

DEMONIC 1101

Chapter 1101 1101. Invitation

What had once been the snowy plain now shined with a bright red color. Flames filled the entirety of its surface, and their tongues rose toward the sky, illuminating the areas nearby.

The flames flickered and trembled in the night without ever dispersing. It was as if King Elbas' spear had given birth to a perpetual fire that nothing in the world could suppress.

The experts observing the battle noticed the strange features of the flames.

The snowy region containing the tall mountain didn't suffer from the increased temperature. The fire didn't affect the sea past the coastline either.

The spear had created a fiery cage that isolated that region from the outside world. As for the actual condition of the land, only King Elbas could know that.

Chasing Demon stared at the fiery scenery while Elder Julia waited for his directives. The two of them had shared the weight of the Copying Technique, but she was out of options now.

The flames blocked any offensive. It was pointless to create copies on the borders since their attacks would melt as soon as they touched the fire.

That had now become King Elbas' private land. Nothing could pass there unless he decided otherwise.

Elder Julia knew about Chasing Demon's divine golem. The Hive still had a chance to fight for that territory's ownership, but she didn't know how far her Patriarch was willing to go.

The same helplessness pervaded the experts watching the scene. Only inscribed items could help once the solid stage powerhouse showed his real power.

The difference in their cultivation level was too steep to overcome with the Copying Technique alone. It would be different if the Hive had captured a peak rank 6 creature, but no one in its ranks could pull off that task.

Also, there would be a problem containing the creature afterward, and that without considering the "Breath" needed to copy it.

Chasing Demon stared at the raging flames in silence. The red radiance filled his vision even if he was at some distance along the southern coast.

Eventually, he decided to send a message to announce the outcome of the battle. "We lost the snowy plain, or what's left of it."

No one felt at a loss once those words echoed from their inscribed notebooks. The Hive had done its best and more. Chasing Demon didn't have any fault in that defeat.

The world now knew how strong the Hive was. Every organization would think twice before deciding to invade its territories.

King Elbas didn't know that Chasing Demon had officially given up on that territory. He stared at the snowy mountain in the distance and waited for his opponents to make a move.

However, as time passed and nothing came to attack him, he showed his arrogant smile to the world before descending toward the flames. His figure eventually disappeared among the fire, leaving every spectator unsure of what would come next.

King Elbas had announced that he would reclaim two territories when he learnt about the new political borders. The second region was a neutral land of the alliance, so it didn't have the Copying Technique to defend it.

A massive call to arms spread among the ranks of the alliance. Every cultivator and hybrid who had a cultivation level in the solid stage of the fifth rank or above had to join the defense of the last territory.

An army of experts gathered in the bushland next to the region featuring the forest of Silver-yellows. Noah and the other higher-ups prepared themselves for the incoming mayhem.

Ten powerhouses stood in front of almost sixty rank 5 experts in the solid stage. Those troops were elites among elites and possibly the strongest force in the entire world.

Yet, their opponent was a solid stage powerhouse, and they had no confidence in dealing with him without the Copying Technique. The defensive formations could block some of his attacks, but the battle wouldn't be as entertaining as the last one.

The priority of the alliance was to salvage troops. The Hive and the Council didn't want to lose essential assets for a region that wasn't vital to their organizations.

Still, they wanted to put up a fight. The alliance would consider the defense a success if it managed to force King Elbas' hand once again. As long as the region became worthless, that wouldn't be a loss.

Days passed, and nothing moved inside the Royals' domain. The Princes and Princesses even returned to their respective regions without performing any flashy action.

The days eventually became weeks, and then months. The Elbas family had gone silent during that period, and no battle started even among the human troops on the other borders.

It was as if peace had returned. Still, the alliance's experts couldn't shake off the feeling that King Elbas had yet to stop interacting with the political situation.

Tension built among them. Both Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana didn't know what was going on, but they didn't believe that King Elbas would go back on his word.

Something eventually happened after six months of tense waiting. The five Princes and Princesses came out of their lands and gathered above the bushland to announce their Father's will.

"Father wishes to express his respect for the Hive's power," Second Prince shouted when the five Royals lined up in the sky above the southern border of the region.

His words echoed through the land and reached the allied troops hidden in a temporary military base built on the western border. No one moved though. They had to hear what the Royals had to say before deciding on their next action.

"Father says that he doesn't want to destroy an entire region again," Second Prince continued, "But he can't let the strongest organization in the world have so little land either."

Noah heard a few snorts resound next to him. Elder Julia and many rank 5 cultivators couldn't help but disagree with the claim that the Elbas family was above them in terms of power.

'It's not the organization,' Noah thought with a tinge of helplessness, 'One existence is enough to make that claim true.'

He didn't like to hide, but he had to respect his opponent's strength. There was a thin line between being reckless and suicidal, and Noah had no intention to cross it for the sake of his pride.

"King Elbas has invited some of you to a formal meeting," Second Prince spoke again. "I'll call now those that he has personally invited to this event."

Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana nodded at each other when they heard those words. That was the best outcome, in their opinion. Other battles at that level would only hurt the world, and no organization desired that.

Some of the new continent's central territories were still recovering from the battle against the quasi-rank 7 Winged Beast. That alone explained how damaged the world would be if that trend against King Elbas continued.

"Great Elder Diana of the Council!" Second Prince began to announce those invited to the meeting. "God's Left Hand of the Empire! Chasing Demon of the Hive!"

The audience felt shocked when they heard God's Left Hand's name. They thought that the invitation involved only the alliance's members, but it seemed that King Elbas wanted the negotiations to feature every organization.

A moment of silence followed those names. The Patriarch and Matriarch of the alliance began to discuss the preparations needed before the meeting.

Everyone thought that the list was over. Second Prince had already called the highest members of the three organizations in the end. However, he surprised the audience by adding a last name.

"Noah Balvan of the Hive!" Second Prince announced as his smile became wider. "The four of you are invited in the fiery land to join King Elbas' banquet. The date is three years from now. There shall be peace until then."

Chapter 1102 1102. Expressions

The five Princes and Princesses left the region after they completed their task. The experts of the alliance in the military base watched them go before meditating on their message.

King Elbas wasn't the type of cultivator that would resort to schemes to deal with his opponents. He was driven and curious, but he wouldn't do anything to hurt his image.

Moreover, his cultivation level placed him away from political struggles. His only goal was to ascend now, so the organizations didn't think that the meeting would endanger them.

Reports reached the alliance's inscribed notebooks. Those in charge of overseeing the new continent's situation stated that the Princes and Princesses had left for the Papral nation.

The structures on the old continent then confirmed that the Royals had conveyed their invitation to the Empire before returning to their respective regions.

The matter became official at that point. The Royals had invited all the interested parties and restored their political silence, and only one doubt remained in the minds of the three leaders. They couldn't understand why King Elbas had decided to invite Noah too.

Noah wasn't exactly famous for his political skills, and King Elbas had suffered a loss when he dealt with him. Even his inscribed items didn't prevent the Demon Prince from tricking him into leaving the surface.

"You don't have to come," Chasing Demon said as he neared Noah. The Patriarch was worried that Noah could be in danger if he went to the meeting.

Noah couldn't claim to know King Elbas personally, but he understood him. They had a lot in common, but there were a few sharp differences that made them unique.

King Elbas was a true creator. His interests enveloped everything in the world, and he was willing to put himself in danger and damage his reputation to appease his curiosity.

Noah put his cultivation level and battle prowess before everything. He had developed other interests throughout his life, but they always concerned his power.

King Elbas preferred grand actions and flashy gestures to prove his superiority. Instead, Noah would often resort to tricks and deceit when necessary.

Noah didn't care about his image, while King Elbas needed it to fuel the power of his bloodline. If the Royal had to resort to a trick to kill Noah, his family would lose most of its reputation.

"I'll go," Noah firmly answered, and the weaker experts paying attention to that interaction couldn't help but nod at his determination.

