

DEMONIC 1081

Chapter 1081 1081. Similarities

'Kill the light!'

'Destroy the light!'

'Death to the light!'

Night sounded ecstatic as it flew through the corrosive smoke and unleashed its abilities on the formations' cores. Its anger toward everything that shone appeared boundless, but Noah could understand the reason behind such intense feelings.

The rank 7 Night-blade Pterodactyl had lived in the Immortal Lands for years without ever gazing at the sky. Heaven and Earth had put a massive limitation on its path toward the higher ranks.

Noah didn't know how old Night was, but he could understand that its life in the higher plane had been harsh. The creature probably blamed every form of light for its fall.

Night accelerated inside the corrosive smoke before slamming head-on on the cores. Its attacks resemble a brainless charge that relied only on its physical strength and speed, but Noah could sense something more profound.

His connection with the creature was strong. He could sense part of its unconscious and understand some of the things that Night didn't even remember.

The name Night-blade Pterodactyl indicated the species' ability to turn into a sharp weapon right before attacking. However, the specimens didn't become simple blades.

Night merged with the world when it clashed with the cores. It became part of the laws of the darkness element and severed everything else effortlessly.

Also, its cuts tainted the world, which gave birth to more darkness. It seemed that the more it destroyed, the more the world lost light.

'To think that we would be so suitable for each other,' Noah thought as he witnessed more cores exploding and small dark areas replacing them.

Noah and the Pterodactyl shared many similarities. He had also pondered the chance that the roars of that species had affected him during his past enlightenment.

'Merging with darkness to spread darkness,' Noah thought while shaking his head. 'A blade that belongs to Heaven and Earth's system can only obey their rules.'

Countless ideas on how to improve Night's body surged in his mind, and a tingling sensation spread on his fingers. Noah wanted to forge, but that wasn't the right moment.

It wasn't only the invasion. Noah was still doubtful about Night's character and preferred to make it grow inside his mind for a while before improving its species.

Both Great Elder Diana and Chasing Demon couldn't contain their smiles at that sight. They had the power to destroy the cores themselves, but the Royals had never given them any chance. The same had happened when Noah arrived. There were too many defenses in place.

However, Noah had a weapon capable of flying unnoticed among his corrosive cloud and expressing power in the sixth rank!

Great Elder Diana completed multiple calculations in a matter of instants. Her slow approach had taken into consideration a battle prowess unable to inflict any damage to the formations, but the situation had changed now.

"Destroy all the cores!" Great Elder Diana shouted. "We'll focus on destabilizing the shields and protecting you!"

Noah nodded, and a human-shaped crack replaced his figure. A massive fissure crashed on the golden shields and darkened a large chunk of their surface, but they remained intact.

Noah reappeared in the open and pointed the tip of his knife-like Demonic Sword on one of the cores before performing one of his slow slashes.

The core exploded, and a human-shaped crack replaced Noah, who moved toward another target.

Night continued to destroy cores, and Noah helped it whenever he could. He had to let the Demonic Sword rest from time to time. That stressful battle didn't suit a weapon in the fifth rank, and Noah's expertise was the only thing keeping it undamaged.

Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana blocked the incoming attacks and launched spells on specific spots of the defenses. Their expertise in the formations field wasn't low, so they could exploit the opportunities created by Noah.

The two of them had even started to use inscribed items!

The powerhouses found it pointless to reveal their weapons when they felt they couldn't win the battle. Yet, Noah's new power had given them a chance, and they didn't hesitate to commit their powerful assets to exploit it fully.

Chasing Demon held a long stick that had countless drawings carved on its surface. The carvings depicted magical beasts of various kinds, and a violent aura came out of them.

A series of lens floated around Great Elder Diana. Small crackling spheres followed them and aimed their lightning bolts at the black glass that made those inscribed items.

Whenever the arrows or the Royals' spells arrived, Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana stepped forward and used their abilities to block them. Then, during their short moments of freedom, they activated their inscribed item to pressure the defensive array.

The carvings on Chasing Demon's stick lit up when he poured "Breath" inside them. The chosen beasts would form in the shape of earth puppets in less than an instant under that light.

The stick shortened Chasing Demon's casting time, but Noah knew it was far more than that. He could see the theories of the Copying Technique behind that summoning. His expertise could be low, but very few experts were capable of matching his knowledge when it came to magical beasts.

The creatures on the stick were copies of existing beasts that took life once Chasing Demon fueled the item with "Breath".

Of course, Noah didn't know all those details, but he could vaguely figure out that the puppets were weaker reproductions of real creatures.

Great Elder Diana's lens had the purpose of enhancing the power of her lightning bolts.

The leader of the Council specialized in precision. She could express the lightning element's innate violence, but her individuality didn't allow her to reach the peak in that field.

However, the lens allowed her to be precise and destructive, making up for the only drawback of her individuality.

The powerhouses' attacks crashed on the golden shields whenever a core exploded. Their idea was to push the destabilizations to their limits until a crack appeared and allowed them to advance.

'I can't go on much longer,' Noah thought after he destroyed his thirtieth core.

His dantian was almost empty after sprinting and attacking for so long, and his Demonic Sword was nearing its structural limits. Even Night's shouts had become less lively after destroying more than fifty cores.

Long battles on that level were Noah's weakness due to the disparity among his centers of power. His dantian had reached its limits, but he wanted to press forward for as long as he could anyway.

The alliance was attacking. Noah could retreat once he became exhausted.

"I'll retreat after a few more," Noah conveyed to the powerhouses through the alliance's special notebooks. His announcement surprised Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana, but they accepted it quite soon.

It was only normal for Noah to feel exhausted before them. His battle prowess made them forget that he was only a newly advanced powerhouse who had barely amassed five hundred years of experience.

"Target these," Great Elder Diana sent a few specific locations to Noah's mind, and he didn't hesitate to sprint again to destroy those cores.

He was unstoppable when he flew in his dimension, and everything fell apart when his blade cut the laws that made the matter. As an opponent, Noah was a deadly force capable of threatening solid defenses due to his high mobility and sharpness.

Five more cores fell apart before the Royals could even think about targeting Noah, and seven more exploded due to Night's actions.

Noah retreated at that point. His low-waist felt heavy, and his dark star spun at high speed to compensate for the lack of darkness in his center of power.

Night retreated too, and Noah massaged his temples when he saw its condition. The bird-like body that had taken him a few months to create had turned into a broken, empty head that floated back to him.

Chapter 1082 1082. Separate battlefields

'Must... destroy... light!' Night conveyed in a tired attempt to launch another battle cry, but Noah quickly moved to seize that broken body.

Night had managed to destroy everything except for its head, which was in a poor state too. Noah knew that the creature could surpass its body's structural limits, but he didn't think it would be so selfless in its anger.

Noah carefully crushed the head and took the dark matter released inside his mind. His half-transparent figure then took Night's consciousness and immersed it in the sea before pushing out the higher energy.

Night's mind rested under the nurturing properties of Noah's mental energy. More thoughts fused with its consciousness to stabilize its growth and add more restrictions.

The Pterodactyl's mind didn't suffer any injury. Its tiredness came from the body that it had destroyed with its reckless offensive.

'It's pointless to leave it without a body,' Noah thought as he came out of the corrosive cloud. 'And it will only hurt it to use such weak puppets.'

He had deactivated the Demonic Form before the last attacks, but he still felt drained. There was so much to do, but the war wouldn't stop raging for a while.

There was one problem with that. Noah didn't believe that the alliance could take anything valuable away from the Royals.

King Elbas was a monster, and most of his descendants were talented inscription masters. It didn't matter that they were weak. All they had to do was relying on defenses that they had set beforehand to survive.

Out of the territories in its domain, the Elbas family only had a few valuable ones remaining.

The region with Spiked Roots hid the Royal Academy, but the Dark Gorge had fallen, and Noah had already taken the rank 7 magical beast. All the defenses would gather in the Academy now, so it was pointless to even dream about conquering it.

