

"I've found the Kesier species," Noah announced before moving toward the western coast of the old continent. The Demons followed him after shooting intimidating glances at the experts. They warned them not to follow the Demon Prince.

Noah's group flew back to the nearest entrance of the separate dimension, and they found Thirty-seven waiting for them once the light of the teleportation vanished.

The automaton wore an angry expression, and his ghostly figure trembled as waves of rage filled him. His eyes went on Noah as loud words came out of his mouth. "How could you?!"

Noah's mind was so full of plans and strategies concerning his next move that he didn't understand why the automaton was so angry at him. Yet, his following words solved his doubts.

"You destroyed years of studies!" Thirty-seven shouted, raising his finger to point at Noah. "The research is sacred! Cultivators' lives can't compare to discoveries that have taken years to find!"

The group ignored him when they understood the reason behind his anger, and Noah questioned him about important matters. "Where is the Patriarch?"

Thirty-seven acted as if he didn't hear his words. He continued to explain how every lost discovery was a curse that would affect humankind for eternity.

His speech made some sense for an inscription maniac. However, Noah didn't have time to waste. His plan had started when he had publicly announced that he wanted to speak with King Elbas.

A few teeth of the Hydras appeared in his hands, and the automaton stopped speaking at that sight. He neared Noah to analyze the material better, but the hand closed, blocking his vision.

"The Patriarch is in his usual lodgings!" Thirty-seven shouted in a hurry, and Noah let the teeth fall on the ground. Both he and the automaton had become used to those interactions. Noah even suspected that Thirty-seven's unwilling behavior was an act.

The Demons and Noah exchanged a nod before he flew toward the nearest teleportation matrix. They already knew their role in Noah's plan, so they didn't need to follow him back to the headquarters.

Noah used a series of teleportation matrices to return to the forest of White Woods. His body could sense the presence of magical beasts caged in the depths of that area, but his focus was on the powerful existence that cultivated in the underground structure above them.

"I need to talk with you," Noah conveyed through his consciousness, and a series of shining lines appeared under him. Their light teleported him directly in the underground structure, where he found Chasing Demon cultivating in a cross-legged position.

The Patriarch had improved his cultivation technique after Thirty-seven joined the Hive, but he had wasted a lot of potential during the fifth rank. He advanced slowly, and he struggled to reach the halfway mark of the lower tier. Only the Seventh Kesier rune had helped him in the last period.

"What brings you to see this old man?" Chasing Demon said in a rough voice as his eyes opened. Cracks appeared on his skin when he moved, revealing that a layer of rocks covered his entire body.

Noah guessed that Chasing Demon was developing a new technique, but he didn't probe further. His plan was already in motion, but he felt the need to warn the Patriarch.

"I'm going to start a war against the Elbas family," Noah said as a jug of wine came out of his space-ring and floated toward the Patriarch.

"Will you now?" Chasing Demon asked as he drank directly from the jug before throwing it back at Noah.

Noah caught the jug and drank directly from it too. He shrugged his shoulders before taking another sip and explaining himself better. "Well, I will attack the Academy and make a mess. I don't think they'll like that."

Chasing Demon smirked, and pieces of his rocky skin fell from the corner of his mouth, revealing his actual tissues. His eyes went on the jug, and Noah threw it back at him while the Patriarch asked a question. "And why would you do that?"

"I need to help her," Noah said, and Chasing Demon almost failed to catch the wine when he heard those words. He was quite sensitive when it came to that topic.

Avenging Charming Demon had given him peace, but it had also left him without any desire. He didn't have much ambition left now that he had fulfilled his lifelong dream, and that mindset affected his growth.

"King Elbas should be out of the scene for a while if everything goes according to my plan," Noah said in an uncaring tone. "I wonder if the Hive wants to use this to its advantage."

Chasing Demon listened to Noah before drinking all the remaining wine in one sip. He then cleaned his mouth with his forearm before asking a simple question. "When?"

Chapter 1054 1054. Hu

Noah flew toward the central territories inhabited by hybrids after he finished his conversation with Chasing Demon. The Patriarch had decided that the Hive would exploit his plan to attack the Elbas family, so there was a lot to prepare.

The mansion inside the separate dimension couldn't contain Noah's power anymore, so he had chosen to spend the time before the meeting in regions that were still recovering from the winged beasts' crisis. He could go all out there without destroying anything important.

The hybrids had thrived in the new continent's central regions under the Vidot family's leadership, and Skully's arrival only helped that positive trend.

Perfect hybrids didn't need specific resources to survive. They fed on the laws contained in the matter, so any food sufficed their needs.

Moreover, cycles of starvation and training with Noah's spherical runes kept their mental instabilities in check. The specimens that fell prey to their instincts became materials or food if their condition was permanent.

Noah landed in one of the poorest regions and released a few cries to force out any pack that had chosen to inhabit that area. He didn't care about their noises, but they were hybrids, and they were quite valuable even if their level was low.

Due to Heaven and Earth's fairness, stronger creatures would have a lower reproductive capacity than the weaker ones. It went without saying that hybrids suffered a great deal from those rules, so every specimen mattered.

Noah dug a cave and sat at its bottom. His mind reviewed the events from the end of the chrysalis to his battle against the rank 6 hybrids.