Noah had learnt to behave like a true leader with time. He often ignored those obligations due to his aloof character, but he always acted while keeping the Hive's best interests in mind.

It wouldn't be wrong to say that the Hive's status would be nowhere near its current one if it weren't for him.

Noah didn't only obtain the tools necessary for the rebellion. He had also gathered a large number of experts and resources across the years.

The Seventh Kesier rune alone was enough to make him the most important existence in the entire Hive. He didn't manage any political matter, but the higher-ups knew that their organization's future was safe with him.

The Elders of the Council saw that too, and they felt glad that Noah was their ally. He usually created chaos whenever he moved, but they would never hope to have him as their enemy.

Even if his dantian was still in the fifth rank, no one dared to consider him an incomplete powerhouse. Actually, some believed that he was already stronger than his Patriarch.

Of course, Noah didn't care about his public image. His mind had registered only two pieces of information: The meeting with King Elbas and the time he had to prepare for that event.

'Training with Sword Saint is obvious,' Noah thought as the troops dispersed, 'But what should I do other than training?'

Three years were nothing for him now. He could spend them thinking about his next project if necessary. Yet, he still had plans to increase his power in the short-run.

Noah had solved the situation with his spells, and he had even improved the Demonic Form. His centers of power grew steadily, and his dantian only needed time or some sudden enlightenment.

He couldn't accelerate the training with Sword Saint. Only the endless repetition of his best slash could make it become his foundation.

The copying of the elements had met a bottleneck. Noah had no idea what to do with the light element, and no one could help him in that matter.

Noah could begin to create techniques capable of fusing with his new spells. Still, his sword arts were incomplete, so he found it pointless to invent forms that he would have to change soon.

'It seems that you are my only option,' Noah thought, and a surprised gasp resounded in his mind.

Night had remained inside its dark underground area during the recent events. King Elbas probably knew a lot about that species, so Noah didn't want to risk it while it was in that weak body.

Their connection had improved, so the two could talk even if they were in different regions. It was as if Noah had a permanent open channel with the Pterodactyl's mind.

"Is something happening?" Night asked through its connection, but Noah didn't answer. He would keep the creature curious for a while to avoid seeing its smug face again.

The world couldn't return to complete peace after King Elbas' return. The shadow of war loomed over the new continent, so every expert did their best to improve their prowess.

They didn't know how the meeting would unfold. It was better to prepare for the worst.

Chasing Demon even issued a series of specific orders meant for Thirty-seven. The automaton and his disciples had to create temporary cities in the separate dimension if King Elbas decided to go all-out against the alliance.

There wasn't enough time to resume creating living weapons, and Noah wasn't in the mood to use those years for that. The various experts could only use their resources to either purchase or build their inscribed items.

Noah returned to the tower next to the Divine Cut. He had a room on the last floor where the sunlight couldn't enter, and he quickly began his project there.

That wasn't his first time improving Night's body, and he had already studied the corpses of its species in the past. Replicating those creatures' innate ability was hard, but Noah didn't want to stop at that.

The Night-blade Pterodactyls were incredible in the right environment. Noah had even begun to believe that they could really be the best predators in darkness.

However, that wasn't enough. It was pointless to be the best among ants in a world filled with dragons.

Night had sensed that something was up, so it didn't hesitate to fly to the tower to spy on its Master. When it reached the last floor, it found June opening one of the windows to allow it inside.

The beast wanted to shoot directly in the isolated room, but June promptly stopped it.

"Noah is working with the corpses of your species," June said before returning to her mat to cultivate.

Her appearance didn't change in those years, but the aura that surrounded her had become unstable. It was as if she was ready to explode at the first sign of battle, which created a sharp contrast with her calm expression.

"Is he creating a new body?" Night asked as a deep chirp accompanied its human words. "It was about time! I suffered so much in this thing!"

June stared at the bird-like creature with interest, but she didn't say anything. Night eventually found that constant gaze annoying and questioned her about it.

"What is it?" Night asked with a tinge of impatience.

"Noah always tells me that you are more expressive than humans," June replied without moving her gaze. "I just can't understand where your expressions are."

Chapter 1103 - 1103. Transformation

The day of the meeting arrived, and the four powerhouses left their training areas to gather on the corner of the southeastern coast.

The region was still on fire. The flames had never stopped flickering for more than three years, but the four experts knew that King Elbas would make his move soon.

King Elbas didn't disappoint them. The flames slowly went down, and a shocking scenery filled the vision of the four invited to that event.

A green prairie covered the land, and mid-sized magical beasts of various ranks populated it. Noah recognized them. They were Royal Peac.o.c.ks, and their bright feathers illuminated the area with multicolored light.

Tall trees with large, rainbow-colored leaves and pale-yellow trunks filled the coastline. The marvelous leaves reflected the sunlight and filled the environment with a mystical halo.

A ditch ran from the southern coast and crossed half of the region before ending in a large lake. A series of horse-type magical beasts rested near its waters and stared at the Peac.o.c.ks with a hungry expression.

Those Horses usually fed on other magical beasts, but they didn't hunt the Peac.o.c.ks in the region. A series of runes flickered on their bodies whenever their instincts tried to take over their actions.

The region had been nothing more than a massive fire just a few seconds ago, but now it had turned into a paradisiac land that expressed nothing but peace.

The most striking element in the area was the massive castle placed right at the region's center.

The castle had a rectangular shape and four tall towers at its corners. Golden bricks made its structure, and crystal-like windows filled its walls.

The building improved the image of the scenery further. That land had instantly become the most beautiful place in the new continent, and no one would ever dare to object to that.

'My consciousness can't go past the grass,' Noah thought as he inspected the area. The beauty of the land couldn't faze him, especially when he was about to meet the strongest cultivator in those Mortal Lands for the second time.

Noah's mental waves couldn't cross the surface. The underground world of the region remained a mystery, which hinted at King Elbas' training area.

Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana exchanged understanding glances with Noah. They had noticed the same peculiarity, but there wasn't much they could do about it.

God's Left Hand didn't interact with the trio. The Shandal Empire was outside of the political struggles. Its entire domain was nothing more than a few poor territories. The other organizations were technically enemies. God's Left Hand had sealed a pact with the Hive, but that didn't make her situation better.

The Hive wouldn't even help the Empire if it was in danger. Some Elders had a connection with the Second Life formation, but that didn't make the two organizations allies.

The four flew through the region until they reached the castle. Its tall golden door then opened, and the five Princes and Princesses walked out of it to welcome the guests.

"Please," Second Prince announced, "Come inside. Father is waiting for you."

That sight didn't please the four experts. Their organizations had kept their eyes open in the past years, but they didn't see the Royals exiting their regions. Yet, there they were, and their luxurious golden robes showed how prepared they were for that event.

That put the guests on the weaker side, but King Elbas was probably enough to do that by himself. The presence of his underlings didn't change their difference in power.

Noah didn't bring any special weapon or protection to the event. He had even left Night in its underground area since he didn't want to see how the Pterodactyl felt about King Elbas.

The other powerhouses had behaved differently. They didn't wear any form of protection, but their space-rings were full of disposable inscribed items that could save their lives if the situation evolved poorly.

God's Left Hand was the first to descend toward the entrance, and the remaining three followed her after exchanging a glance.

Noah and Second Prince stared at each other during his descent. The red crystal at the center of the Royal's forehead resembled a third eye that registered and studied his every move.

Still, Noah's prowess had evolved by leaps and bounds in the past three hundred and fifty years. He wasn't nearly close to the same opponent that Second Prince had fought with his puppet.

The experts began to walk through the golden corridor after they crossed the castle's entrance. A Royal escorted each powerhouse, and First Prince walked in front of the group to lead the way.

Noah wasn't surprised that Second Prince decided to walk next to him. He didn't bother Noah, but the latter could sense that his mental waves tried to probe his new power.