The buildings in Divine Market city belonging to the Elbas family had tight defenses, and it could take a century of continuous siege to deplete the energy accumulated there.

The alliance could endure the costs, but the lack of certainty made it doubtful. Both the Hive and the Council were more willing to invest time and resources in nurturing more cultivators.

The Utra nation had the dimensional portal, but only King Elbas knew how to use it. Conquering that region was virtually useless since his return would restore everything to the previous state.

The Elbas family used every other region in its domain as a livable land. It built obelisks and trained talents, but it didn't have anything worthy of the attention of a powerhouse.

The alliance was willing to invest resources for something lasting, but the defensive formations made even the valuable resources unappealing. The gains wouldn't make up for the resources wasted to seize them.

It was better to invest in the growth of assets rather than sending them into countless wars.

The report at the end of the battle confirmed Noah's guess. Even with the three of them in one of the less protected regions, they didn't manage to pierce the golden shields.

The alliance had invested a lot in that region already, so it will continue the assault until it fell. Taking away a habitable land would still hurt the Elbas family in the long-run in the end.

However, both leaders didn't want to push any more than that. The Elbas family had already lost a lot, and the alliance could remain above its enemies for years with those gains.

With the Empire relegated to the peripheral territories of the Papral nation and the Elbas family stuck in four regions, the rule of the alliance would be undisputed. The Hive and the Council could keep on growing stronger than the other organizations for millennia.

Noah agreed with the leaders' vision and joined the next battles too. It had become evident that they couldn't destroy the golden shields in a few assaults, but they could pressure them until they depleted all the energy stashed in the region.

Third Prince and First Princess had a hard time dealing with the three powerhouses. Still, their greatest pain was the invisible puppet that felt through the darkness and destroyed everything that it could.

Luckily for the alliance, those formations didn't have self-fixing properties, so its assets could continue to create small damages through the years of battle.

Noah learnt a lot about Night in that period, but the most surprising event happened two years after the beginning of the invasion.

Great Elder Diana, Chasing Demon, and Noah hammered the defensive formations while dealing with the Royals' assault as per usual. The Elbas family didn't dare to deploy more troops there for fear of losing essential territories, so all the battles were similar to each other.

Night and Noah destroyed cores, and the two powerhouses took care of the incoming attacks while expanding the tremors spreading through the shields.

The cloud of corrosive smoke surrounded that battlefield, so some weaker cultivators had decided to fight on the regions' sides instead. There were fewer protections there, so the battles mostly had fame as their main gains. The weaker cultivators couldn't let the powerhouses decide everything. They wanted their share of the glory.

Those battles happened in an orderly manner, and cultivators even bet resources from time to time. A few of them had to stop fighting because their power put them in a different league from other rank 5 experts.

Flying Demon and Dreaming Demon were like that. Their prowess surpassed the limits of the fifth rank. The same went for Elder Julia, who had steadily improved over the years.

The Hive wasn't the only organization to have experts of that type. The Elbas family had Andrew Elbas, who was on a similar level to Elder Julia, and a few solid stage cultivators who didn't rely on the Pool to advance.

The Council had Elder Regina, who appeared on the same level as Dreaming Demon. Many believed that the two of them would be the next existences to step into the powerhouses' realm.

Those existences couldn't kill each other when surrounded by allies. It was simply impossible to deliver a fatal injury when their levels were so close. So, it was mostly weaker cultivators fighting.

During one of those battles, a flash of black lightning fell on the battlefield, revealing June's figure surrounded by waves of black sparks. An orange halo came out of her figure, and the Elbas family's side cheered when it saw her solid stage cultivation level.

Nevertheless, June rose in the sky until she reached the Hive's army. A wave of surprised gasps and incredulous shouts echoed through that side of the battlefield, but that was only the beginning.

"I'm willing to bet Eccentric Thunder's inheritance to leave the Elbas family together with my family," June announced once all eyes went on her.

Many experts knew about Eccentric Thunder, and some had even investigated the matter of his inheritance. Yet, the expert's will had detonated everything to cover June's traces, so everyone thought that every resource was gone.

The offer was appealing, especially since June gave the Royals a chance to punish a traitor before her actual betrayal. They eventually sent one of the solid stage cultivators nearing the peak of the rank against her after agreeing to her conditions.

June had been a liquid stage cultivator only a few years before, so no one expected much from her. Still, Andrew Elbas had sent one of the strongest assets among those that had relied on the Royal Pool to advance.

Many believed that such a decision was overkill, but they had to rethink their evaluation when they saw June match her opponent's blows after four exchanges.

Chapter 1083 1083. Poison

Only the Elders of the Hive believed that June had some chances against her opponent. They knew more about her power, and her relationship with Noah gave her some credibility.

Noah was the mighty Demon Prince who had defied any common sense. His woman had to be awesome too, and her fame had already proven that hypothesis to be true.

June was the battle maniac of the Elbas family. She had led the unofficial and illegal missions of the Royals since she was only a human cultivator. Her family had been in charge of the western border of the Utra nation for decades, and her tasks didn't stop after the migration.

The matters of the Royal Inheritance were still a secret to many, but the Hive knew that she had been part of the clearing operations. The immense number of heroic cultivators of the Elbas family came from her efforts in seizing the Royal Pool.

The Royals knew her value too, but June had never shown how powerful she was. Her battle prowess had spiked after obtaining the black sparks, but she had never revealed them to the public.

Dreaming Demon and Flying Demon neared the battlefield and stood next to the Elbas family's forces before the fight began. They didn't want to interfere, but they didn't know what the Royals would do to seize Eccentric Thunder's inheritance.

June's opponent's name was Gustavo Elbas. He was a tall man carrying the usual features of the Elbas family, even if his colors indicated his distance from the main bloodline.

His golden hair had brown shades, and his eyes were pale green, lacking any shine. He was an alchemy expert, but he didn't manage to fuse his expertise with his cultivation journey like Daniel.

The Pool had allowed him to reach the solid stage, and the various resources of the Elbas family had pushed his cultivation level near the peak of the rank. Yet, his battle prowess was somewhat lacking and heavily reliant on his creations.

June stepped forward without showing any fear. The various Elders and Royals made a large circle around her and Gustavo, creating a large battlefield at some distance from the healing light of the golden formations.

The faint shields were close, but no expert stood behind them. The powerhouses were fighting the real battle for that territory. The assets there were holding honorable matches to increase their fame and gain some resources.

"When did you betray us?" Gustavo asked as he neared June. A series of potions and pills came out of his space-ring and floated around his figure.

June snorted. She didn't like it when cultivators had weapons that she didn't understand. She was relatively simple-minded in her battle style. In her opinion, power had to overwhelm, not deceive.

Gustavo quickly understood that his opponent didn't want to engage in the usual foreplays that preceded an official battle. A tinge of disdain appeared on his expression. In his mind, only animals didn't follow human formalities.

"You are indeed a maniac," Gustavo announced. "The Elbas Bloodline doesn't need weapons that it can't control."

Most experts of the Elbas family didn't like June due to her unwillingness to marry one of the Royals. Hers was the only noble family that had yet to fuse with them, so many accepted her distant and violent behavior only because of her battle results.

Still, she was openly betraying them right now. Gustavo could finally vent the annoyance that had accumulated during the past centuries.

Soft gales began to blow from behind Gustavo. One of the potions around him broke, releasing a purple liquid that turned into a green gas when it came in contact with the air.

The gales spread the gas, creating a large green cloud that covered the entire battlefield. The experts on the edges had to rely on their defensive spells to stop it from spreading further.

June couldn't avoid the gas, but black sparks came out of her body and destroyed any poisonous particles that tried to land on her skin. Her higher energy even expanded to create a defensive array.

The gales changed direction, and the faint shape of a massive snake formed inside the cloud. June felt something landing on her back before her mind could even sense any danger.

