

DEMONIC 1171

Chapter 1171 1171. Defea

It was the first time the entire world worked together to plan a battle against a common enemy. The Hive and the Council had already helped each other in the past. Still, the Shandal Empire's addition improved that already solid alliance.

Something similar had happened during the winged beasts' crisis, but the situation was different at that time. The organizations could prepare defenses together and plan strategies that involved all their forces at that time.

The usual divisions that involved those forces fell apart in front of King Elbas' threat. The Matriarchs and Noah knew that their lofty status in the world would crumble if they let the Royals' leader retake control of some regions.

The goal was to kill him or banish him again. Sending any heroic cultivator in the void would condemn them to certain death. King Elbas had managed to survive the last time only because the separate reality behaved differently.

The three organizations deployed defenses on their respective domains, but they also reinforced the Hive's borders.

Chasing Demon, his divine item, and Noah's dark world had been crucial assets in King Elbas' banishment. The Royal would most likely unleash his rage on the main culprit behind his defeat.

Noah helped in the preparations whenever he could. His expertise could only cover certain aspects of the defensive formations, so he completed his tasks quickly.

There were only so many resources in the world. Noah couldn't create Instabilities and living weapon without limits, so the negotiation with the Ape God signaled the end of his obligations.

He would return to King Elbas' palace once Thirty-seven and his disciples were about to free the quasi-rank 7 beast, but he could focus on himself in the meantime.

Even if King Elbas' return could lead to their deaths, Noah and June didn't spend much time together. They were both busy trying to improve their chances to survive, and they needed power for that.

Noah didn't have methods to improve quickly. He had completed all his projects, and there were only details to polish in his battle style. Some of his spells could match martial arts, but his main offensive remained connected to the dark world.

Cultivating in his underground quarters and training with the Seventh Kesier rune were core parts of his daily schedule, but he had something else that kept on polishing both his existence and battle style.

Sword Saint continued to exchange slashes with Noah. The divine will kept on teaching him everything he knew about sword arts.

Yet, Sword Saint didn't have any new techniques to teach. He had already shown Noah the apex of his path. Noah could only grow as a law to improve his battle prowess.

Noah was in the liquid stage of the sixth rank now. His path required him to solidify a personal law and obtain a true meaning that expressed his existence.

That was the exact purpose behind Sword Saint's training. The more Noah poured his existence into his slashes, the more he would strive forward, slowly becoming a law in the process.

"I can see your savagery!" Sword Saint exclaimed as he slashed against Noah's attack. "I can see your techniques, your creation, and your destruction!"

Sword Saint's slash clashed with Noah's attack and pierced it. The blow dispersed before it could reach Noah, but he didn't seem satisfied about that result.

"What am I lacking?" Noah asked while his thoughts reviewed the last exchange.

Noah never failed to analyze all his slashes. That had always been his approach. He rarely pressed forward unless he had flaws to fix.

However, his slash appeared perfect. It expressed the entirety of Noah's existence, and it carried all his features.

Noah couldn't understand why he didn't manage to defeat Sword Saint. That was his apex, the very peak of his expertise. Still, the divine will didn't budge.

"You are too bound by the heroic ranks in this state," Sword Saint replied. "You have strength and power, but you lack true meaning."

Sword Saint unleashed his aura at that point, and Noah struggled to keep his mental sphere safe from the existence's sharpness.

"You fail to see what it is to be a god," Sword Saint continued as a blade appeared in his ethereal hands. "I am a sword. I am the apex of the sword. Sword arts advance because I exist. This is the influence that you have to reach."

Noah couldn't help but remain speechless at that announcement. Sword Saint's sharpness had become more intense as he spoke.

His aura had managed to affect Noah. He felt weaker as that speech continued. It was as if his sharpness lost intensity during the will's expression of power.

Noah couldn't believe his senses. Having his sharpness losing power due to a similar law's effects was an outcome that he didn't think possible.

Yet, Sword Saint, even in the form of a will, could affect all the sharpness in the world. Noah could only feel amazed seeing his influence on a world far away from his main body.

"What is your law?" Sword Saint asked as his aura became even more intense. "What is the meaning of your existence? What do you want to represent once you reach the Immortal Lands?"

The will's words created waves in his mental sea. That was a representation of Noah's mental state when hearing his speech.

Sword Saint had always tried to push Noah toward the divine ranks. His techniques and teachings had to unify Noah's existence to the point when he could evolve it.

Noah understood that after the speech. His aura surged, and his sharpness retrieved its intensity when he made his mind.

Laws were unique, but every heroic cultivator had to form their own once they reached the sixth rank. Many would create it only when they arrived at the solid stage, but there were exceptions.