Of course, Noah's aura shredded into pieces any form of investigative method. He didn't even need to focus on countering those faint auras trying to get past his innate defenses.

Second Prince eventually turned to look at Noah when all his investigative methods failed. His expression showed his great surprise at his guest's improvements, but his arrogant smile remained wide on his face.

Noah didn't look at him, but his mental waves imitated the Royal's behavior and inspected his centers of power. Second Prince accepted that challenge and used his defenses to stop Noah's mental energy. However, a flash of golden light suddenly came out of his body and startled the other experts.

"What is it?" First Prince asked as his eyes moved between his brother and Noah.

The atmosphere became tense as everyone sensed that a fight was about to start, but Second Prince promptly spoke to disperse that tension. "My inscribed item is acting strangely. I'll get Father to take a look at it later."

Chasing Demon glanced at Noah, who shrugged his shoulders to express his innocence, and the group forgot about that event to continue their march.

Noah and Second Prince were at the back of the group. Most of their interactions went unnoticed since the other powerhouses were busy studying each other.

No one noticed that Noah's mental waves had cut right through Second Prince's defenses effortlessly. The abruptness of that event directly destroyed the defensive item that the Royal had used to help him in the task.

"Another puppet," Noah whispered, and Second Prince's expression froze when he heard those words. His guest had uncovered his secret with a simple glance!

The Royals weren't the only ones capable of learning from the enemy's techniques. In the last centuries, Noah had eventually understood why he didn't notice that his opponent had been a puppet.

The red crystal had mysterious abilities, and one of them allowed Second Prince to alter his aura. That had tricked Noah in the past, but it didn't manage to do the same now.

Noah's mental waves had gone directly for the crystal and had seen that body for what it was. The Second Prince next to him was nothing more than a golem created with rank 6 materials.

"Are you even real?" Noah mocked him as the group walked past a series of golden doors. The castle was immense, but First Prince led the group directly into the meeting area.

Second Prince didn't answer and began to walk faster. The other Royals understood that something had happened and picked up some speed to reach their destination more quickly.

The group eventually reached a corridor without any door that had a garden at its end. Many precious plants grew there, and countless delicate scents created a peculiar smell that accelerated the seas of consciousness' thinking capabilities.

Noah's mind experienced the same effects of the Divine Deduction technique, even if in a less intense manner. Still, he couldn't help but feel surprised.

The acceleration of mental faculties happened naturally. It didn't consume more mental energy, and it didn't seem to have any adverse effect on the sea of consciousness.

King Elbas welcomed them from the top of a long table featuring ten large armchairs. The meeting could finally begin, but not before the Royals' leader announced the main topic.

"I've found something at the center of this plane." King Elbas said before sitting on his armchair.

Chapter 1104 - 1104. Once

Every piece of furniture in the garden had a golden color. The table, the armchairs, the short sticks that kept some magical plants straight, and the window on top of the room reflected a golden halo.

The plants in the indoor garden seemed affected by that halo, but the experts couldn't pay attention to that after King Elbas' revelation.

Chasing Demon and the others glanced at Noah, who could only shake his head to answer. He had explored the world under the surface, but he had never gone as far as reaching the core of the plane.

The core of the planet was hotter. That was common knowledge among the higher-ups of every organization.

The temperatures there were so high that every material melted by merely standing in its area of influence. Yet, the density of the magma increased as one descended further.

Noah didn't know if the core followed that trend, but he didn't expect many cultivators to survive there without external help. Even most powerhouses would have to resort to inscribed items to explore that area.

"What did you find?" God's Left Hand asked without taking a seat, but King Elbas didn't pay her attention.

The Princes and Princesses sat next to their Father and imitated him in ignoring the guests. The four powerhouses eventually took a seat since their curiosity got the best of them.

Great Elder Diana sat on the short side of the table, and the other experts took the long ones. Noah surprised Chasing Demon by sitting next to Second Prince, but his confident expression reassured the Patriarch.

Second Prince didn't like that disposition, but he had to maintain some dignity in front of his Father. He was his heir in the end. He didn't sit next to him only due to seniority reasons.

"What did you find?" God's Left Hand asked again after everyone had taken their seat, and King Elbas finally seemed to hear her words.

The Royals' leader waved his hand to fill the table with strong wine and special delicacies, and Noah didn't hesitate to fill his cup. He wouldn't waste that chance since he knew how good King Elbas' wines were.

His direct behavior surprised some cultivators on the table, but they quickly let go of the matter to focus on the meeting's main topic.

King Elbas imitated Noah and filled his cup as he finally replied to that question. "Laws in their raw form."

Only God's Left hand understood what King Elbas meant with those words. Chasing Demon, Noah, and Great Elder Diana had no idea of what that was.

King Elbas decided to explain since he noticed the confused expressions of his guests. "Raw laws have yet to gain a true meaning. Powerhouses can absorb them to increase their cultivation level without suffering any backlash. They are ownerless energy that awaits to receive a purpose."

It was needless to say that the revelation shocked the three experts. If what King Elbas had said was true, anyone could directly increase their cultivation level by absorbing the raw laws.

"How can something like this exist?" Noah asked after he took a sip from his cup.

Raw laws defied the fairness of Heaven and Earth if he had understood how they worked. They would be no different from the Royal Pool without its side-effects.

"They are addicting," God's Left Hand intervened to clear some doubts. "Your individuality needs to be strong too. They won't turn into your laws otherwise, and you'll lose your path forever."

'There are side-effects then,' Noah exclaimed in his mind. A limitless increase in the cultivation level was too good to be true.

Nevertheless, King Elbas would have never returned to the surface and disclosed that information without wanting anything in return. It was normal to have doubts about his behavior.

"Why are you telling us this?" Great Elder Diana said. "Why didn't you stay there by yourself until you ascended?"

King Elbas took a sip from his cup at that question. He didn't like to talk about his failures, but he didn't enjoy lying either, especially now that he was a solid stage powerhouse.

"I didn't reach the solid stage with the raw laws," King Elbas admitted. "I experienced the breakthrough before even finding the Kesier Ape. I met the raw laws only after the underground currents forced me near the core."

The four from the three forces remained silent as they waited for the last part of the story. Instead, the Princes and Princesses lowered their heads since they knew about that already.

"I..." King Elbas struggled to continue that phrase, but he eventually steeled his resolve. "I've lost myself inside the raw laws for an entire century. I've survived because a defensive item has stopped me from hurting my cultivation level. I spent the remaining time underground cleansing my dantian."

"What can we do with a resource that even you can't control?" Chasing Demon asked. He liked the idea of obtaining quick powerups at no cost, but he wasn't unrealistic.

King Elbas was the strongest and most prepared cultivator in those Mortal Lands, but even he had failed to avoid the addicting properties of the raw laws. The other powerhouses in the world had no chance to seize them.

"I was alone, injured after a battle with an unreasonable creature, and exhausted after centuries in the magma," King Elbas stated without showing the slightest shame. "I can't create an item to seize the raw laws, but I can build an exploration party for the same purpose. We can control each other and make sure that we don't go mad."

"You have five powerhouses under you already," Noah joined the discussion once the topic reached that point. "Why did you even summon us? Aren't your sons and daughter up to the task?"

Noah's words were sharp as swords, even if he didn't exude any aura when he talked. It didn't matter what King Elbas said to justify his family. His actions had already revealed how he felt about his underlings.

"I don't know if they are," King Elbas admitted without even looking at the other Royals. "Still, I'm going to find out."

King Elbas stood up at that point, and a map appeared on the golden table. The drawing depicted the new continent and divided its regions according to the current political borders.

"I want to hold a tournament to reorganize our domains," King Elbas said. "Powerhouses will fight among themselves to seize each region, but we will exclude those that are too important to every organization."

A few regions on the map lit up. The Hive saw the area between the lava lake and the forest of White Woods become purple, indicating that King Elbas saw them as its core domains.