He had learnt a lot about the functioning of his body in that period. His dark star acted according to Noah's needs other than applying a constant purification to his tissues, nutrients, and energy.

Noah could force it to focus on specific processes if he concentrated, but its effects peaked only when the situation required it.

The rebellion had started, and he was on the other side of the continent. Therefore, the dark star had forced his body to replicate the Divine Deduction technique's effects, leading him to create his movement technique in no time.

The Hydras had injured him with their joint attacks, so the dark star had diverted all the nutrients to fuel his healing properties.

Attacks tried to pierce his muscles, so his black heart poured dark matter through the injuries to block the intruders.

The rebels were about to reach the defenseless dimensional tunnel, but his energies fused to create a cry capable of commanding every species.

Only his instincts could take the best out of his body, and Noah had no real control over them. He could obtain weaker effects with his thoughts, but his dark star's real power was in its connection with his subconscious.

It was as if his existence was telling him to venture toward new adventures, and Noah didn't know if that had been a natural consequence of his evolution or the result of his reckless life.

Noah meditated for a while to address the issue. He succeeded in forcing his mind into an instinctive state, but he had poor control over his thoughts when that happened. When he managed to push his instincts toward his goals, the effects were still inferior to his body's full capabilities, so the process wasn't worth the effort.

Failing in that experiment didn't worry him too much. He regretted being unable to empower his faculties at will, but he had a way around that. He only needed to put himself in danger.

His focus went on the abilities that he had to improve then. He had many spells that couldn't express power in the sixth rank in their current state and even those that could needed modifications.

His existence had changed again, and his wills had a different intensity now. The dark matter had also become a core part of his being, so his modifications reflected those features.

Some spells had different problems. The Shadow copy spell didn't have limitations in its rank, but he used it to replicate the Demonic Sword, which found it hard to bear his new strength.

Then, there were his elements, and Noah couldn't help but think about June's words when he pondered about the topic. He only lacked light to have control over all the types of energy in the matter. His next step would be to create a world at that point.

Noah spent months in the silence of his cave, coming out only when he needed to test something. The region's layout changed every time he unleashed his power, but the area was empty, so nothing suffered from his actions.

The tests with the Demonic Sword went better than he expected. His time with June had taught him how to control his body, which allowed him to use his living weapon without risking its integrity.

The Demonic Sword had a flexible structure, which made it endure Noah's strength after a bit of practice. The only problem was that Noah couldn't use his full power even when the two coordinated themselves to diminish the pressure on the weapon's structure.

Nevertheless, the effects were satisfying. The Demonic Sword's slashes didn't carry the destructiveness of Noah's body, but they added a powerful tool to his arsenal. Also, they were attacks in the sixth rank, and they could help him in long-range situations.

The problems arrived when he wanted to pair his offensive martial art with other abilities. The Demonic Sword couldn't endure them, and Noah would remain with a significant weakness until he fixed the issue.

The thought of creating a temporary weapon in the sixth rank crossed his mind, but he received the mental message that he was waiting for at that time.

His loud announcement had reached the ears of the Elbas family's higher-ups, and its Patriarch had contacted Chasing Demon to set up a meeting.

'It's time,' Noah thought as donned one of his best robes and left toward the spot designated for the meeting. The two Patriarchs had opted for an area near the snowy mountain on the southern coast for the location.

That decision wasn't casual. King Elbas had requested for Noah to come alone, so Chasing Demon wanted to use the king of the mountain as a deterrent in case the negotiations went bad.

Noah used a series of teleportation matrices to reach his destination and sat on the snowy ground as he waited for the powerhouse. King Elbas arrived a few hours later, and a small hut appeared on the terrain when he snapped his fingers.

Noah's consciousness expanded, and his mind's senses peaked as he inspected the structure. To his surprise, he didn't see any inscription on it, and the laws inside its fabric confirmed that it was a simple wooden house.

"Come, little demon," King Elbas said as he landed in front of the hut. "I want to hear what you have to say."

Chapter 1055 1055. Everything

Noah followed King Elbas inside the hut, but he stopped his tracks when he saw the powerhouse snapping his fingers to light a fireplace situated on the other side of the entrance.

The hut wasn't big, and it featured only one large room. Wood made the entirety of the structure, and luxurious carpets covered its walls and floor. A round table stood at its center with two comfy armchairs placed on opposite sides.

Noah couldn't help but stare at the scene for a few seconds. With the fireplace as the only form of illumination and no inscriptions, the hut resembled one of his previous world's structures.

"Cultivators lose something when they obtain godlike powers," King Elbas said as a tinge of melancholy made its way through his arrogant. "I've never forgotten what it was to be a commoner."

The powerhouse traced the surface of the table with his fingers before sitting in an armchair. His expression became pensive for an instant only to recover its sharpness when he focused on his guest.

Noah could see the leader of the Royals outside of his role for the first time. King Elbas wasn't only the arrogant expert who wore a crown wherever he went. He was also a thoughtful cultivator who could spend time studying the most basic structure, even if he could already build miraculous items.

Every living being that managed to reach the sixth rank was exceptional in some way. King Elbas was the best inscription master in the world, and his expertise didn't stop at the cultivation field.

Noah didn't see the arrogant expert anymore. In his mind, King Elbas appeared as a creator who had started from simple wood until he had learnt to handle materials bordering the divine ranks.