June flew through the cloud. Poison entered her skin, and a large bruise formed on her back. Behind her, a reptilian head chased after her, charging through the gas as it showed its massive fangs.

Sparks crackled from under her skin while June stopped mid-air. Her defenses had been useless against Gustavo's attack, but that had only ignited her battle intent.

The Perfect Circuit stirred her centers of power to produce more energy. Denser and larger sparks came out of her body and took the shape of countless spheres that gathered lightning on their surface.

The poisonous gas' fabric began to crumble when it touched the spheres, and a large chunk of the cloud disappeared when they released a series of lightning bolts toward the incoming snake.

Gustavo waved his hand, and a pill next to him broke. A purple liquid mixed with the cloud, giving birth to hundreds of dense trails that shot toward the snake.

When the trails fused with the snake, the gaseous creature split into hundreds of small purple fangs that tried to dodge the incoming lightning bolts.

June's attacks destroyed most fangs, and even those that didn't clash directly with the lightning bolts fell apart when they entered their range.

Gustavo felt surprised when he witnessed that scene. His attacks' power neared the peak of the solid stage. They weren't as strong as proper spells, but they could overwhelm any blow from a newly advanced cultivator.

However, June's black lightning was peculiar. It felt weak, but it could destroy the fangs without even touching them!

June performed an evasive maneuver, but two fangs hit her anyway. One stabbed her right shoulder while the other cut her left ankle.

Both attacks injected poison inside her, but the higher energy released by her body managed to prevent it from spreading further. The black sparks couldn't destroy them, and that caused her battle intent to increase even more.

More sparks came out of her body, but they appeared to pulsate at that time. An array of lightning bolts covered her and expanded, following the rhythm of her heartbeat.

The green cloud began to resonate with June's heartbeat too. The aura released by her higher energy was so intense that the environment couldn't help but follow her rhythm.

Gustavo felt even more surprised. He couldn't understand how someone weaker than him could have that influence of spells that had been enhanced by his potions.

Three pills broke at the same time, and more gales began to churn inside the cloud. The gas became denser and darker, and June found it challenging to localize his opponent even when she expanded her consciousness.

A smile appeared on June's expression. She didn't mind that her opponent was hiding. That gave her an excuse to unleash her power freely.

June joined her palms, and a cube formed when she separated them. The crackling black form then floated above her head and became unstable.

Lightning bolts shot in every direction whenever the cube trembled. They resembled massive arrows that cut the dark-green cloud and destroyed its poisonous gas.

The orange halo they released illuminated the dark environment, revealing the gaseous creatures flying in her direction. Gustavo had created hundreds of beasts while June prepared her attack, but the lightning bolts destroyed them.

However, the denser gas that made their bodies didn't vanish. Instead, it fused with the cloud and began to press on June. She felt as if a cage had formed around her, and even her cube crumbled against that pressure.

Gustavo appeared above her and poured potion after potion on the dense gas. His creations improved the poisonous properties of the cage and increased its density.

Then, he performed a hand-sign, and the spikes rose from the internal surface of the cage. June could only let her body be pierced by those poisonous blades while allowing her individuality to push her power toward the next level.

Chapter 1084 1084. Heartbeats

June felt the spikes piercing her skin and pouring poison inside her body. Her mind began to feel dizzy even if the higher energy suppressed the foreign substance.

The face of her lover appeared in her vision while she amassed power. Noah would have never suffered that kind of injury, especially from a cultivator that relied on his potions and pills to match those on his level.

'I'm still so far away,' June thought as the poison and the higher energy fought inside her.

Noah was a powerhouse. His dantian was still in the solid stage, but he was a true member of the higher stage. He was even fighting on a battlefield that she and other weaker cultivators had to abandon.

He was in another league, and his next step was the Immortal Lands. Their paths would diverge once again, and it was unclear how long it would take for them to reunite once he left.

'Only you can be my eternal opponent,' June smiled as a peculiar scene appeared in her mind. She saw Noah disappearing in the white sky and becoming out of her reach.

That vision made her sad but also extremely motivated. Her individuality depended on strong opponents, and her lover was the most powerful of all of them.

"He could kill weaklings like you when he was only in the liquid stage," June said. Gustavo's eyes sharpened when he heard those words, but his actions didn't slow down.

The Royal continued to pour potions on the cage. The pressure accumulated was enough to destroy most rank 5 cultivators. However, June remained still. She kept her eyes closed as she let her centers of power fill the Perfect Circuit with higher energy.

The structure of her dantian, body, and mind had improved after she used the prototype. She had no more limits inside the fifth rank, but she still wanted to see if she could reach higher levels.

There was an unreachable target in her vision. She recalled the toughness of Noah's skin as she evaluated the energy accumulated inside her, and only one thought resounded in her mind. 'This isn't enough to defeat him.'

Many experts had to control their ambitions once approaching the sixth rank. A broad individuality hindered the path toward the higher ranks, and it usually misled cultivators.

Yet, some couldn't stop themselves from following their true calling.

Noah's ambition prevented him from cutting away any part of his individuality. King Elbas' pride and curiosity forced him to pursue every path in the inscription field.

Other experts in the past had found themselves in the same situation. Legendary names like Divine Demon, Divine Architect, and others had pursued their paths without leaving anything behind.

June's path was the same. She could either soar while carrying everything with her or die trying.

Gustavo smiled when he sensed that June's body functions were slowing down. The poison was finally taking effect. Yet, a loud heartbeat affected the environment once again at that point.

The cage began to contract together with the heartbeat. June's aura then affected the gas and spread until it covered the entire cloud.

Gustavo felt a dangerous sensation rising in the back of his mind. He hated that such a weak cultivator could make him so scared, but he knew that he had to retreat.

The Royal jumped off the cage and tried to hide his presence in the dark-green gas again, but the explosion arrived before he could escape its range.

An orange light spread from the poisonous cage, and lightning bolts shot from the enlarging halo, creating cracks on the dense gaseous layers. Gustavo had to dodge some of them while he retreated, but the influence of the heartbeat reached him during his evasive maneuvers.

Gustavo began to sense the rhythm of June's heartbeat while the orange light covered the entire cloud. A pulling and pushing force pressed on his body according to the rotation of the Perfect Circuit.

The beat pushed him away from the expanding lightning storm, while the silence pulled him closer. He felt as if he was in a series of tides that kept him locked in the same area.

The black lightning storm expanded together with June's heartbeat. It destroyed everything it touched, and it increased in power after every cycle.

June could feel that too. Her heart was the center of the Perfect Circuit, and each of its beats slightly increased her power. The lightning storm reflected that feature and expanded as she produced more energy.

Terror appeared on Gustavo's expression. June's power didn't make sense, and she kept on becoming stronger even!

His first spell should have been enough to kill her, but she had survived all his attacks. Moreover, her body didn't suffer from his poison's effects since her black sparks isolated its properties.

That was the worst possible outcome for him. He was a wind cultivator that relied on poison in the end. His strategies often saw him slowly damaging his opponent until he could deliver the final blow.

That didn't happen with June. Her individuality made him see the exact opposite of what he was expecting, which ruined his battle plan.

Gustavo's expression became resolute when the lightning storm was only a few heartbeats away from him. Countless pills came out of his space-ring and released a red smoke as they fused with the dark-red cloud.

Gales blew through the cloud and gathered all the poison in the air in Gustavo's position. The red and dark-green gas condensed until they turned into a liquid armor that covered the Royal and turned him into a giant.

The lightning storm eventually arrived and clashed with him. Layers of poison splashed in every direction as the black sparks raged on its surface. However, the dark liquid's corrosive properties managed to extinguish them before they reached Gustavo's body.

June shot forward at that sight. Green blood came out of her injuries and tainted her orange robe, but a wide smile shone on her face.

She felt delighted that her opponent had survived the last attack. Her centers of power were producing even more energy now, and the world of the laws appeared in her vision as her existence strived toward the higher ranks.