The same happened for the Council. The lands between the natural paradise and Divine Market city became green, with some purple tinge near the Stele.

Nothing lit up for the Empire, but that only meant that it couldn't lose anything. Still, the powerhouses had yet to hear the reason why they should join that tournament.

Great Elder Diana gave voice to everyone's question. "What if we refuse to join both the journey and the battles?"

"I'll spend the next century taking every land that you have," King Elbas replied coldly, glancing at Chasing Demon with the corner of his eyes. "I don't mind burning the entire new continent. I don't need it anymore."

His threat sounded real. Noah had believed him even before he finished speaking.

"What about you?" Noah asked. He didn't mind fighting. He had actually been waiting for opponents to come in his way. However, everything would be pointless if King Elbas joined the battles.

"Only my underlings will fight," King Elbas said. "The new powerhouses will fight themselves for the right to come in my journey. The regions are only a bet on the side."

The conditions didn't appear too strict, especially for the Hive since it was proud of its experts. Chasing Demon didn't believe that the Princes and Princesses would be stronger than his fellow Demons.

"I have only one condition," King Elbas added before finalizing his offer. "You can only fight once."

Noah found King Elbas' forefinger pointing at him when he heard those words.

Chapter 1105 - 1105. Group battles

"Why is that?" Noah asked with a tinge of interest in his tone.

The fact that King Elbas had placed a limit on him spoke for his prowess, but Noah didn't care about fame. He only wanted the chance to seize rank 6 dantians.

King Elbas' gesture surprised the other guests too, but they could vaguely guess why he wanted to apply restrictions on Noah. His answer confirmed their hypothesis too.

"You have already proven your ability," King Elbas announced. "You all have shown that you can deal with threats in the sixth rank. Those that have advanced while I was away didn't, so I want to test them before bringing them in my journey."

King Elbas didn't miss the chance to remind everyone that the mission was happening because of him. He could place all the restrictions and rules that he wanted. The others couldn't object after the last threat.

"Does that mean that we can't fight either?" Great Elder Diana asked, and King Elbas nodded to reply.

The Royal's idea became clear now. He wanted to hold a tournament among the newly advanced powerhouses to see if they were worthy of accompanying him.

The three leaders had to admit that they were quite pleased with those conditions. Except for Noah, their new powerhouses lacked battle experience at that level.

Still, they were proud of their underlings. The alliance also had many superfluous territories, so it didn't mind gambling them to train its future leaders.

Moreover, success in the mission would shorten King Elbas' time in the Mortal Lands. Once he ascended, the alliance would have no real enemy in the entire world.

Chasing Demon felt a bit sorry for Noah, but he didn't have any power over the matter. King Elbas had been quite clear. They could either obey or waste centuries of accumulation.

The meeting moved forward, and the group set the methods and conditions of the battles. King Elbas dictated most of them, but the other leaders managed to make him rethink certain aspects of that tournament.

Since there were only a few new powerhouses, the four organizations would engage in group battles. They didn't set a rule against killing, but they strongly advised against it. Also, cultivators could give up in the middle of the fight.

There was no need for oaths or similar methods to seal the agreement, and those involved in that meeting weren't easy to bind to inscribed pacts in the first place.

It would be up to the various organizations to respect the rules. That gave King Elbas the last say on every matter, but the situation would be the same, even with oaths.

What was happening there was positive in the minds of the three leaders. The Elbas family currently had the strongest cultivator in the world, so they had to avoid any frontal clash. Still, Chasing Demon and the others had managed to enlarge the areas that the tournament couldn't affect.

King Elbas had eventually given in to some of their relentless requests and complaints. The Hive and the Council considered themselves satisfied with the new dispositions obtained.

The Hive would keep all its essential territories even if it lost all the group battles, which involved many central regions.

Cultivators could quickly adapt to new environments, and the Chasing Demon didn't mind creating multiple domes in some regions. Yet, the hybrids needed their space.

The guests left and conveyed the news of the tournament to the powerhouses of their organizations. The battles would begin in five years, so everyone had time to prepare.

Noah returned to the tower next to the Divine Cut to train with Sword Saint. By then, he had completed the projects that he could finish without having a rank 6 dantian. He didn't need any special training before the battle.

At best, he could plan what he would hide during his group battle. He had already decided that he wouldn't show Night, but there were other abilities that he would rather keep hidden for now.

He didn't fear the other newly advanced powerhouses, especially after years of rigorous training with Sword Saint. Yet, the Royals were tricky to fight, and they probably had many countermeasures to his most famous abilities.

'I guess I can only avoid using my spells,' Noah thought before contacting Thirty-seven.

There was one small issue that he had meant to solve for a while but that he couldn't fix with his expertise alone.

The Demonic Sword and Night were living beings. They were both quite peculiar among lifeforms, but space-rings didn't allow them inside their separate dimensions anyway.

Noah had never minded that too much since the weapon and the Pterodactyl had tight links with his mind. Yet, he would venture to the center of the plane soon, and he didn't want to endanger them.

Of course, Noah didn't consider for even a second the possibility that he would fail to qualify for the mission. If the group battle became too tough to handle while holding back, he would go all-out.

"I heard about King Elbas," June said as she reached the roof of the tower. "Raw laws and the center of the world. Sounds fun."

The couple's interactions had become more peaceful after spending more than three centuries without hiding their relationship. They had lost their desperate craving to make the best out of their time together. Still, they didn't desire their partner any less than before.

"Peace is making you jumpy," Noah teased June as she sat next to him and lay her head on his shoulder.

June's aura appeared ready to explode. She could control it easily thanks to her improved Perfect Circuit, but that didn't make her less annoyed about that long peace. She had hoped that King Elbas' return would bring a new wave of battles, but the outcome of the meeting had disappointed her.

"I think I'll go in the other world while you are away," June said after the two of them had stared at the scenery for a while.

The mountains covered in a thin fog and the ancient vibe radiated by the Cut created a wonderful picture that the couple enjoyed in silence.

"Hoping for a new rebellion?" Noah asked as a peaceful feeling filled his being.

Noah stood in the last stage of the heroic ranks. His lover was next to him, and the Hive grew steadily. They had no real enemies and nothing else to wish for from that world.

That was life at the peak. Countless years of training to be one step closer to the Immortal Lands, and nothing else to do but perfect their arts.

Many would find that kind of life perfect. Noah could obtain everything he wanted, and he had already seized most of that. However, Noah and June were both bored of that situation.

The mysterious lower plane couldn't keep secrets from them anymore. They had uncovered everything there was to discover, and they had reached a simple conclusion: That wasn't enough.

Noah was a boundless ambition striving for the higher levels, and June an endless battle intent that couldn't stop craving for more opponents.

Staying still went against their nature, which was why they ended up joining one mission after another whenever they had the chance.

"There are many hybrids there," June replied. "Helping to clear the other world is better than remaining here where everything is so unchanging."

"I bet Faith will come with you," Noah said, and June nodded while wearing a warm smile.

The two of them had become real friends in the last period. Other than being her sparring partner, Faith had helped June survive her boredom in the previous centuries.

"She says good things about Elder Laura," June said while turning to look at her lover. "Try not to kill her."

King Elbas and the others had already planned the matches of the tournament. Noah would fight against Second Prince, Elder Laura, and True Speed, the new powerhouse of the Empire.

"I won't target her on purpose," Noah replied. "My real target is that puppet-user anyway."

Chapter 1106 - 1106. Ordinary

Noah flew toward the bushland next to the region featuring the forest of Yellow-silvers. His opponents were already waiting for him, but he wasn't late to the appointment.

Five years had passed in complete peace. The region rebuilt by King Elbas didn't show any sign of activity in that period, and no one from the Elbas family had occupied his area.

King Elbas had taken the entire region as his training area. The other assets of his organization overcrowded the few remaining lands in his domain, but he didn't seem to care.