Mysteries surrounded most of his history. The world only knew that King Elbas had been one of the nobles in the old Utra nation before his coup. No one knew how he had reached the sixth rank without alerting the previous Royal family.

'He is a monster,' Noah concluded in his mind as he sat on the armchair, 'Just like me.'

King Elbas didn't take out wine nor any food as per the customs of meetings on that level. He remained in silence, staring at his guest as he waited for him to begin the negotiations.

Yet, Noah had a different plan. Everything about that meeting was a bait that had to lead to King Elbas abandoning his domains for a while. Noah couldn't appear as if he was desperate to seal an agreement.

Minutes passed while both existences remained in silence. Only the fireplace's crackling and the noise of the storm outside accompanied the two powerhouses inside the hut.

"I thought you wanted to talk about Apes," King Elbas eventually said, and the corners of Noah's mouth curved upward at his words.

He could have held back that smile, but he wanted King Elbas to notice the small victories that he managed to seize during their conversation.

Noah had the upper hand in that meeting. The fact that King Elbas had contacted Chasing Demon after his announcement showed how the Royals' leader cared about the Kesier species.

"I thought pieces of information had a price," Noah replied, and King Elbas showed a smile too. He appeared happy that his guest's resolve didn't crack in front of him.

"My descendants' reports say that you can't handle negotiations properly," King Elbas continued. "They were wrong."

"Your family has been wrong about me since I was a human cultivator," Noah used sharp words to reply. "I hope this outcome doesn't hurt your pride."

A tremor ran through King Elbas' eyes when he heard that answer. Noah had casually hinted at his individuality, but he knew that the Demon Prince of the Hive wasn't someone that acted on whims.

Noah was purposely showing his knowledge to prove that he wasn't a simple newly advanced cultivator.

King Elbas waved his hand, and a large jug appeared at the table's center together with two cups. The powerhouse gestured Noah to taste the wine, but the latter hinted that he had to go first.

"I might have taken an antidote before," King Elbas teased as he filled his cup and emptied it in one sip.

"If there is an antidote," Noah said as he copied his actions, "then it can't affect me."

The flavor of strong wine filled his body. The dark star spun faster as it purified the nutrients carried by that liquid and diverted part of the energy absorbed to his mind.

Noah felt a wave of heat filling his body. It was as if he had taken a bite from a scorching magical beast in the sixth rank when he understood how nourishing that wine was.

King Elbas' smile widened when he saw surprise appearing in Noah's expression, and he couldn't help but comment on the matter. "I could only brew six on these. The material went extinct afterward, and I'm still trying to recreate it. Let me tell you, it's hard to make a rank 6 magical plant out of nothing."

King Elbas was bragging about his expertise. After all, he talked about growing magical plants in the sixth rank due to a hobby. No one could even imagine what he did for matters that concerned his power.

Noah decided to change the approach. He suppressed his surprised face and filled another cup before officially starting the negotiations. "I have found and captured a few specimens belonging to the Kesier species in the human ranks. The Hive is nurturing the pack now. We expect a new Sixth Kesier rune to appear every four hundred years."

King Elbas' eyes flickered as calculations happened in his mind. There was a difference between feeding a magical beast until it reached the sixth rank and pushing it at that level forcefully.

The specimen in the sixth rank didn't have to be healthy or strong. It could even be a pile of fur as long as it had the Sixth Kesier rune on it. King Elbas knew that he could shorten that period to two hundred years if he didn't care about the creature's condition.

"What do you want for a female specimen?" King Elbas asked directly, but he didn't appear too interested. He was already nearing the last stage of the sixth rank in the end. There was a limit to how much those creatures could interest him.

It wasn't even worth grooming a creature until it reached the seventh rank. King Elbas already had a good method to train his mind, and he would find it pointless to invest a lot of resources and time in that project.

"The specimens of our pack aren't for sale," Noah replied firmly, and interest finally appeared on King Elbas' face.

Noah had set up the meeting, which meant that he had something to trade. It also had to concern the Kesier species since he had mentioned it.

King Elbas felt intrigued, and he understood that there was only one way to learn the nature of Noah's goods.

"What do you want?" King Elbas asked, and Noah replied while wearing a cold smirk. "Everything, of course."

Chapter 1056 1056. Deal

Noah's request wasn't specific, but it was greedy enough to make King Elbas understand that his guest owned something precious.

King Elbas' eyes sharpened, but he couldn't remain in silence for long. His mouth opened, and a question came out of it. "What did you even find?"

"I want everything you have on the darkness element." Noah promptly answered. "I'm not talking only about spells and martial arts. I want every technique, research, and blueprint that cultivators with a darkness aptitude can use."

The Elbas family stood at the peak of the inscription field, and its studies covered every aspect of the cultivation journey. Noah couldn't even begin to imagine how many discoveries and mysterious techniques the Royals had created under King Elbas' rule. Yet, he had every intention to find that out.

Silence fell in the room, and the crackling fireplace accompanied the two powerhouses once again. The duo filled and emptied cups as the minutes passed, but their eyes never left their adversary.

Eventually, King Elbas took out a scale that had two golden plates on its sides. An eerie aura surrounded the inscribed item, and Noah could sense that its power was in the middle tier of the sixth rank even if it didn't have offensive properties.