Her centers of power weren't advancing. The energy they produced was so dense that the world mistook her for an existence near the peak of the solid stage!

June bathed in that feeling as lightning bolts shot from her figure. They didn't seem to have a target, but they stopped mid-air once they crossed the giant.

Gustavo didn't care about June's strategy. The poison covering him was so strong that even his skin began to burn. That was his most potent attack, and he didn't dare to prolong his suffering by using its energy to defend.

The giant waved its limbs, and massive dark-red wing blades shot from its figure. Dark sparks exploded under June's feet and allowed her to perform short accelerations that made her dodge the incoming attacks.

Yet, the blades exploded every time June dodged one of them and the poison that they released managed to touch her from time to time.

June charged forward, uncaring of the injuries accumulating on her body. Her figure continued to release lightning bolts that stopped mid-air behind and around the giant.

Then, when she reached her opponent, the floating lightning bolts expanded to create a dark net that surrounded the red giant.

Gustavo tried to stop the net from covering him, but the poison that made his armor fell apart when it touched the black lightning. June's spell had successfully trapped him.

The heartbeat resounded again at that point. It beat once when June landed on the net. It beat the second time when she raised her arms to the sky, and it beat a third time when a thick lightning bolt formed between her hands.

The fourth heartbeat arrived when she threw her lightning bolt on the net, but Gustavo didn't hear it.

Chapter 1085 1085. Face

June's spells had gained the effects of her individuality. The net around Gustavo enhanced her attacks other than damaging the giant by itself.

When June's lightning bolt hit the net, it triggered a chain reaction that released a torrent of attacks toward the giant.

Splashes of a dark-red poison landed on the net only to shatter due to its destructive power. Lightning bolts dug the massive armor and pierced every defensive layer until they landed on the cultivators at its center.

Gustavo screamed in pain as June's attacks crushed his body. Its survival instinct made him throw potions and pills recklessly in a desperate attempt to escape from that deadly situation.

The giant changed color under that relentless assault. Its shades became dark-blue until they turned completely black. Then, its structure became unstable, and violent tremors ran through its fabric, making it denser.

Gustavo didn't care about his safety anymore. When death became a possibility in his mind, he poured everything he had in the armor, uncaring of the harm that it could cause him.

A dangerous sensation rose from the back of June's mind, and she retreated a high speed while launching multiple lightning bolts toward the net. The giant inside it became bigger as she escaped, and a smelly smoke started to come out of its figure.

An explosion occurred after a few seconds. The poisons accumulated in the armor led to a detonation that spread smelly dark drops everywhere on the battlefield.

The cultivators observing the battle had to resort to defensive measures to fend off those poisonous drops. June had to launch countless attacks since she was closer to the detonation, but a dark current engulfed her nonetheless.

The audience remained silent as the outcome of the battle unfolded in their vision. The clouds that had formed around the fighters were slowly dispersing, and no one dared to divert their eyes from them.

The first one to disperse revealed a badly injured June. Her body was a mess of bruises, missing skin, and bulging pustules. The various poisons inside the current had begun to affect her muscles, but the pulsating Perfect Circuit kept them away from her insides.

Then, Gustavo's cloud dispersed, revealing a humanoid figure covered by a smelly liquid.

The cultivators at the battlefield's borders took a while to understand Gustavo's condition, and they shook their heads when they realized how far gone he was.

His body had fused with the poison, and it took all his mental energy to prevent it from crumbling. Still, dense drops fell from his figure, showing how even that effort was pointless.

Gustavo pointed his arm toward June, but his hand melted and fell during the process. A confused expression appeared on his monstrous face. It seemed that he had yet to realize how injured he was.

A thick lightning bolt suddenly pierced his chest and made what remained of his body explode. June didn't hesitate to deliver the finishing blow since she was desperate to end that battle and rest.

The Elders of the alliance cheered. June had won, adding another victory to the invading side. Unsightly expressions appeared on the Royals while Andrew picked his inscribed notebook to respect the terms of the battle.

A few seconds had to pass before he announced the results. "From this moment onward, the Ballor family doesn't belong to the Elbas family anymore. It is free to emigrate..."

Andrew glanced at June as he interrupted his line, and she mustered her strength to complete it. "It will emigrate toward the Hive."

The Elders of the Hive cheered, and the Demons stepped forward to help June. Her life wasn't in danger, but she needed to rest immediately to avoid worsening her injuries.

The matter appeared to be over, and everyone relaxed as they started to discuss who would fight next. Yet, a heavy aura spread on the battlefield, and the experts slowly turned toward the origin of that pressure.

A silver-haired cultivator wearing a shining golden robe had appeared above them. He stared at the battlefield while wearing a confident smile, and his eyes darted between the allied and enemy troops.

His aura revealed his status as a powerhouse, and the small crown on his head hinted that he was important even among rank 6 cultivators. His facial features resembled the other silver-haired experts, but he had a red mark in the middle of his forehead that differentiated him from them.

"Second Prince!" Andrew shouted in a solemn tone as he kneeled in the air. The other Royals quickly followed his example, and welcoming cries echoed as all the members of the Elbas family fell on one knee.

Flying Demon and Dreaming Demon's eyes sharpened at that sight. They had heard that name when they had invaded the old Royal Academy, but the fame of that powerhouse didn't stop there.

When the invasion started, the Elbas family had revealed its new five powerhouses. They appeared to be twins with identical cultivation levels who imitated King Elbas in both power and expertise.

Nevertheless, Second Prince was different. He had already made some progress inside the lower stage of the sixth rank, and his appearance was more eccentric than his brothers and sisters.

Moreover, he had been in charge of defending Divine Market city during the invasion. Great Elder Diana had fought him, and she described him as a canny mind and a great strategist, other than a true master in making use of defensive formations.

His appearance there was unexpected. After all, the alliance could quickly make use of teleportation matrices to change their target. Yet, everything had happened too suddenly, so the troops had to reorganize before moving into the now defenseless territory.

Chasing Demon and the others were in the middle of a battle too. The troops had to wait for them to be over before moving.

"I didn't know we let traitors escape freely," Second Prince said as his gaze stopped on the injured June. His golden eyes crossed her mental defenses and exposed her centers of power to his inspection.

"You have Father's research too," Second Prince announced in a severe tone. "Your betrayal is older than you make it appear."

June's eyes widened at his words, but a tremor swept her body at that point. She started to cough, and a smelly black liquid came out of her mouth as the effects of the poison intensified.

She was getting worse. Every minute spent in that condition were hours added to her recovery. Still, that was the last of her problems now that a powerhouse's focus was on her.

"Your Highness," Andrew spoke in an attempt to justify his actions, "These are the rules of the fight. The Elbas family will lose face if we ignore them."

"You lost enough face by letting a traitor win," Second Prince said in an uncaring tone. His hand rose, and flames gathered in his palm as his eyes remained on June, but ice suddenly spread on his fingers.

The Demons arrived next to June and threw a few pills in her mouth. Some of her injuries started to close, and the bumps began to withdraw. The three of them were about to leave, but the heavy aura returned and stopped their movements.

Dreaming Demon stared at Second Prince with a confused expression. The bottle containing the pink liquid was empty. She had used her remaining reward from Shadal's dimension to stop the powerhouse, but he had recovered in a matter of seconds.

"You used that against Ravaging Demon," Second Prince said as he shook his head to dispel the remaining effects of Dreaming Demon's influence. "How can you expect that to work again?"

The ice on his fingers broke, and flames reappeared on his palm. They took the shape of a small snake coiled around his arm as he pointed at the trio.

He was about to launch a spell, but he quickly moved his arm to attack it somewhere next to him. An explosion occurred mid-air, and a man followed by a maimed bird, a flying blade, and a giant snake came out of it.

Behind him, the golden shields fell apart, and the ballistae crumbled under the assault of the two allied powerhouses.