Elder Laura, Second Prince, and True Speed floated on different borders of the region.

Second Prince occupied the southern border, showing his usual golden robes and the small shining crown on his head. The red crystal at the center of his forehead reflected the sunlight, and his smile was wide as he looked at his opponents.

True Speed floated above the eastern coast. He was a youthful tall man with short black hair and no beard. A tight red robe underlined his bulging muscles, but he had a peculiarity that was hard to miss.

The new powerhouse of the Empire didn't have human feet. Both his legs had wolf-like features, and his hairy paws stuck out from the bottom of his robe.

The Empire had met some success with the hybrid transformation. Every organization had done the same, but only a few of them had implemented it to high-ranking cultivators.

Noah couldn't help but praise that type of process in his mind. True Speed had gone through a proper partial transformation to avoid the issues connected with his individuality.

That didn't give the expert a hybrid body, but it unlocked some abilities humans couldn't perform. It wasn't hard to guess that the man's name came from a movement ability.

Elder Laura flew above the northern border. She had long brown hair tied in a bun and a pair of green eyes. She appeared relatively young too, and her green robe enhanced her curves even if it didn't reveal her skin.

According to June, Elder Laura was one of the few higher-ups of the Council who had never tried to pressure Faith. The latter also liked her, so her death wasn't something that she wanted to see.

The three cultivators had a similar cultivation level. They were all rank 6 cultivators in the gaseous stage, with Second Prince being the most advanced.

Those small differences in power weren't enough to declare who was the strongest among them. It only indicated who was closer to become a law.

Noah was the weaker of them in terms of centers of power. Only his sea of consciousness was above theirs, but his body and dantian were far behind. Still, that didn't speak for his battle prowess, and the anxiety lingering on his opponents' gazes when they looked at him proved that.

The four of them flew toward the center of the region when the four leaders appeared high in the sky. King Elbas, God's Left Hand, Great Elder Diana, and Chasing Demon would act as judges for each battle.

Noah didn't say anything when he and his opponents gathered. He bowed only out of respect for the leaders above them, but he wasn't in the mood for political foreplays.

Second Prince felt in the same way, but Elder Laura and True Speed paid particular attention to Noah when they bowed toward him.

"It's an honor to fight against the Demon Prince of the Hive," True Speed said before retreating to the coastline.

"I can't wait to fight the bane of the Elbas family," Elder Laura announced before retreating toward her border.

Noah saw the woman leaving and decided to use his consciousness to send her a mental message. "If you see darkness, run."

He didn't care that the other two could see that action. The Hive and the Council were allies. It was only normal to exchange a few private words between cultivators from those organizations.

Elder Laura stopped her tracks when the mental message reached her consciousness, and she glanced at Noah wearing an interested face. Yet, some fear had appeared in her eyes.

Second Prince snorted before retreating toward his border too, and Noah decided to imitate him to begin that battle.

King Elbas waited for everyone to be ready to throw a fireball that exploded mid-air, releasing small flames that dispersed in the environment. That was the signal decided previously by the four organizations.

The battle had officially begun now, and Noah soon saw how feared he was by all three experts. The fire dispersed only to reveal Elder Laura, True Speed, and Second Prince flying toward him at full speed.

'Are they for real?' Noah thought as he released dark matter to create Snore next to him.

Elder Laura wielded an inscribed black bow and loaded three water arrows as she flew toward Noah.

Yellow sparks crackled on True Speed's legs, and the fur on his feet stood up when he activated his innate ability. Small shockwaves spread from under him, and his figure became hard to see as he accelerated.

Second Prince had quickly summoned his fiery snakes by giving fire to one of his silver hair. He and the beasts flew toward Noah in what appeared to be a planned joint attack against the strongest among them.

The three powerhouses had instantly chosen to join their forces to defeat Noah! Their intense auras filled the environment and cracked the sky at their passage, but Noah couldn't feel any danger at that sight.

'My senses must have dulled after fighting for so long against a divine will,' Noah thought as he lifted his arm and arched his fingers as if they were claws.

Noah wasn't underestimating his opponents, but he had fought Sword Saint for years by then. He knew the terror that divine existences could generate, so he didn't feel anything when against powerhouses.

Attacks eventually shot in his direction. Elder Laura fired her water arrows, and Second Prince commanded the snakes around him to release a torrent of flames. True Speed kicked the air in front of him, and a series of quick lightning bolts flew in the sky.

The attacks converged in Noah's position, but he didn't perform any evasive maneuver. He only lowered his arm with a quick movement, and five black cracks formed as his fingers dug in the fabric of the sky.

The three powerhouses didn't even sense the attack coming. Only Second Prince understood something at the last instant and activated a defensive item. A large golden shield appeared in front of the trio, who could only watch five thick slashes appearing in the sky and cutting their attacks.

The slashes flew through their abilities before landing on the golden shield. The structure of the defensive item began to tremble to no end at that point, and its light eventually dispersed as cracks appeared on its surface.

Second Prince threw away one talisman from his space-ring after Noah destroyed the spell. He didn't even try to hide his surprise at the sight of Noah's prowess.

That shield was enough to endure a few spells launched by cultivators close to the last part of the gaseous stage. It was quite strong as a defensive item, but Noah had pierced it with a single attack.

Moreover, Noah's slashes had crossed attacks before landing on the shield. That had dispersed some of their power, but they still managed to pierce Second Prince's defensive item.

The three powerhouses calmly realized that Noah's battle prowess had already gone past ordinary gaseous stage cultivators.

Chapter 1107 - 1107. One-sided

The four leaders observing the battle revealed surprised expressions seeing Noah's attack.

He didn't use his Demonic Sword, and he had barely depleted any "Breath". However, the slashes that had come out of his fingers carried the power of spells launched by experienced powerhouses!

That should be impossible for a cultivator that didn't even have a rank 6 dantian. The leaders could understand that Noah's sheer power allowed him to fight powerhouses, but they didn't expect him to have such mastery with laws already.

'Creation is lacking,' Noah thought as he analyzed the effects of his attack.

The most significant difference between ordinary and experienced powerhouses was in how intensely they could express their individuality.

In the seventh rank, their individuality would be intense enough to turn into a unique law. That was the evolution of a cultivator from the heroic to the divine ranks.

Noah had stepped on that path by now. Even if his dantian shouldn't allow him to carry laws as well as other powerhouses, he already wielded the intensity proper of an experienced being.

It was as if Noah had already strived to become a law without waiting for his dantian to advance. The shock of the leaders came from the fact that such an event wasn't possible in theory.

"His mind is making up for it," King Elbas explained after he analyzed the issue.

The Royal was surprised too. He could understand that Noah used his body to compensate for his weaker centers of power, but he had never heard of a mind doing the same for the laws of the dantian.

The contenders couldn't see the reactions of the leaders nor hear King Elbas' explanation. Still, they realized that Noah was far stronger than he appeared.

Second Prince, Elder Laura, and True Speed didn't plan to cooperate beforehand. They had charged at Noah together because they had no confidence in doing that on their own. Once Noah was out, they could decide who was the strongest among them.

The power that Noah had revealed forced them to change their approach. They couldn't only launch spells at the same time to defeat him. They had to work together and create a proper strategy.

Noah didn't give them any time to regroup. A human-shaped crack replaced his figure, and a series of tattoos appeared on Second Prince's forearm when he neared the group.

Second Prince quickly activated talisman to create another golden shield, but the ability immediately fell apart since Noah had arrived above them and had launched five more slashes already.

Snore quickly reformed and spewed its elemental attacks. Fire, ice, and lightning bolts came out of its mouth and horns and shot toward the trio running for their lives.

Noah had yet to improve Snore. He had decided to wait for his dark matter to evolve before fusing all the elements with its structure.

Noah had initially planned to wait until he obtained all the elements, but he had eventually set a date for its upgrade since he had no confidence in copying the light element.