Noah had reached the liquid stage without bothering to build a law. His cultivation journey had always been relatively smooth, and his dark world had solved his latest bottleneck. Still, that speech pushed his power further forward.

All the memories involving his core drive appeared in his mind. Noah saw the dragon from his childhood, the attitude test in the Royal Academy, and his dreams in the wilderness at the same time before he understood who he was.

Laws were hard to explain, but Noah didn't have any doubt when he reviewed who he was. Powerhouses would usually spend entire years secluded to decide which path to take, but Noah didn't even hesitate when he thought about that.

"I have an eternal fuel," Noah said as he raised his ethereal sword. "Nothing can suppress it, and flawed raw laws detonate when they touch it."

Noah's ethereal blade began to grow as his aura flowed inside it. Sword Saint felt sharpness, savagery, creation, and destruction coming out of Noah's figure, but they weren't enough to express his existence.

Tension spread inside the area. Noah's mental sphere endured the new pressure, but it seemed quite used to it. The only one who appeared to suffer from that was Sword Saint.

"My ambition can't stop," Noah said as his blade grew until it touched the limits of his mental world. "It is boundless, and it had fueled every aspect of my individuality even before I reached the heroic ranks."

Sword Saint saw Noah slash in his direction and launched an attack of his own. His expert eye could identify the properties of that blow in an instant, but he didn't feel able to copy it.

"My law is ambition," Noah announced after his slash pierced the will's attack and dispersed before reaching his figure. "I know I will reach your level. This is the reason why I can defeat you now."

Chapter 1172 1172. Cage

Sword Saint was a divine will, but he had clear limits to what he could imitate. Noah's last slash had enhanced his individuality and brought it on a level that different laws couldn't copy.

There was an ambition that Sword Saint couldn't imitate. The powerhouses during the mission had remained speechless when they sensed Noah's drive. His main feeling had a boundlessness that they couldn't even begin to imagine.

Noah couldn't think of any other path capable of containing the entirety of his existence. He had poured his ambition into his last slash, and the result had left him amazed.

The slash had surpassed Noah's limits. It had touched on a level of power that Noah didn't reach yet. It was as if he had pushed his prowess according to what his ambition could imagine.

That wasn't theoretically possible. Every cultivator had a limit to how much they could express. They could deploy their existence, but that was it.

Yet, Noah had endless fuel. His ambition was intense enough to cast his abilities in their best form. His slash was already pure, but his main drive made it as strong as a law.

Sword Saint lowered his head before lifting his long eyebrows to stare at Noah. He had finally broken through the limits that bound the heroic ranks. Noah had expressed his law.

"Can you do it again?" Sword Saint asked, and Noah didn't hesitate to summon the feelings that had filled him when he launched his previous attack.

His ambition surged again and flowed into his slash while carrying every aspect of his existence. A pure meaning became part of his attack and made it surpass its average level of power as it flew toward the will.

Sword Saint inspected his opponent's attack thoroughly at that time. Noah couldn't sense it, but time slowed down in the will's eyes as the slash flew toward him.

Every detail of the attack became clear to Sword Saint, but he knew that he couldn't replicate it. Blades didn't matter anymore. Noah was finally pushing his individuality on a level that even Heaven and Earth couldn't imitate.

He still launched a slash, but his attack lost against Noah's blow again. There was nothing more that the will could do at that point. Noah didn't understand that yet, but he had completed his training.

"You did it," Sword Saint said. "You took your first step to become a law. This is your path now. Don't let doubts and uncertainties taint it."

Noah showed a confused expression at that announcement, but he remained silent. Every word spoken by the will was an enlightening line that he didn't dare to miss.

"The law of ambition!" Sword Saint shouted as his figure became fainter. "So intense that even cultivation levels give in to its power. You know that you can win on an even field, so your law makes you stronger than you are. Truly wonderful."

"Most cultivators have to give up on that feeling to advance," Sword Saint continued, "But you made it your core drive. Your path won't be easy, but you have decided now. Advance as much as you can. I want you to find me and unleash your best slash as a form of greeting."

Noah finally understood what was happening, and part of him felt some regret. He didn't want his training with Sword Saint to end, but he knew that he had reached the last of those sessions.

"My existence strives for perfection," Sword Saint explained. "I want to find the slash able to express every slash, even those still unknown. I desire to become the embodiment of the sword itself, and my goal is to expand its limits."

Sword Saint's sharpness reached a level that Noah struggled to contain. His mind felt like exploding, but he didn't dare to miss those last teachings.

"Your law focuses only on yourself," Sword Saint said. "You are aware of your power, but you want more. Your ambition will give you what you desire, but I don't know where it will lead you. I know it will have the shape of a sword, but I can't even imagine what it will carry."