Chapter 1086 1086. Second Prince

Turning time back to when June's battle was still ongoing, Noah, Chasing Demon, and Great Elder Diana were fighting against the defenses they had memorized in the last two years.

Night and Noah focused on the formations' cores, and the two leaders handled the ballistae and the Royals' attacks.

The trio had become used to cooperate in the last period, and Noah had learnt to trust Night a bit more. The creature had grown after resting inside his mental sea multiple times, and it had become fonder of his Master.

Most of that came from the harmonization with the modifications applied during the suppression. Still, the fact that Noah and Night shared similar personalities and goals had played an essential role in their relationship.

"Ten in one sprint!" Night shouted, and Noah heard its words inside his mind. "Give me a decent body already!"

"Ten," Noah calmly conveyed as he retracted the Demonic Sword and sprinted backward. "I might think of doing a second blade if that's everything you can do."

Night snorted and charged toward more cores. Noah kept making bigger and better bodies every time it destroyed them, so surpassing their structural limits had become a goal for the creature.

Noah didn't mind that. Third Prince and First Princess fixed part of the formations after every battle, so he needed Night to go all-out every time if they wanted to conquer that region.

It still had a bird-like appearance, but Noah had experimented a bit to see what suited its species.

Two years weren't a long time for powerhouses, but Noah had learnt a lot by studying the corpses amassed in his space-ring. The Night-blade Pterodactyls' innate ability allowed them to turn into darkness to generate darkness.

They became blades capable of cutting the fabric of the world and causing a natural creation of darkness. Their bodies then fed on those laws and repeated the process until they advanced.

Noah could spend an entire day listing the weaknesses of that species. The Pterodactyls advanced slowly, they had poor reproductive capacities, and their bodies were quite frail against attacks that crossed their natural defenses.

They couldn't even live under the sunlight, which halted their potential to the seventh rank since the Immortal Lands had a perpetual white sky.

However, Heaven and Earth had applied their fairness on the Pterodactyls' kind too. That species balanced those weaknesses with the most threatening offensive power that Noah had ever seen!

Noah could cut laws with his new slashes, but the Pterodactyls became blades made of laws when they attacked. There was virtually no defense that could stop them as long as their rank was high enough to cut them.

Replicating that feature was challenging, and Noah was still testing how to apply such a miraculous ability to the dark matter. The task would be easier if he used his darkness, but Noah wouldn't limit his weapon's potential because of a few hindrances.

Night became darkness that lay waste of twelve cores in an instant. The creature was too fast and precise for the Royals to develop a countermeasure in a few years. Moreover, it was hard to identify the nature of the attacks, so they chose to focus on the powerhouses for the time being.

Night's body came out more wrecked after every attack. It had destroyed more than two hundred cores on its own during that battle, but it had sacrificed its lower half in the task.

Only a small portion of its torso, one wing, and its head remained intact. Noah guessed that it would need to return inside his mind after less than ten exchanges.

Noah destroyed eleven cores, and Night's laugh resounded in his mind. The creature had learnt to savor those small victories in silence after understanding that they weren't its Master's fault.

Night could sense due to the connection with his mind how the Demonic Sword suffered to keep up with Noah's prowess. The living weapon grew together with his dantian, so it was still unsuited for battles on that level.

'I can't keep up much longer either,' Noah thought as he inspected the Demonic Sword. A few cracks had appeared on its tip. It could launch less than ten attacks too.

"We broke through!" Chasing Demon suddenly sent a message, and Noah called Night back as he turned toward his Patriarch's direction.

The allied powerhouses had exploited Noah's attacks to destabilize the shields, and a large hole had finally appeared in their golden surface.

Cracks spread from the hole. The shields began to crumble as that instability started a chain reaction. The Royals even retreated at that sight, indicating that they couldn't do anything to save the defensive formations.

Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana quickly prepared spells to destroy the ballistae. Noah relaxed, but something peculiar reached his mind now that his consciousness stopped focusing on the shields.

At first, he sensed June's familiar aura. He felt happy that she had rejoined the battlefield and that her centers of power worked properly. Yet, his dark star spun like crazy when he noticed the arrival of the third enemy powerhouse.

He didn't even remember when he entered his dimension. The world in his eyes became devoid of light as he flew toward the side of the battlefield to intercept the enemy spell.

Nevertheless, before he could even reach Second Prince, a wave of flames hit him, forcing him out of his dimension.

The defensive formations and ballistae crumbled behind Noah, but his eyes remained on Second Prince's eccentric figure. The small crown on his head was eye-catching, but Noah's focus was on the red mark on his forehead.

Noah's mind felt a dangerous sensation coming from that prism-like mark. It reflected the light that landed on it, making it shine together with the Prince's golden eyes.

It was a piercing gaze. Noah felt as if a dense halo tried to dig through his natural defenses and inspect the very core of his existence. However, his mental waves cut that foreign presence and freed his body of that strange pressure.

'How did he even sense me?' Noah thought as he continued to exchange stares with Second Prince. He had noticed his friends and lover under him, but something told him that he shouldn't get distracted.

'Is he really that strong?' Noah couldn't help but feel surprised.

Second Prince was a powerhouse in the lower stage, which put them on the same level. He was slightly stronger than his brother and sisters, but Noah had fought two of them together already.

Nevertheless, Second Prince appeared different. Noah didn't know where that sensation came from, but he felt sure that he was in front of another monster.

"You must be his heir," Noah said. He rarely spoke once a battle began, but he wanted to buy June and the Demons time. Also, he tried to destabilize his opponent with his revelations.

June and the Demons quickly left the battlefield, and Second Prince followed them with his eyes. He had to focus quickly though since Noah didn't let his distraction go to waste.

Second Prince turned into flames that shot sideways, and a tall fissure appeared on his previous spot. His fire continued to retreat, but Noah reappeared above it, ready to thrust with his blade.

Another large fissure appeared in the sky, but Second Prince's flames dodged it by separating and regrouping in another spot. His body reformed just in time to see Noah's fingernails slashing at his face.

Five smaller cuts appeared in the sky, but a golden light shone from the Royal's skin and blocked Noah's attacks. Second Prince smiled when he was face to face with his opponent, and the brightness surrounding him intensified before exploding into a sea of fire.

Second Prince reappeared higher in the sky, but his gaze remained on the flames below. His smile remained wide, but his eyes became solemn when he saw the half-naked figure of his opponent walking out of the fire.

Noah didn't suffer any injury. His skin shone with metallic properties, and black gas came out of his mouth as he held back his flames.

Noah didn't know if the Royal was powerful enough to face him, but he had confirmed that he was more ruthless than his siblings.

Chapter 1087 1087. Data

'Let's end this quickly,' Noah thought. His dantian, Demonic Sword, and Night were far away from their perfect condition, so he couldn't express his peak battle prowess for long.

Still, Third Prince and First Princess were busy dealing with the allied powerhouses, and there wasn't any defensive formation on the battlefield. There was no better chance to kill one of the Elbas family's strongest assets.

Black smoke started to come out of Noah's body. His spiked armor quickly formed, and a vast cloud covered a large area in a matter of seconds.

"I see," Second Prince said as the corrosive cloud engulfed him. "The famous Demonic Form. Thaddeus should have given your head to Father when you were still a human."

Another layer of light appeared around him. Its color was white at that time, and the corrosive smoke seemed unable even to get close to that radiance.

It seemed that Second Prince had come prepared. His defenses against the Demonic Form were more effective than those deployed by the allied powerhouses.

Hundreds of slashes flew through the darkness and converged in his position. Second Prince waved his hand, and tens of massive fiery snakes formed around him to block the incoming attacks.

The white light of his defensive item spread on the snakes and made them resistant to the corrosive properties of the cloud, but the slashes carried Noah's sharpness and cut right through them.

Second Prince's eyebrows arched as a metallic layer appeared over his white light. The slashes landed on his figure, but none of them managed to pierce his defenses.