Second Prince vanished in a sea of flames and reformed at some distance from Noah. Five drops of blood came out of his palm, and a massive snake formed once they took fire.

A giant humanoid figure made of water surrounded Elder Laura and protected her from the elemental attacks. Her defensive spell fell apart under that offensive, but she managed to endure the blow and load five arrows in her inscribed bow.

Yellow sparks covered True Speed's legs, and the expert disappeared from his spot. Small crackling areas formed on his path as he sprinted toward his opponent.

It had been a long time since a cultivator had tried to engage Noah in a melee battle. Only magical beasts and hybrids could match his physical strength in the end.

However, True Speed sprinted toward him without any fear. His movement technique resembled Noah's in some aspects, but he lacked the physical strength necessary to threaten him.

The power of True Speed's attack came from the yellow lightning bolts gathering on his legs. His acceleration was a consequence of the energy released during their motion.

Noah sensed True Speed coming. He could dodge him or even launch an attack in his direction. Yet, he chose to face him with his bare body to feel how advanced the Shandal Empire's fusions were.

True Speed delivered a powerful kick aimed at Noah's head only to meet his palm. Noah blocked the attack, but his opponent released the amassed lightning bolts at that point.

An intense series of lightning bolts entered Noah's palm and ran through his insides. Noah's arm trembled under the intensity of that blow, but his dark star blocked most of that energy.

'It's not bad,' Noah thought as he clenched his hand.

True Speed held back a painful cry as five long wounds appeared on his right leg. Noah's fingers had even stabbed his ankle, and they continued to dig his tissues to rip his wolf foot apart.

His other leg shot as he tried to hit Noah again. Still, Noah blocked the attack with his free forearm and endured the lightning bolts released in the impact.

Noah had to admit that the Empire had done a great job with the fusion. True Speed's lower body carried the physical strength of a hybrid and its innate ability.

Yet, that wasn't enough with Noah. His body was simply on another level, and his higher energy protected his insides.

Snore launched its elemental attacks against the trapped cultivator while Noah continued to endure the lightning bolts entering his body. He didn't manage to chop the limb in one slash, but he would do it with the second.

Second Prince and Elder Laura's attacks disrupted his plans. The Elder shot the five arrows that turned into dragons mid-air, and the Royal's snake spewed crimson flames that left large cracks on the sky.

True Speed had activated a defensive item before Snore's attacks landed on his body. Thick sparks had surrounded his body and blocked the various elemental blows that tried to kill him on the spot.

Noah analyzed the scene and threw True Speed toward the dragons before creating a human-shaped crack with his sprint. He reappeared behind Elder Laura in an instant with fingers arched to slash at her back.

Another water giant surrounded her figure, but Noah's slashes pierced it and left five deep wounds on her back. Her defenses weren't enough to block his attacks at such close range.

Elder Laura endured the pain to control the dragons and avoid True Speed. Meanwhile, Second Prince reappeared on Noah's side, followed by his massive snake and ready to launch another attack.

A starry sky suddenly covered the area. Noah had launched his flames to damage his opponent and sprint without being seen.

The trio retreated in fear as they used their spells to block the black flames, but a series of thick slashes came from the fire and aimed for the three of them.

The lights of more defensive items shone in the sky as the cultivators blocked the slashes. Second Prince's sensors lit up only to see his snake falling apart and Noah's figure becoming visible among the flames.

Another series of slashes shot out at that point. The battle was utterly one-sided. Noah had cornered them with only his bare hands.

Of course, his fingers were far more than strong weapons. Noah could perform slashes that surpassed his previous might with them due to his intense individuality.

He wasn't a brute anymore. There were precise techniques hidden behind his simple movements.

The trio was out of option. Only a few exchanges had been enough to prove Noah's superiority, even if the three of them never had any doubt about that.

The only problem was that they couldn't compete with Noah even as three, and he had yet to show his real power.

It was with a tinge of unwillingness that the cultivators began to announce their defeats.

"I surrender," Elder Laura said, and True Speed didn't hesitate to imitate her. "I surrender too."

Noah felt surprised by that sudden surrender and glanced at Second Prince with a curious expression. Still, the Royal followed the other cultivators' example.

"I surrender, " The Royal said, and the first battle of the tournament ended.

Chapter 1108 - 1108. Second Battle

'Where are the tricky defensive methods?' Noah thought as annoyance built inside him. 'Where are their secret techniques? Where are their schemes to corner me?'

Noah couldn't believe that his battle had been so short. He had barely exchanged a few blows that the fight was already over.

Elder Laura and True Speed heaved a sigh of relief. Their injuries were deep but not too severe. One healing session would be enough to fix them.

Instead, Second Prince stared at him while wearing a mocking smile. At that point, it became clear that he had never wanted to fight him seriously. His priority was to get him out of the tournament as fast as possible.

Noah felt slightly deceived. That outcome had left a bitter feeling in his mouth. He didn't expect to seize rank 6 dantians easily, but he wished to have a chance at least!

'I can't say that they made the wrong call,' Noah thought as he accepted that result. Except for Second Prince, he didn't believe that the others had a chance to survive if he fought seriously.

Second Prince and the others left to treat their injuries and prepare for the next battles. They could fight again, so that loss didn't affect them in the slightest.

They considered that outcome a victory since Noah didn't manage to inflict any lasting wound. They would be able to express their full power in the next fights.

Noah had to retreat even if he felt disappointed. There was still the mission at the center of the plane, so he had to prepare accordingly.

Thirty-seven was handling the creation of a space-ring capable of containing living beings, and Noah didn't have any project at hand. Still, he could investigate matters that rarely affected the surface.

As an expert in the magical beasts' field, Noah knew virtually any species in his Mortal Lands. His knowledge also covered a big chunk of the extinct and ancient creatures after his adventure in the hidden world.

However, the sea of magma was mysterious. Its fauna had remained the same for eras, but that didn't help the experts since only a few cultivators had explored its depths.

Noah didn't find anything specific even when he researched and purchased records concerning that topic. He knew that there were magical beasts down there, but he couldn't find out which species.

King Elbas didn't reveal much about his journey, and Noah knew that he would be vague even if he tried to investigate the matter. It was up to him to gather as much information as possible.

Noah didn't want to learn about the fauna down there because he feared those ancient species. He felt uneasy leaving that knowledge only to King Elbas.

Yet, he didn't find anything relevant or that had a bit of reliability. That made sense due to the peculiar environment of the sea of magma, but it still troubled Noah.

King Elbas would be in complete control of the mission. The experts with him would be blind unless he decided to reveal something.

'I guess thick skin and fire-related abilities,' Noah thought as he gave up on the matter.

He could guess some of the magical beasts' characteristics in the sea of magma, but that didn't help him too much. It would be up to him and his survival instinct once the mission started.

The next group battle started two months after the first one. That fight featured Dreaming Demon, Elder Regina, First Princess, and True Speed again.

The Shandal Empire only had one newly advanced powerhouse, so True Speed had to fight in every group battle.

That put a lot of pressure on him since his victory could bring the Empire back to the new continent. Yet, he had to accept his limits and go all-out only in battles that he could win.

"I surrender," True Speed announced as soon as the second group battle began, and his three opponents couldn't help but be surprised about that.

The audience saw the matter differently. Elder Regina, Dreaming Demon, and First Princess were among the best new powerhouses in the world. Noah and Second Prince were exceptions since they lived in the realm of the monsters, but those three women were only a few steps behind them.

True Speed's surrender forced the trio to go all-out from the beginning of the battle. The fight unfolded far differently than the first one, and the audience could see how strong those new assets were.

Dreaming Demon expanded her consciousness as soon as the fight began, but her opponents quickly activated countermeasures to her individuality.

Elder Regina summoned a human-shaped puppet that absorbed her opponent's mental waves and left her an area untouched by her influence.