King Elbas pressed two fingers on his forehead, and an azure lump of mental energy came out of his mind when he pulled his hand. He then dropped those thoughts on the plate near him, and the scale tilted in his direction.

"This is the value of what you've asked," King Elbas said as he pointed at the empty golden plate. "It won't record anything unless you want to."

Noah felt intrigued when looking at the scale. King Elbas had created something on that level with the sole purpose of making his negotiations fair.

Most powerhouses won't ever think of spending time and resources creating something like that, but King Elbas was atypical. He appeared to have a rank 6 item ready for every occasion.

Noah looked at the scale for a while, but he imitated King Elbas' actions before he started to have some doubts about the truthfulness of his guest's claims. The image of the Ape God appeared in his mind before Noah pulled that thought and placed it on the empty plate.

His thoughts weren't azure like King Elbas'. His shining lump of mental energy was brown, and it tilted the scale toward him when it landed on the golden plate.

King Elbas' eyes widened when he heard the plate landing on the wooden table. He knew exactly how valuable the resources requested by Noah were, so the reaction of the scale left him speechless.

All the accumulated techniques, studies, and resources connected to the darkness element could rival any quasi-divine item in value. Yet, the scale declared Noah's offer was far superior to that.

The only possible conclusion was that Noah was willing to trade a proper divine resource!

King Elbas didn't hesitate anymore. A black tablet appeared on the table, and the Royal placed his finger on it. Azure runes formed on the item's surface as he listed the contents of his oath and flung it toward Noah when he finished.

Noah analyzed the oath with his mental energy. It was a standard item used during negotiations of that kind, which would activate once both parties agreed to the deal.

Brown runes formed on the empty side of the tablet as Noah swore the oath. The negotiation had officially begun at that point. It was only a matter of deciding the terms.

"I have a general idea of the location of your travel," King Elbas said in an attempt to lower the value of Noah's offer. "Whatever it is, I can find it on my own."

"You can't," Noah replied, "I've destroyed the entire place. You need me if you want to get your hands on it."

"It?" King Elbas asked. He had already understood that the matter involved resources in the divine rank, but he needed to hear their nature from his guest's mouth.

Noah smiled and took a sip from his cup. He let the tension build enough to see annoyance appearing on the powerhouse's expression before revealing his resource. "I found a rank 7 Kesier Ape."

King Elbas' eyelids trembled, but he promptly closed them to hide his surprise. Many questions filled his mind, and countless doubts made him wonder whether his guest was speaking the truth.

However, he knew that the time for questions was over. Both parties had sealed the oath. Their offers had to be true for the agreement to activate.

"How did you even survive?" King Elbas couldn't help but ask when he reopened his eyes. Still, Noah limited himself to take sips from his cup.

"The exact location of the Divine Ape in exchange for martial arts and spells of the darkness element," King Elbas offered.

Noah shook his head and gave voice to his counteroffer. "No. There is no precise location, and you will never find it without me. As I said, I want everything."

"I need to invest resources to kill something on that level," King Elbas replied.

"That's what makes this trade fair," Noah said, putting an end to that argument.

King Elbas could train his mind till the seventh rank on his own, but the Seventh Kesier rune would ensure his breakthrough. Even the best inscription master in the world couldn't ignore that offer.

"You have your deal," King Elbas eventually said, and the azure runes on the tablet began to shine at his acceptance.

Noah smiled again and sealed the agreement by saying a single word. "Deal."

Both sides of the tablet shone at that point, and runes appeared on the existences' fingers. Noah saw black runes forming on his hand and flickering a couple of times before disappearing inside his skin.

The runes traveled through his body, and the dark star focused on them when they floated toward his mind. Still, it let them pass because it felt Noah's will inside them.

The runes landed on his mind and fused with its walls. King Elbas and Noah had finally sealed the pact now. It was time to exchange the goods.

King Elbas took back his inscribed items and placed a large map on the table. Noah stood up and began to describe the last seen location of the Ape God and the layout of the sea of magma.

His explanation didn't stop there. Noah explained the behavior of the red sea's currents and gave King Elbas his personal opinion as an expert in the magical beasts' field.

The two agreed on the delivery of the resources too, so the matter ended there. They were about to leave the hut and return to their respective domain, but Noah had another doubt.

"Why did you tell me about the higher energy?" Noah asked. "You knew it would have made me stronger."

King Elbas had stood up by then and was walking toward the exit. Yet, Noah's question made him stop to answer honestly. "I'm a researcher, Demon Prince of the Hive. I had to know which shape darkness would take."

Chapter 1057 1057. Fissure

Noah and King Elbas left the region without looking back. Their conversation had concerned only the exchange of resources, but the two of them had understood a lot about their respective personality nonetheless.

King Elbas had learnt how sharp Noah could be outside of a battlefield. He wouldn't fear anyone as long as he had some leverage. He wouldn't flinch even if a god stood in his way if he knew how to exploit the situation to his advantage.

Noah had seen how the leader of the Royals was more than just arrogance. He was an expert entirely dedicated to his field of expertise. His experiments covered every aspect of the cultivation journey, and he had achieved great things in each one of them.

King Elbas' arrogance came from his results. He knew exactly how amazing he was, and he couldn't help but feel superior to any other force in the world. His only mistake was being born after Shandal and God's Right Hand.