Noah appeared above his opponent while the torrent of slashes landed on his opponent. He pointed the tip of the Demonic Sword toward his head, severing the laws on his path as he lowered it slowly.

A massive fissure appeared on the Royal's spot, and the metallic defense opened in two only to reveal that it was empty inside. Noah felt confused, but a giant reptilian head bit on his torso and pushed him in the distance.

Noah stared at the tall snake that clenched its maw on his body. The white halo around it made the creature unaffected by the corrosive smoke, but its power wasn't enough to pierce his skin.

A strange scent reached Noah's nostrils at that point. His body instinctively rejected that smell, but the dark star spun faster and made him used to it.

Noah's consciousness became able to sense presences around him when his body adapted to the scent. Second Prince had created multiple snakes that flew in Noah's direction and threatened to self-detonate.

'He has studied me for a long time,' Noah thought as he tapped his finger on the reptilian head clenched on his torso.

A small crack appeared on its forehead, and massive openings spread throughout its body due to the effects of Noah's destruction. A human-shaped fissure replaced his figure then, and the incoming snakes detonated only to hit black smoke.

Noah flew toward Second Prince's presence, but another fireball forced him out of his dimension. Nevertheless, he was ready at that time, and he slashed with the Demonic Sword without losing his momentum.

Second Prince was nearby, with his hand pointed toward Noah. He was ready to launch another spell, but he turned himself into flames when he saw Noah's slashing in his direction.

A large chunk of the black cloud disappeared as part of the sky became a massive crack connected to the void. Second Prince's flames struggled to escape the fissure's pulling force, and Noah didn't let that chance go to waste.

He reappeared on the flames' path, and a starry sky spread in front of him. Countless slashes landed on them, and Snore quickly reformed to launch its elemental attacks.

The Blood Companion fell apart and reformed every time he used his movement technique. The higher energy couldn't keep up with his speed, so Snore lost its connection with Noah during his sprints.

A torrent of attacks landed on the flames. A grunt came out of them, but a golden light soon shone from their surface.

Noah recognized that defense and didn't hesitate to rely on his strongest slash to deliver a decisive blow. Another fissure appeared on top of the previous one, but many runes covered the flames and made them disappear from that spot.

Noah turned his head toward another area of the cloud. Second Prince's body had reformed there, but his condition wasn't optimal. Trails of blood came out of his mouth, and a long diagonal cut had appeared on his torso.

The last offensive had been too much even for his many defensive methods. Noah's power was enough to hurt him.

Second Prince coughed blood before cleaning his mouth with his golden robe. The white light still protected him from the corrosive smoke, and his smile remained wide on his face.

"You moved away from the hybrid realm," Second Prince announced. "To think that we invested so much in researching those creatures only for you to discover a superior state."

Noah remained speechless when he heard that, but a sea of saber-shaped runes formed around him. Snore spread its wings too and began to charge its feathers with the primary energy accumulated in the environment.

"I thought you wanted to talk," Second Prince exclaimed while releasing a laugh. "You are right. I am Father's heir and his rightful successor. I have also inherited his curiosity, which makes you the most appealing being in my eyes."

Noah calmly listened to his words while his attacks charged. He had enough energy for a few more exchanges, but he wanted to end the battle with the next one.

Silent orders reached Night, who had hidden its presence inside the cloud. The creature prepared itself for the final assault.

"You still seem a bit too much for me to handle at the moment," Second Prince continued. "I'll be more prepared next time."

Noah launched his array of sabers and feathers and waited for them to near his opponent before using his movement technique. It took him only an instant to reappear above Second Prince and unleash another powerful slash.

Second Prince used all his defensive measures to block the attacks. The metallic layer covered his figure while he turned into flames. Yet, the torrent of sabers tore the dark-silver protection apart and opened a path for Noah's slash.

A fissure appeared on the spot. Half of Second Prince's flames disappeared in the void while the others flew away to reform his body. The Royal reappeared in a maimed condition, with missing limbs and countless cuts, but with his smile still wide.

Second Prince opened his mouth to speak again, but something moved inside the darkness and silenced him. The Royal revealed a surprised expression as a cut appeared on his neck, and his head fell from his shoulders.

"Got him!" Night cheered while half of what remained of its body crumbled. The bird-like puppet flew slowly toward Noah's shoulders before turning into a lump of dark matter that entered his mind.

Noah wanted to heave a sigh of relief, but the decapitated body began to melt right in front of his eyes. It turned into a red liquid that the black cloud consumed in a matter of seconds.

Instead, the severed head continued to float among the corrosive smoke with white light still covering its surface. The head eventually turned to face Noah upside-down with the same smirk that had accompanied the Royal through the entire battle.

"All these data will be interesting to process," Second Prince announced as the light around his head dimmed. The corrosive smoke began to affect pieces of his skin, which slowly consumed what remained of his body.

"It's still too early for a proper battle among our organizations," Second Prince said as his head disappeared inside the cloud. "Spend a few more years taking this region. The real fight will have to wait for Father's return."

When the corrosive smoke destroyed the last bits of Second Prince's tissues, a golden light shot from that spot and landed on the battlefield created by the four powerhouses in the distance.

The light spread, creating multiple formations that gave birth to a series of golden shields and divining the Royals from the alliance's leaders.

Chapter 1088 1088. Together

Noah remained inside his black cloud. His gaze didn't go on the newly formed golden shields. Instead, it remained on the spot where the smoke had consumed Second Prince.

'Was that a puppet?' Noah couldn't help but think after reviewing the last battle.

His blows on Second Prince's body and their exchanges had felt real. They didn't differ from the battles with other powerhouses. Even Night didn't sense anything unusual when cutting him.

Yet, Second Prince had shown no fear of death. The peculiar way in which he had died also hinted that his body was a mere puppet rather than his bones and flesh.

'It was able to express so much power with a fake body,' Noah's mind felt heavy when considering that. He had initially thought that King Elbas was the last worthy opponent in the Mortal Lands, but it seemed that his heir belonged to the realms of monsters too.

Every organization had promising cultivators that preferred to hide from the public scene and focus only on their path. Noah had always known that, but he had begun to learn more about them only after becoming a powerhouse.

A smirk appeared on Noah's face as the Demonic Form vanished, and the black cloud began to disperse. He felt happy that the struggles weren't over. Now he knew that he wouldn't have to spend the last part of the heroic ranks in complete safety.

Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana exchanged a glance before gazing in Noah's direction. The dispersion of the cloud slowly revealed his figure, but he could only spread his arms to express his helplessness when he sensed the two pairs of eyes on him.

The two powerhouses were cornering Third Prince and First Princess after the shields fell, but Second Prince's actions had restored the battlefield to its previous condition.

They weren't back to the starting point though. The ballistae had fallen, and the new shields had fewer cores. It would take the alliance less than a year to conquer that region unless the Elbas family had other tricks.

The battle ended like that. The troops began to retreat, but Noah had yet another gesture to make before returning to his quarters.

Second Prince's defeat was a silent authorization to respect the terms of June's battle. Andrew Elbas continued to settle the Ballor family's release in public so that everyone could see that his word had some value.

Noah wasn't aware of June's bet, but he saw her injured condition. The Demons' drugs and her body's innate healing capabilities were already dealing with her wounds.

She didn't need any external help, so Noah could use that chance to announce something that he had waited to make public for way too long.

Noah slowly descended toward the allied troops, who welcomed him with polite bows. Only those close to him dared to react differently to his arrival.

Daniel nodded, Faith giggled while trying to hold back her excitement, and the corners of Elder Julia's mouth turned upward. Dreaming Demon revealed a warm smile, and Flying Demon started to laugh, giving thumbs-ups with both his hands.

Only June didn't react at all. She kept her stare fixed on Noah as her lover neared the allied troops.

June had understood what he wanted to do, but she waited for him to stand in front of her to give voice to a confident complaint. "I can deal with these wounds."

"I know," Noah said while placing his palm on her forehead, "That's why I'm doing it."