First Princess didn't use any spell, but she relied on a similar method to keep Dreaming Demon's threatening mind away from her. She threw a dark orb that floated above her head and absorbed the mental waves flying in her direction.

Dreaming Demon's opponents had studied her power thoroughly. She had managed to block powerhouses while she was still a rank 5 cultivator in the end. Her achievements made her worthy of in-depth analysis.

Still, that wasn't enough to stop her offensive. The air affected by her consciousness bent and amassed to form a series of human-like shapes that shot toward her opponents.

The wind-shapes carried her mental waves and spread them wherever they went. More puppets appeared as they tainted other parts of the battlefield. It took only a few seconds for an army to form and surround the two women.

A wild fire surrounded First Princess' figure and fended off Dreaming Demon's puppets. Yet, her flames slowly started to bend to the Demon's will as the wind-shapes spread her influence.

It didn't take much before First Princess felt forced to rely on another inscribed item. A cylindrical object flew among the puppets' army and exploded in a white radiance that removed the Demon's influence from the air.

Noah was watching the battle. He recognized that inscribed item. It was similar to the flare used by the rebels to shut down the defensive formations in the other world.

'They recovered that study,' Noah thought as the battle raged in front of his eyes.

Elder Regina had summoned an army of puppet-like beasts to fight against the enemy's creations, but she was slowly losing ground.

Dreaming Demon's influence had become too thick around the Elder, and the creatures crumbled without detonating as her will invaded their fabric. Elder Regina appeared unable to do anything against her offensive.

First Princess' next actions surprised the audience. She had just freed herself of the Demon's blockage, but she didn't counterattack. Instead, she launched a fiery snake in Elder Regina's direction.

The powerhouse of the Council was struggling already. The arrival of the snake forced her to rely on a defensive item to avoid deadly injuries. A talisman came out of her space-ring and covered her in a thick rocky armor.

Dreaming Demon didn't understand the reasons behind First Princess' actions, but she didn't waste the chance that she had created.

The intensity of her influence in the environment suddenly spiked, and her mental waves seeped in Elder Regina's armor to destroy its superficial layers.

Then, the flames arrived and crushed what remained of her defensive method. Elder Regina could only give up on the fight when she saw that the army of wind-puppets shot toward her now that she was defenseless.

Once Elder Regina left the battlefield, Dreaming Demon and First Princess went all-out against each other. They didn't exchange any word nor hesitated in unleashing everything they had at their opponent.

The sky became a mess. Dreaming Demon's mind continued to spread until First Princess used her white explosions to get rid of her influence and counterattack.

The two of them didn't manage to land a single direct blow on each other. First Princess' items saved her every time, and Dreaming Demon took control of the flames whenever they became too close.

To the audience's surprise, the two women fought until both their centers of power had exhausted their reserves of energy. That was a clear tie, and the judges above them agreed with that outcome.

As for the territory gambled in the group battle, King Elbas assigned it to the Hive since Dreaming Demon's prowess didn't come from inscribed items.

Chapter 1109 - 1109. Third battle

The second battle ended with another victory of the Hive, but both Dreaming Demon and First Princess earned the right to join King Elbas' mission.

The Royals' leader didn't care about the territories. The tournament's sole purpose was to test the new powerhouses' prowess, and both women had succeeded in meeting his standards.

The third group battle started a few months after the last one. Flying Demon, Elder Regina, Second Prince, and True Speed gathered on the battlefield and began to fight without many foreplays.

The only exciting exchange of words happened between Second Prince and Flying Demon. The Royal had stared at the Demon for so long that he ultimately questioned him about that.

"Do you like me or what?" Flying Demon asked in a mocking tone, but that didn't affect Second Prince's smile, who replied honestly. "I can't wait to see the individuality of a god."

The fact that Flying Demon had inherited Shandal's individuality wasn't a secret. He didn't disclose the matter to anyone. Still, every expert of the world had paid a great deal of attention to the God of the Empire.

They couldn't possibly fail to recognize such a similar individuality, and it was enough for one force to notice that for everyone in the world to learn about it.

Flying Demon didn't care about Second Prince's words, and the contenders quickly returned to their borders to start the battle.

True Speed tried to fight at that time, but the three powerhouses ganged on him to kick him out of the battle. No one wanted to see the Shandal Empire on the new continent again, so he was the natural enemy of all three organizations.

Second Prince had to deal with both Flying Demon and Elder Regina once True Speed conceded. The two experts were allies, and they both knew that their opponent was the strongest among King Elbas' underlings.

Elder Regina surrounded the Prince with an army of earth-puppets. Magical beasts of various kinds charged through the fiery walls protecting him and detonated once they were about to fall apart.

Flying Demon's white flowers grew among the flames and spread ice among them. His individuality even stopped their flickering before frost covered them.

The Royal relied on his blood to fuel spells capable of destroying both ice and puppets. His figure often exploded into a sea of flames, and fiery snakes always covered his body to protect him.

The fiery creatures spewed dense flames too. The area occupied by Second Prince was nothing more than a massive fire that took different shapes depending on his needs.

The Royal didn't use any inscribed item to match his opponents' offensive. His dense flames were enough to melt the ice and keep the puppets at bay.

That spoke for his prowess, but Elder Regina and Flying Demon didn't care about proving themselves better than him. Kicking him out of the group battle was their main goal.

Second Prince fought bravely. His flames used ten drops of his blood as fuel at some point and transformed into a nine-headed hydra that occupied half of the battlefield.

That spell was massive, and the scorching aura radiated by its flames was enough to melt any of Flying Demon's attempts to freeze it. The intensity of its pressure fended off Elder Regina's puppets too.

The allied powerhouses found themselves cornered at the borders of the battlefield. No rule stated that they couldn't cross them, but that didn't help them solve the situation.

Flying Demon and Elder Regina exchanged an understanding glance as they dodged the pillars of flames launched by the hydra. They would go all-out together.

Flying Demon's aura surged, and his consciousness covered the entire region, engulfing the hydra in his individuality. Countless flowers grew in the sky, but they didn't spread any ice.

Instead, they exploded to create a storm of ice-shards that melted before they could reach Second Prince, who was at the center of the massive beast. The spell seemed to be over, but more flowers suddenly grew from inside the hydra and detonated before the flames could melt them.

Second Prince generated a sea of flames inside the dense fire and melted the new attack. However, his focus had wavered for a second, and a flower grew on his neck due to that distraction.

Ice quickly spread from the flower. Half of Second Prince's torso had turned frozen by the time Second Prince took care of the storm of ice-shards.

The ice didn't only stop the functioning of his tissues. It influenced his very existence, freezing it in time due to the laws contained in Flying Demon's individuality.

Elder Regina didn't fail to exploit that chance. Flying Demon's attack had rendered the hydra motionless, so she could send an army of puppets through its flames without losing too many of them.

The puppets eventually detonated right before Second Prince regained control of his body, and the hydra dispersed in the explosion.

Trails of fire came out of the gray cloud that had formed after that clash. They converged higher in the sky to reform Second Prince, who appeared to have suffered some slight injury.

Part of his skin carried scarred spots due to the forceful removal of the ice. The most significant wound was a red mark on his neck that exposed his skin's lower layers.

King Elbas appeared in the middle of the battlefield at that point, forcing the three powerhouses to stop their offensive. The leaders in the sky didn't know what he was up to, but they descended to make sure that their underlings were safe.

"The three of you are worthy of joining my journey," King Elbas announced. "This land will go to the Hive."

His last line confused Elder Regina. She felt that King Elbas didn't give her a chance to prove herself against Flying Demon. However, right before she could give voice to her complaint, she saw that a white flower had appeared on the back of her right foot.

"You bastard," Elder Regina said as she shot a hateful stare toward Flying Demon, but the latter spread his arms to express his helplessness in the matter.

He was a demon. He had to put the Hive's best interests before any alliance or pact. Their cooperation had given him a chance to take his ally by surprise, so he had seized it.