Noah's mind kept on playing King Elbas' answer to the question related to the higher energy. The Patriarch of the Elbas family was so selfless about his research that he had purposely provided his study to a potential enemy.

He didn't care that Noah could use the higher energy against him one day. He had to see how the darkness element evolved, even if that put him in danger.

Noah's respect for such a determined opponent couldn't help but increase. The two of them belonged to the same type of cultivators. They were the monsters that regular labels failed to comprehend.

Black versions of the elements floated in Noah's palm as he flew back to the nearest teleportation matrix. Fire, water, earth, wind, lightning, and darkness rotated on his hand and exchanged part of their fabric. Still, they never fused.

'I need my light,' Noah thought. His enlightenment over other elements came when he saw them expressed in ways that reflected his individuality or after being in contact with them for a long time. He couldn't force that process. It had to be a natural understanding.

His fire came from Ravaging Demon's destruction, water from the Divine Stele's enlightening properties, earth from Chasing Demon's life, wind from the Ape God's anger, and lightning from the Heaven Tribulation. The dark matter represented the darkness element, but Noah had yet to find something that could complete his understanding of those types of energy.

Daniel's individuality couldn't work. The two of them were too different, and even their goals went in opposite directions.

Noah wanted everything, both destruction and creation. He strived for the power to create and destroy matter because his ambition didn't allow him to aim any lower. Instead, Daniel wanted purity. He pursued the simplest but most potent form in everything, even himself.

Both paths led to power, but that was their only common feature. Moreover, Noah's felt an innate disgust toward the light element, which made it even harder for him to lose himself in its fabric.

Noah returned to his temporary training area in the new continent's central regions. He dug another cave while waiting for the Elbas family to comply with their part of the agreement.

The Royals' inscription masters had to make copies of thousands of scrolls, studies, and techniques. The process would take a while. Still, Noah wasn't in a hurry. He had to wait for King Elbas to leave the surface anyway.

That was the only uncertainty in Noah's plan. He didn't fear the defenses of the Royal Academy, but he had no way to confirm King Elbas' departure without putting himself in danger.

His only option was to predict how long the Patriarch of the Elbas family would take to make the necessary preparations and decide to explore the sea of magma.

Noah didn't mind waiting, but he had to consider June in his plan.

They had agreed that she wouldn't return to the Elbas family's territories until the mission started. Nevertheless, she was a battle maniac, and staying put wasn't in her style. Her individuality might suffer if Noah waited too much before making his move.

Noah meditated and cultivated. His focus was on the light element and his spells. Noah's improvements were slow without the dark star pushing his mind to its limits, even if immensely faster than cultivators without the Divine Deduction technique.

All his diagrams went through the same process as the Merging spell. His mind broke them down to their core ideas and rebuilt their structure after confirming that they could suit his individuality.

Some goods began to arrive from the Elbas family. That batch of resources saw only techniques and spells in the human ranks, but Noah analyzed them nonetheless.

He didn't need strong abilities anymore. His interest lingered on core ideas that suited his needs and existences so that he could create skills meant for him.

A sudden message came while he was busy sorting through thousands of scrolls and books. Faith contacted him, asking to settle the restlessness that was building inside the Council.

Noah had publicly announced that he had found the Kesier species, but his decision to set up a meeting with King Elbas without considering his allies had created some tension.

Noah would usually delegate those matters to the Elders of the Hive. The political environment had never interested him, and he had already obtained what he needed.

Moreover, the Hive could use the Kesier species to gain more resources, so he didn't mind leaving the matter to the other higher-ups.

However, Faith had managed to convince the Council to offer something that could benefit him. The resources in its proposal didn't appeal to his element nor his hybrid status. It wanted to intrigue his expertise as a swordsman.

It was rare for cultivators to use martial arts, and they completely disappeared among existences in the fifth rank and above. Yet, the Council had found traces left by divine beings that appeared connected to those techniques.

Noah stopped sorting through his piles of abilities to travel toward the part of the mountain chain that ended on the northern coast. It didn't take much for him to reach that region since the Hive and the Council had established a thick array of matrices that connected the two domains.

Faith welcomed him once appeared at his destination. Tall mountains filled his view, and large pagodas stood on their sides. Countless heroic cultivators sat cross-legged on those buildings' balconies and roofs and stared at something hidden between the peaks.

Other Elders joined Faith in her warm welcome, and the group eventually led Noah toward the pagodas where he could see the reason behind the cultivators' focus.

The mountains had seen many excavations in that area, but their purpose was to enlighten a fissure on one of them that radiated an ancient aura.

The dark star in Noah's chest spun faster as his consciousness went on the fissure. Its smooth edges had survived the passage of time, and not even a crack had appeared on their surface.

It was as if the fissure carried traces of eternity. It resembled a mark in Heaven and Earth's world that not even time could erase.

Chapter 1058 1058. Sword arts

Noah's consciousness covered the fissure and fused with the aura on its surfaces. Thousands of swords appeared in his mind. Noah felt the weight of countless experiences filling his thoughts and giving birth to an endless number of forms.

One Cut contained hundreds of thousands of minute movements that could bring its power to the apex if executed in perfect succession. There was more than a martial art inside the ancient aura. Noah felt as if that fissure contained the experiences of a divine swordsman!