June lowered her defenses and allowed Noah's dark matter to run inside her body. The poison that had infected her tissues couldn't do anything against the higher energy.

In a matter of seconds, June's body became devoid of poison, and her healing properties started to fix the damage suffered at full speed. Her skin began to heal, and her complexion regained some color.

She still had bruises and some smelly spots, but Noah didn't mind them in the slightest. The fixed stare of his lover left him speechless and in a daze.

It didn't matter of ugly she looked after the battle. It didn't matter that her injuries had left horrid marks on her skin. Noah only needed to look at those orange eyes to recognize his lover and ignore everything else.

The Elders of the Hive knew about their relationship, but the others didn't share that knowledge. The experts of Council felt confused seeing that intimate interaction, but they understood something when they saw Faith's expression.

Many higher-ups of the Council still believed that Noah and Faith would eventually end up together. They were terrific cultivators, and their political value would make the alliance between their organizations sturdier.

Nevertheless, there wasn't any regret nor disappointment on Faith's face. She appeared truly happy to see June and Noah interacting in that way in the open.

While the Elder of the Council had restrained reactions at that discovery, the assets of the Elbas family's responses were far flashier.

June was quite famous among the Royals. She was the battle maniac who had refused every marriage proposal and focused only on her cultivation level.

The Royals would barely see her outside of her quarters. She appeared to be a grumpy machine, programmed only to complete missions and cultivate. They had never seen her exchange more than a few lines with other experts, let alone allowing them to touch her.

However, she appeared calm with Noah's hand on her forehead. Her expression didn't carry her usual coldness. Instead, it had a tinge of warmth that became more evident as that interaction continued.

Some of her admirers froze in fear. They had chased June for a long time only to see the Demon Prince of the Hive casually behaving intimately with her.

Other higher-ups had different reactions. Andrew Elbas and the leaders of various factions began to send countless mental messages through their inscribed notebooks.

June had learnt a lot about the Elbas family. The Royals had never fully trusted her due to her aloof behavior, but she still had a general understanding of many secret structures and defenses.

They had to modify all of them now that June had turned out to be intimate with such a high-level personality inside the Hive. It would have been different with the Council or other Elders, but Noah was famous for appearing behind the enemy lines out of nowhere.

Noah and June weren't paying attention to their surroundings. Only the eyes of their lover occupied their vision.

The hand on her forehead slowly slid toward her cheek. Meanwhile, June reached for Noah's robe to pull him closer.

The two of them drew close without diverting their gazes. They didn't speak nor convey anything with their gestures, but their lips eventually touched right in front of everyone.

That removed every doubt about their relationship. The couple's public kiss announced their status. That exposed them to enemy schemes, but June and Noah didn't want to remain in the shadows anymore.

"It took us only a few centuries," Noah whispered once their lips separated. June wanted to tease him, but she felt too happy to say anything.

Her hand rose toward his face. Her thumb traced his features as memories resurfaced in her mind.

Everything had begun with a promise after the crisis of the winged beasts. They were little more than talented heroic assets back then, with goals that forced them to separate multiple times.

Their life together had been a series of moments stolen from a strict political environment that they had to respect as long as they remained weak.

Yet, Noah's prowess was in the powerhouses' realm, and June had centers of power fueled by higher energy. They had been spectacular talents in the past, but they had become respected assets among the heroic ranks now.

"You are still stronger than me," June eventually pouted, but both of them laughed at her words.

Their journey was still long, and they had yet to face the Immortal Lands as a challenge. However, they could finally walk forward together now.

Chapter 1089 - 1089. Peace

The alliance spent the following year dealing with the rebuilt golden shields. Second Prince didn't appear again, but First Princess and Third Prince changed their battle tactic often to slow down the invaders' advance.

Noah, Chasing Demon, and Great Elder Diana had to deal with a series of quasi-rank 6 disposable items that had the sole purpose of slowing them down.

They had to face a flock of hawk-like puppets capable of eating the energy inside spells before they detonated. They had to pave their way out of illusions that left them wandering inside Noah's cloud for days.

Once, they even had to deal with copies of themselves created after the defensive formations had gathered enough data about their individualities.

Still, the efforts of the Royals could only delay the inevitable. Every defense fell, and the enemy powerhouses relied on giant runes on top of the obelisks to teleport their assets away.

The Elbas family salvaged their assets in that way, but that wasn't necessarily positive since only three regions remained in its domain. The lack of losses left them overcrowded.

The higher-ups of the alliance held a political meeting after they conquered that land. They estimated the resources required to seize the remaining regions of the Elbas family, and the conclusions were disheartening.

The defenses were too tight, and the five Princes and Princesses would be more threatening now that they could focus all their efforts on fewer territories.

The alliance could even have to face all five of them simultaneously since the formations in the other lands were enough to stop any secret attack.

A slow siege was possible, but the eventual gains didn't make it worthy.

The invasion came to an end at that point. Both the Hive and the Council divided their gains and established a series of neutral territories that they could use as headquarters for their alliance.

They issued a series of smaller organizations meant to control and oversee the situation to prevent the appearance of rebellious groups. Still, those areas mainly served the purpose of increasing the friendly antagonism between the two factions.

Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana began to cover those new lands with defenses while building habitable areas. It was only a matter of time before their organizations started to prosper there too.

The future for the human cultivators of both forces appeared brighter than ever. Only failures would have a lackluster growth with endless lands at their disposal and multiple adversaries to fight.

The situation for the heroic cultivators was a bit different. More lands meant more space for training areas, but the few losses and increasing amount of powerful assets accelerated the new continent's deterioration.

That was an inevitable occurrence. Heroic cultivators absorbed the "Breath" inside the matter to improve, and having more of them would lower the overall value of the new continent.

That wouldn't affect only their training. The resources in the heroic ranks would slowly become scarcer as the deterioration continued.

It was as if the world imposed a limit to the growth of the organizations. There could be only so many powerful cultivations around, and that world had delayed the issue only thanks to the piece of Immortal Lands.

The other world had helped in the matter too, but the number of heroic cultivators had continued to increase, making even those vast regions not enough to sustain all of them.

The deterioration had started right after the war against the Empire. As the organizations grew again, the world began to suffer.

Everyone knew about that issue, but no force was willing to restrain their growth to benefit the world. Every leader would rather start another war than suppress their power.

Noah didn't care about that matter. Ruining a world to push his cultivation level upward was a trade that every cultivator aiming for the sky had to make.

Those striving for godhood couldn't keep in mind the well-being of the ants. That was a ruthless mindset that every heroic cultivator had to accept sooner or later.

Without any opponents in sight nor war to fight, Noah could finally resume his long-awaited training. He had many projects to take care of, and the first one was obtaining the divine inheritance inside the Cut.

Now that he had revealed his relationship with June to the world, he could spend time with her without minding the political environment.

June and Noah spent a few months inside one of the new habitations built for them, but they soon restored a tight training schedule. The fact that they could express their love in the open didn't divert their minds from their real goals.

Their life became similar to their cohabitation inside Noah's mansion. June's training didn't have special requirements, so she could follow him wherever he went.

The Council built a tall tower near the Cut where those attempting to seize the divine inheritance could live. June and Noah could occupy the last floor of the structure due to their unique position.

Noah couldn't only focus on the Divine Cut. The time spent inside the ancient aura increased as his understanding improved. He had reached the point when each training session took him decades.

His centers of power would suffer if he left them to stagnate so often. Noah had to take long breaks where he immersed himself in traditional training and some side projects.

Faith, Daniel, and the Demons would visit them from time to time. They would even remain inside the tower for months whenever they felt the need to discuss their individuality.

They were the most promising assets of their organizations in the end. They shared similar ambitions, and their paths had met more than once.

Noah had united those different characters along his journey, and his influence had pushed their power forward. It wouldn't be wrong to say that many of their achievements had come after interacting with him.