The third group battle ended with the Hive still undefeated. That didn't increase its domain since the won territories had previously belonged to it already.

Still, the prowess showed by its powerhouses demonstrated to the world that the Hive had earned its spot among the strongest organizations. Its current position didn't come from the Copying Technique alone.

Chasing Demon and Great Elder Diana held a long meeting after Flying Demon's actions, but the two leaders eventually let go of the matter. The two decided that they would think about their domains after the battles ended.

The fourth group battle featured Elder Julia, Elder Laura, First Prince, and True Speed again.

Elder Julia and First Prince were on another league compared to the other two powerhouses. True Speed was the first to surrender since he found the three opponents ganging on him again, but Elder Laura suffered from a similar fate.

Elder Julia and Elder Laura were fighting against First Prince as everyone expected them to do. Yet, the Royal didn't mind relying on inscribed items in his battle.

While a torrent of wind slashes and water arrows destroyed his flames, First Prince activated a golden rune that made him reappear above Elder Laura.

That was an instant teleport. Even matrices wouldn't be able to be so quick in their effects.

Elder Laura's last line of defense activated on its own when she saw a fiery snake slamming on her figure and pushing her toward the ground.

A broken water giant became visible on the ground after the cloud created in the clash dispersed. Elder Laura was inside it, but a large chunk of her waist had disappeared after the attack.

Her dantian was safe, but she felt the need to concede anyway. She preferred to treat her injuries now to express her full power in the next battle.

Chapter 1110 1110. Fourth battle

Elder Julia and First Prince remained alone on the battlefield. The two of them stared at each other for a while before resuming their offensive.

First Prince knew about his opponent's individuality. Elder Julia shared similar features with Dreaming Demon, but her influence affected a different aspect of the world.

Dreaming Demon forced her will in the matter. She affected the laws of both world and living beings without caring for their structure.

Elder Julia's focused on her aura instead. She could make it invisible to the enemy's mind and tricky to deal with. Also, she preferred to use simple attacks rather than complex constructs.

Her individuality wasn't as broad as Dreaming Demon's, but that allowed her to gain power faster. Her more straightforward path was one reason she had advanced to the sixth rank before the Demon.

First Prince had a hard time keeping track of Elder Julia's offensive. She didn't rely on schemes or plans. It was in her nature to pair an imponent display of power to insidious slashes.

Elder Julia hesitated to face the Royal too. The fact that he had relied on inscribed items made the situation far more complicated than she expected.

First Prince was by no means weak. He was weaker than Second Prince, but he was still more potent of many new powerhouses.

Elder Julia was the same, but she lacked such powerful inscribed items. She didn't even go to Shandal's separate dimension, so she lacked a divine weapon that could bring her prowess to the next level.

First Prince and Elder Julia's levels were similar, but the inscribed items were a vital variable that she couldn't ignore nor overcome with her methods.

The Royal summoned a series of fiery snakes once he decided that it was time to resume the battle. Elder Julia answered with a sea of wind slashes that clashed with the flames spewed by the creatures.

Many of the slashes crumbled as the flames engulfed them and flew toward Elder Julia. However, a dangerous sensation suddenly surged inside First Prince's mind and forced him to explode into a sea of flames.

Two massive slashes divided his array of fiery snakes into four parts. They created a cross-like fissure in the sky that absorbed the flames gathered in the environment.

Only a few fiery trails escaped the void's suction force, and they condensed at some distance in the sky to reform First Prince's body.

First Prince didn't have any time to relax since a series of wind-spears materialized around him and converged in his position. The Royal had to explode into a sea of flames again to dodge that attack, but something similar happened once he reappeared.

Elder Julia wasn't giving her opponent any time to breathe. Her consciousness covered the sky, allowing her to cast precise spells that shot toward First Prince as soon as he reappeared.

Moreover, she used her hiding skills often. Many of her tricky attacks arrived after the Royal blocked the flashy ones.

First Prince had to deal with a myriad of both visible and invisible wind-weapons. Countless slashes often filled his vision, and the Elder always forced him to rely on the sea of flames to escape her offensive.

Elder Julia couldn't match First Prince's inscribed items. So, she wouldn't give him time to use them!

The Royal never suffered an injury during those oppressive exchanges, but his energy reserves depleted at high speed to dodge the relentless offensive.

The visible attacks weren't a problem, but he couldn't cast the most suitable spells for the invisible ones since his opponent always managed to catch him by surprise.

His consumption of "Breath" and mental energy would be far lower if he could identify the type of attack in time. Still, Elder Julia's individuality made that impossible.

Determination appeared on First Prince's eyes as that situation continued for an entire hour. He would lose if he didn't do anything to change the trend of the battle, but he didn't have any safe option at hand.

Golden runes lit up on his skin once her reformed in the sky. Slashes, swords, arrows, and spears of various shapes appeared around him and converged in his position, but he didn't rely on his sea of flames at that time.

First Prince jumped toward the side with the least number of wind-weapons and summoned a series of snakes to endure the blow. The blades and slashes cut his defenses and dug in his muscles, but he didn't reveal any fear at those wounds.

The blood that came out of his injuries took fire before the other weapons could reach him. Dense flames went out of his body and formed the shape of a gigantic eight-armed titan that swung its limbs around him.

Elder Julia saw her spells vanish under the titan's rage, but her problems didn't end there. Every time the fiery creature swung its arms, massive fireballs would fly out of them and destroy everything in their path.

Gales made of sharp slashes clashed with the fireballs aiming for her, but Elder Julia had to perform evasive maneuvers to dodge those chaotic attacks nonetheless.

The wind slashes weren't dense enough to stop the fireballs. They could only slow them down and give Elder Julia time to dodge the offensive.

Golden runes shone in a spot behind her while she retreated. The eight-armed titan disappeared from its previous location and reformed behind Elder Julia, taking her by surprise.

The titan clasped its hands on her figure, and the audience held their breath when they saw that nothing came out of the fire. It was as if Elder Julia had died on the spot.

Nevertheless, the most experienced cultivators among the spectators noticed how no ashes came out when the titan opened its hands.

First Prince looked around him as golden runes lit up on his skin again. He was ready to launch another instant teleportation as soon as he found his opponent.

Elder Julia reappeared in a corner of the battlefield. She seemed unharmed and with her robe still intact. Yet, her expression revealed how unhappy she was about that situation.

Her battle prowess was enough to suppress First Prince, but the difference in inscribed items ultimately tilted the scales of the battle against her.

Truth be told, First Prince had shown great resolve in charging toward the wind-slashes and weapons to escape from the negative trend where Elder Julia was forcing him to stay.

The Royal had proven that he wasn't only a spoiled cultivator who had managed to reach the sixth rank because of his Father's backing. He had the determination to stand among powerhouses without any shame.

"I surrender," Elder Julia said when she saw the golden light radiated by First Prince's skin.

She couldn't handle those teleports. She had survived the first attack because she had created a copy of herself during the battle. Still, her cover was now gone.

The region went to the Elbas family, but the Hive didn't mind that outcome. First of all, King Elbas had recognized Elder Julia's prowess and had agreed to bring her on the journey.

Moreover, that land had initially belonged to the Council, so the Hive didn't suffer any loss.

Almost all the Hive's new powerhouses had qualified themselves for the mission at the center of the plane. Only Skully remained among the forces in the sixth rank who had yet to earn King Elbas' recognition.

Yet, she didn't want to return to the sea of magma. She preferred to remain on the surface and handle the hybrids rather than returning to the place that had kept her prisoner for more than one hundred thousand years.

By the time the fourth group battle ended, the party for King Elbas' mission already had a decent number of experts. Five came from the Hive, four from the Elbas family, two from the Council, and only one from the Shandal Empire.

There were still battles to fight, but every organization learnt to recognize the best assets currently living among them. The twelve of them were elites, even among powerhouses.