'This is incredible!' Noah exclaimed, while his awareness wavered. Only a few experts in the cultivation world could claim to have the same experience in swords.

Noah had wielded sabers since he had set his mind to learn martial arts, and swords had accompanied the entirety of his cultivation journey. He didn't abandon that practice even when his centers of power pushed him toward other abilities.

His individuality had the shape of a sword that could pierce the starry sky with its might. The first will that his ambition had fueled concerned his sharpness.

Noah had always been unwilling to separate himself from his trustworthy weapons. Becoming a hybrid had solidified that feeling and had opened a path where his expertise could flourish, reaching levels of power that other existences could only dream of wielding.

The dark star in his chest spun faster, pushing his body toward limits that Noah had yet to experience. His instincts didn't want him to stop his immersion in that divine aura, and his greed desired to absorb all the knowledge contained in the cut.

Humanoid shapes eventually appeared inside his mind. They moved, performing various forms while they wielded ethereal blades.

Noah's mind had harmonized with the sharpness carried by the ancient aura, and his thoughts played any piece of knowledge that they were able to translate.

Understanding filled his whole consciousness as his thoughts kept on materializing the forms of ancient and forgotten martial arts. Noah felt that he was staring at the very origin of every sword art, only to see them become more complex as his mind translated more pieces of information.

Noah activated the Divine Deduction technique when he felt that his mind couldn't keep up anymore with that stream of knowledge. The Divine ability pushed his consciousness's processing skills even more and allowed him to remain immersed inside the ancient aura for longer.

However, he had to give up and cut his connection with the fissure at some point. His mind felt exhausted, and one glance at the condition of his sea of consciousness made him understand that he had reached his limits.

Almost all his mental energy had disappeared during the process. Remaining immersed in that understanding had depleted most of his thoughts, making him feel beyond drained.

His vision was messy, and the sunlight hurt his eyes. Still, his condition slowly stabilized, making able to see a crowd of Elders staring at him with incredulous expressions.

Noah didn't have the strength to speak. He only wanted to rest and recover the mental energy to get back on studying the fissure again. There was too much inside that aura, and Noah didn't want to miss any of it.

Before he could shot toward a mountain to dig a cave, Faith stepped forward and handed him a small basket filled with crystalline water. She didn't speak while she stretched the item toward him.

Noah instinctively grabbed the bucket and drank from its edges. Some of the water fell on his face, and a gray smoke formed due to his body's high temperatures.

A refreshing feeling spread from his throat and face when the water touched his tissues. The tiredness that filled his mind softened and Noah found himself able to think properly again in a few seconds.

The Elders of the Council had become used to the after-effects of the fissure. They had deployed many methods to improve the training sessions near the cut and shorten the time required to recover the mental energy depleted during the enlightenment.

Those methods worked even better with Noah. His dark star purified and improved the crystalline water's healing properties before pushing them toward his mind. In a few minutes, Noah saw the level of the sea inside his sphere rising.

"You are incredible," Faith said when she saw that Noah's face had recovered some energy.

Noah paid attention to the crowd of Elders staring at him at her words, and his questioning gaze hinted that he desired an explanation to that event.

"No one had ever lasted longer than a week when inside the ancient aura," Faith replied. "The rank of the sea of consciousness isn't the only variable in place. Great Elder Diana can last only for five days, while some rank 4 cultivators have surpassed her easily."

Noah understood the meaning of her words. A strong mind was necessary to process more information, but a swordsman would deplete less mental energy to translate those forms.

"How long?" Noah asked, and the experts around him diverted their gazes. Regret appeared in the faces of some of the Elders. It seemed that they didn't like how the events had unfolded.

Yet, Faith showed a happy expression when she replied to his question. "You have been in the same position for two whole months! I knew that this place was perfect for someone like you."

Noah could guess the reason behind the Elders' regret now. They had long since learnt that the cut benefitted cultivators with swords experience, but they wanted a monopoly over that training area.

Even after the alliance with the Hive, they didn't feel the need to share that resource. The Elders knew that Noah would benefit from it more than anyone else. After all, he had swung his weapons throughout his entire cultivation journey.

The Elders didn't want to give more power to such an unruly existence, mostly since it belonged to a foreign organization. Faith had eventually convinced them, but they didn't expect Noah to be so suitable for that resource.

Noah had managed to meditate next to the Cut nine times longer than their best experts. Knowing the benefits that the fissure had given to them, they could only sigh, thinking about Noah's imminent improvements.

"You can negotiate the Kesier species with the Hive," Noah announced to the crowd, "But I can't be the only one to have access to this place."

Noah didn't believe that the cultivators of the Hive could gain much from those divine remains due to how little heroic assets relied on martial arts. Yet, hordes of hybrids filled his organizations now, and some of them had bodies suited for those teachings.

Moreover, those who belonged to the six Bloodlines had experience in martial arts even in the heroic ranks, making them even better candidates for that training area.

"Agreed!" A loud voice broke the silence that had filled the region after Noah's offer. Respectful expressions formed on the Elders' faces as Great Elder Diana appeared in the sky above them.

The Matriarch of the Council had given her official approval to Noah's request. Now both organizations could prepare for the attack at the Elbas family properly.