Life was peaceful, and nothing could interrupt his cultivation. Without his hunger driving him in the wilderness often, Noah spent almost all his time between the tower and under Chasing Demons' quarters.

The Hive had placed the Seventh Kesier rune among the trapped magical beasts meant for the Copying Technique. That was the safest place in the entire organization, and the only spot deign of containing an actual divine item.

Years passed quietly, with no major event happening. The lack of struggles would usually hurt cultivators, but Noah had accumulated too many experiences to suffer from that situation.

The breakthroughs eventually arrived. Many assets had been near the peak of the fifth rank before the invasion, and those experiences had been enough to make their power cross the last step.

Elder Julia's dantian was the first to advance. The event surprised some of the higher-ups of the Hive since they expected Dreaming Demon to be the first. Still, many understood the reason behind that.

The Demons had lost a lot of time inside Divine Architect's separate dimension. Their cultivation level had reached those peaks due to their incredible talent, but they lacked the years of training needed for that breakthrough.

Those arrived anyway at some point. Dreaming Demon advanced to the sixth rank with both dantian and mind only sixty years after Elder Julia. The two women became the third and fourth powerhouses of the Hive in less than a century after the invasion.

Flying Demon had a harder time advancing. He had been at some distance from the absolute peak before the invasion, but the sight of his lover advancing pushed his centers of power forward.

Seeing Dreaming Demon moving away from him was the greatest drive that his individuality could feel. For a cultivator who had spent one thousand years keeping his lover alive, losing her was his biggest fear.

Two hundred years had to pass from the end of the invasion for Flying Demon to advance to the sixth rank. His breakthrough made the Hive match the forces of the Elbas family, but no new attack began because of that.

Breakthroughs happened on the Council's side too. Elder Regina advanced in the same period as Elder Julia, and others followed her example. Still, the Council didn't manage to match the numbers of the Hive.

Chapter 1090: 1090. Hair

Noah felt the breakthrough of his dantian drawing close only after three centuries spent training in that peaceful period.

It was needless to say that such speed surpassed the realm of the talents, but it wasn't as monstrous as his other centers of power. Moreover, he felt that he lacked something to finalize his advance.

Still, peace worked against those seeking enlightenment. Noah could only cultivate and meditate since no adventure or opponents gave him the chance to test himself.

Of course, Noah would act if the issue persisted for too long. It wouldn't be his first time doing something reckless in the hope that it benefitted his growth, and the Elbas family was always there for him. 2

His training didn't reach that point yet, so he continued to use traditional methods to train. For Noah, that meant using the Seventh Kesier rune, eating peak rank 5 magical beasts, and cultivating with the Demonic Sword.

He paired the traditional training with his many projects. The Divine Cut occupied most of his attention, but he found time to forge and test other inscriptions. Also, he had to deal with Night's constant harassment. 2

Among his centers of power, his mind had the most remarkable growth. The Seventh Kesier rune wasn't a copy. It was the actual piece of the fur of a rank 7 Kesier Ape, and its benefits were almost miraculous.

Noah struggled to believe how easy it was to enlarge his mind with that divine item. He had even stopped using his spherical rune since he preferred to use all his mental energy in those training sessions.

The Seventh Kesier rune improved the sturdiness of his mental walls too. In those three hundred years, the internal pressure caused by Snore and Night had almost vanished.

His body had improved steadily. Noah didn't have many rank 6 meals in those years, but his lack of hunger made them easier to endure.

Peak rank 5 magical beasts could satisfy him. His level didn't increase with them, but he couldn't do much better even if he went out to hunt rank 6 creatures.

As for those powerful beasts, most of them were hard to find, and Noah didn't want to spend months studying their tracks and planning hunts unless it was necessary.

Some of them weren't on the lower tier either, so he didn't know if he could defeat them.

Luckily for him, the dark star took care of the growth of his body. It didn't matter if it was food, darkness, or "Breath". His rotating heart kept on improving his tissues with whatever fuel it could find.

The dark star depended on his dantian. Any improvement in his darkness would necessarily increase the power and efficiency of his fourth center of power.

His dark matter had become slightly unstable as Noah neared the peak of the fifth rank. It was about to transform, but it still lacked a little push. It would be up to the rank 6 darkness to make it take the last step.

Snore was in the same situation as the dark star. Its existence's depended on Noah's higher energy, so it had yet to become a fully rank 6 creature according to the world's labels.

The Demonic Sword was in the same situation, even if its issues came from Noah's dantian. It couldn't reach the sixth rank unless his individuality moved to the next stage, but it still required a decent amount of nutrients to appease its hunger.

Noah had a few ideas for what concerned his Demonic Sword. His existence had evolved after the breakthrough of his body. Instead, his living weapon had remained tied to his hybrid status.

He felt that he should try to fuse the dark matter with the blade's fabric, but the Divine Cut took most of his time, and he didn't want to approach that project when his higher energy was so unstable.

The same didn't apply for Night. Since the core of the rank 7 Pterodactyl was its mind, Noah could experiment freely with its body without risking its life.

Countless sword forms floated inside Noah's mind. They performed harmless cuts before shattering and fusing with his mental sea once he understood them.

Noah's consciousness was inside the ancient aura of the Cut. That was his longest training session inside the divine inheritance so far. He had been sitting on top of the tower for fifty years already.

The sword arts shown inside his mind covered every possible technique that involved blades. They went from delicate thrusts to a violent series of slashes.

Noah lost himself inside the constant enlightenment. His consciousness wavered until he almost forgot who he was. It was as if everything about him was becoming a sword.

Still, that path wasn't his. The creator of that inheritance was an unparalleled expert, but Noah was different. His individuality could have the form of a sword, but he was much more than that.

That was the reason why he never let his mind wholly lose itself in the ancient aura. He didn't want to lose his path while pursuing methods to improve his power.

Noah wanted to learn from the Divine Cut, not become its copy.

Something unusual happened when the forms that had accumulated inside his mind fused with his lowering mental sea. Usually, new figures would appear until Noah exhausted his mental energy, but that didn't happen at that time.

Swords entered his mental sphere and amassed to form a human figure. Noah's focus spiked as the ghostly shape of a man landed on his mental sea and inspected the area.

The man appeared relatively young, not even in his thirties. He had long hair and beard, and the same went for his eyebrows that fell on top of his eyes.

An intense sharpness spread from his figure. Noah felt as if everything about him was a blade. Every hair, every inch of his ghostly shape was a sword that pointed at him.

The man scratched his hair and lifted his eyebrows to stare at Noah's ghostly figure. His attention briefly went on Snore's shape, but he quickly recognized the owner of that mental sphere.

Noah could finally see his eyes when he removed the hair in front of them. The man didn't have pupils nor irises, but Noah could swear that he felt a sharp gaze on him.

There was an unfathomable truth in his eyes. Noah couldn't even begin to understand it, but he knew that it was there.

'Is that his law?' Noah thought, but the man began to speak before he could inspect him further.

"So," The man said, "You must be a fellow swordsman."

His words carried a sharpness that hurt Noah's mind even after it went through centuries of training with the Seventh Kesier rune. Yet, Noah endured the pain to perform a quick greeting bow.

The man began to mumble as he kept his eyebrows lifted. Noah felt naked in front of his empty gaze, but something told him that he had to go through that inspection to reach the next stage of the inheritance. 1

The man eventually shook his head and placed his arms on his waist as he shouted his final evaluation. "You are a brute!" 3

The shout forced Noah to focus on keeping his mental walls stable, but part of his mind remained on the man since he didn't seem to be over yet.

"You swing swords as if they were hammers!" The man shouted again. "You only rely on your physical strength to obtain power. Come back here when you can differentiate blades from maces!" 3

The sharpness intensified until Noah felt forced to cut the connection with the ancient aura. He had to disperse the pressure accumulated in his mind even after the outside world appeared in his vision.

Once he recovered, he found a one meter tall bird-like creature looking at him with a mocking expression.