Chapter 1059 1059. Hints

Chasing Demon settled the matter of the Kesier species with Divine Elder Diana. The Council wouldn't own any Ape, but it could join the Hive in improving their grooming. Also, it would have claims over some of the Kesier runes produced.

Skully and the natives of the Vilot family handpicked a few hybrids to send toward the Divine Cut. They chose creatures with experience in martial arts. They even had to have humanoid bodies or be able to wield blades in their beast form.

Moreover, any Elder who felt curious about the sword arts in the divine aura or wanted to improve their overall prowess could visit the Council's territories. The alliance would then select who could train there again according to their talent in the field.

The Hive became restless right after the news of the new traces left by divine beings spread among the Elders. Many cultivators traveled toward the mountain chain, hoping that their past training or individualities could match the ancient aura.

That was a proper divine inheritance that didn't cause any lasting after-effects. No one would ever refrain from attempting to seize it.

However, most of them soon learnt the harsh truth. Abandoning martial arts after their centers of power had reached the fourth rank made them unsuitable for that inheritance. Their minds would take millennia to process that knowledge.

The hybrids had it a bit better, especially those from the six Bloodlines' inner circles. They had never needed to completely abandon martial arts since they were physically stronger than the main world's cultivators. Those lacking a dantian had even needed to rely on them since spells took too long to cast.

Skully traveled to the Cut too. Her appearance shook the Council's Elders to no end, but they ultimately felt glad to be the Hive's ally.

Those Mortal Lands were experiencing one of the wealthiest eras that a lower plane could ever see. Their sheer number of heroic experts was unheard of in the historical records.

Also, many cultivators were slowly reaching the peak of the fifth rank. Every organization expected more powerhouses to appear in the following years.

Many experts linked that rare phenomenon to the fall of the piece of Immortal Lands. Still, a few of them believed that the exceptional talents living in their era affected that trend.

In less than a millennium, the world had seen God's Right Hand's ascension, King Elba's dimensional portal, the fall of a new continent, wars of various width, and a crisis featuring a quasi-divine creature.

Those events had given birth to countless talents that either inspired others or created even more shocking scenes. The positive trend never stopped because of that, and more experts felt spurred to do better.

The hybrids remained for a few months over the Cut before many of them gave up on seizing the inheritance. Skully eventually abandoned the region too. Only a few weaker specimens remained there, and the Council prepared good accommodations for them.

As for Noah, he had become the main topic of many conversations in that period.

Noah almost couldn't help himself. The last session of meditation near the Cut had given him so many ideas that he had started another one right away.

Crowds of experts would reach the Cut and fail to last for more than a few days while he remained immersed in the divine aura for months. By the time his second training session ended, the Hive had already decided who was suitable for that type of procedure.

Noah saw an Elder of the Council handing him a bucket filled with crystalline water when he opened his eyes. His mind struggled under the effects of that refreshing liquid, but he noticed how the pagodas were almost empty when he managed to focus.

Many Elders had given up in that period. They had believed that hard work and constancy could eventually lead them to the bottom of the inheritance. Yet, that belief had vanished when they saw how long Noah could last.

Only a few stubborn experts and a small group of hybrids had remained in the area. No one else felt like wasting time near the fissure when there were existences better suited for that inheritance.

Hard work was pointless when Noah could absorb knowledge faster and for longer periods than anyone else. He could learn in days what other experts would take years to recreate in their minds.

It wasn't a matter of talent. Noah had never stopped using swords through the entirety of his cultivation journey, and that made him the perfect heir for that inheritance.

Noah didn't give much importance to those events. His mind could only focus on the forms contained inside the ancient aura now. He felt his expertise improving with each second spent in that meditation, and his body reached the peaks that he couldn't usually force during the process.

A war was about to start, and he had to improve as fast as he could before invading the Royal Academy. Noah didn't know how much time he had, but he preferred to spend it training next to the Cut since the dark star would push his body's abilities there.

Studying resources for years wouldn't give him the same immediate benefits as the Divine Cut. Improving his martial arts was even Noah's priority, so he found no reason to be elsewhere.

The Hive sent him weekly reports concerning June and King Elbas' situation. All the new continent's investigative structures focused their attention on the Royals' domain, waiting for the powerhouse to leave the surface.

The alliance knew that King Elbas expected the arrival of an attack after his departure. The powerhouse wouldn't lose his chance to capture a Kesier Ape in the seventh rank, but he wouldn't leave his domain unprotected.

The Hive and the Council had to wait until King Elbas felt ready to leave the surface, which meant that they had to let years pass while they prepared for their offensive too.

June did her best to kill her boredom. She entered the separate dimension and spent time with Thirty-seven. Her reward from Shandal's dimension was the perfect bribe to learn even more about formations.

A few years had to pass before the Elbas family showed some changes. They weren't anything flashy, and they didn't affect the weaker troops in the peripheral regions.

No one informed the weaker cultivators about events of that importance, so their behavior didn't change. However, the higher-ups of the Royals began to act slightly differently than usual.

Experts gradually came back from the other world, and the resources exchanged or bought in the various trades saw a change in their nature.

The masters of the alliance knew that the new resources exchanged with the Royals had the purpose of fueling defensive formations of protections of various kinds. The Elbas family had begun to prepare for the imminent battle, and it was trying to hide it.

The alliance waited a few more years and contacted Noah only when it felt sure that King Elbas had left the surface. The war was ready to start. He just had to make the first move.

Chapter 1060 1060. Promise

Noah ended his meditation session and went through the mental messages accumulated in his inscribed notebook once his mind recovered.

The alliance claimed that King Elbas had left the surface for a few years already, and Noah agreed with the experts' conclusion once he inspected the clues gathered in that period.

Cracks appeared on the walls of his cave when his determination surged. Sharpness leaked out of his mind as a natural consequence of his concentration. The environment around him almost fell apart because of that.

Noah had never felt so in tune with his martial art before. His expertise had fused with the forms inside the ancient aura and had given birth to countless inspirations.

The inheritance was still there. Noah had yet to reach its end. He didn't test its effects, so he didn't know how strong he had become. However, he felt that he could express his new knowledge right away.

That confidence didn't come only from his body. The dark star pushed his learning capabilities to the limit during the meditation next to the Cut, but that alone wasn't enough to make him learn new techniques instantly.

The main reason behind that feeling came from the nature of the divine aura. Noah had to translate the forms before absorbing them, but they became part of him once his mind memorized them.

Noah spent a few months pushing his centers of power to their peak state and improving them slightly. He didn't want his existence to have any weakness before approaching the invasion.

Mental messages shot from his inscribed notebook as he came out of his cave. He was telling the Hive to prepare since he was about to make his move.

The light of the teleportation matrix shone in his eyes before the familiar environment of the separate dimension appeared in his vision. Noah had returned there after leaving the Council's domain, and he found an annoyed June waiting for him.

"You know that this isn't my fault," Noah said as he took her in his embrace and kissed her forehead.

"You could have put a bit more pressure on that old geezer," June complained, but her expression relaxed when she laid her head on his chest.

The couple remained in that position for a few minutes before moving toward the next teleportation matrix. The path leading to the Royal Academy was only a few hours from their spot.

Crowds of experts waited for them whenever they teleported in another area. They performed polite greetings and wished them good luck before they moved to the next matrices.

Noah saw his acquaintances and friends along the way. Chasing Demon didn't show his face, and the two Demons appeared only before the couple reached the last matrix.

"You aren't coming with me this time," Noah said when he gazed at the two Demons.

He was about to go all-out, and he couldn't let the couple be near him when that happened. He wasn't even sure if his new enhanced sharpness would spare their lives once he stopped holding back.

They couldn't go with June either. She had to make the trip alone, and no one could help her in the mission.

"We'll wait for both of you on the frontlines," Dreaming Demon said while wearing a warm smile. Flying Demon limited himself to wink at Noah before the couple sent them off.

Thirty-seven waited for the couple at the end of that corridor. He had created two exists toward the Royal Academy. One of them ended up inside the restricted areas, while the other teleported right at the structures' center.

June knew the Academy's basic layout and position, so the automaton had managed to be precise with his inscriptions. The exits were incomplete though. He had to place the last line before the arrays could activate.

Noah and June turned toward each other and exchanged a long stare. That could be their last time together. There were only two possible outcomes after they stepped on the matrices: A life together in the open or death.

"I remember the first time we fought," June said as she took slow steps toward her lover. "We have lived for five centuries, but that memory is still clear in my mind."

"You are speaking as someone who is about to die," Noah said while wearing a smirk and closing the distance to caress her face.

June showed a warm smile at their usual exchange of lines, but she soon lowered her eyes when painful thoughts surged in her mind. Noah lifted her face at that sight, and June's hand went on his chest to feel his burning core.

"Noah," June said as her eyes went down again, "You have given new life to two nations, and one of them has reached the peak of the Mortal Lands thanks to you. You have revived old monsters whose only fate was to die in a forgotten dimension. You have given flesh, muscles, and organs to ancient bones."

June's words felt like heavy hammers when they reached Noah's ears. He knew what she was trying to do, and it pained him having to hold back to let her finish.

That could be their last time together. Noah wouldn't dare to interrupt his lover at that moment.

June squeezed his robe, and her fingers pointed on his metallic skin in a desperate attempt to remain with him forever. However, her grasp soon relaxed, and more words came out of her mouth.

"I am the foundation of your life," She said, "But your creation is much more than that. It has already surpassed what a single death can affect."

"You don't have to say all of this," Noah said as he took her hand.

"Yes, I have to," June replied, moving her free hand on his face, "Promise me that you won't let a single death leave a crack in your individuality."

Noah could only stare at June in silence after her words. She was too important for him, so he had no confidence in promising that. Yet, he could see the anxiety in her eyes. It was as if she was begging for him to say that.

"I promise," Noah eventually said, "My creation won't stop even if you die. Still, it won't be the same without you."

Calm appeared on June's face when she heard that. She pointed her feet to leave a quick kiss on Noah's lips before battle intent filled her expression.

The dark matter came out of his body as her black sparks lifted Noah's restrictions. Her cultivation level exploded with power as she left her lover's arms and moved toward her designated teleportation matrix.

Noah followed her with his eyes, and he suppressed his feelings as he walked toward the other matrix. His eyes never left his lover even when the light of the teleportation engulfed both figures.

Thirty-seven inspected the exits after they disappeared, but his expression froze when he saw the condition of Noah's matrix. Deep cuts had divided all the lines of the array in half.