"Reach the Immortal Lands and show me your progress," Sword Saint concluded as his figure was almost about to disappear. "Show me an ambition that can force me to advance."

The will's desires were selfish. He wanted Noah to express his individuality because he needed to advance on the sword path.

Noah didn't care about those promises, but he wanted to fulfill them for his reasons. He wanted to meet Sword Saint in the Immortal Lands and show him that his ambition could contain everything.

"Don't mention my name when you go up there," Sword saint said as his figure vanished to become thoughts in Noah's mental sea. "I have the habit of challenging everyone for an exchange of attacks. I've made too many enemies across the years."

Noah nodded as he watched Sword Saint vanishing inside his mental sea. Noah was alone inside his mind now, but his Companions and living weapon kept him company.

The insides of his mental sphere became ethereal too. Noah woke up in the outside world, but the emotions that he had felt during the last training session still echoed in his mind.

Noah knew what he had done and what he needed to do. He felt the need to cultivate to improve his current level, but he wanted to exploit those moments as much as he could.

However, Sword Saint's aura quickly disappeared as Noah reviewed his teachings. All the Elders and hybrids that were slowly learning about the various sword arts found themselves unable to establish contact with the divine will.

The training area lost its value after its divine resource had completed its training. Cracks spread on the Divine Cut's edges after Sword Saint's will vanished, and the whole world suffered because of that.

Those with some talent with sword arts found their connection with Sword Saint cut off, and Noah was the culprit behind those events.

He had shown the will that he could take the following steps on his own, and the world adapted because of his breakthrough. Noah had ruined the Divine Cut as a training area, but he had obtained Sword Saint's teachings in the meantime.

The world returned to its usual peace after a while. The Divine Cut's disappearance still burned inside the Council's mind, and the Shandal Empire didn't need to object to its treatment after learning about that.

A limited resource had disappeared forever, but Noah appeared stronger than before. That sight could only benefit those waiting for the battle against King Elbas.

They would be the first to die during normal times, but Noah's battle didn't involve the only cultivators. King Elbas had almost breached the entirety of the Hive the last time, so Noah had to make sure that everything was perfect.

The formations relying on Instabilities were ready. The troops had their living weapons, so Noah had only one last thing to do. After Sword Saint disappeared from the Divine Cut, Noah flew toward the southeastern coast and neared the Ape God's cage that was about to open.

Chapter 1173 1173. Return

Noah's improvements weren't substantial when it came to his cultivation level. Yet, those who saw him knew that there was something different with him.

While Noah flew through the new continent, those watching him understood that the disappearance of the divine aura from the Cut had something to do with him.

It wasn't only the fact that the divine aura had disappeared after he left that region. Noah appeared different. His figure had become hard to make out even with the help of inscribed structures.

Noah reached King Elbas' palace in the region on the southeastern coast's corner and walked directly toward the underground area. He found Thirty-seven waiting for him together with the Ape God that showed an eager expression.

"I hope you will honor your promises," The Ape God said before Noah nodded at the automaton.

Thirty-seven pressed on the ground, and the barriers around the room opened. The Ape God could move the golden sphere that contained it outside of its prison, and part of its aura began to leak in the area.

"I can break this barrier on my own," The Ape God said while touching the golden light around it, "But you need to remove the curse under my skin. The golden human has placed chains that bind my muscles."

Thirty-seven's eyes lit up at those words, and he began to inspect the creature with a newfound interest. It seemed quite captivated by the thought of analyzing formations capable of suppressing a quasi-rank 7 beast.

The Ape God unleashed more of its aura and focused as much pressure as it could around Noah.

"What stops me from killing you now?" The Ape God asked.

Noah let the pressure fall on him before his sharpness surged. His aura appeared boundless in the creature's eyes, but its power wasn't enough to fend off the Ape God's mental waves.

Still, Noah didn't show any fear. His aloof expression didn't reveal any interest in the Ape God.

"Do it," Noah said as his expression broke into a mocking smile. "Kill me. Actually, leave me alive enough to see what King Elbas does to your species. I want to die laughing."

The Ape God sensed the complete lack of fear coming from Noah's figure and dispersed its mental waves. It didn't like that outcome, but it knew that Noah would be in complete control of its actions now.

Thirty-seven wanted to follow the Ape God, but Noah's stern gaze forced the automaton to return to his duties. He had to bind the creature to an oath, and there were countless defenses to review.

The Ape God left toward the region inhabited by the colony of Kesier Apes. Noah had made sure that they had their territory, so he felt confident that the quasi-rank 7 beast wouldn't complain about its new accommodations.

Thirty-seven quickly chased after the beast, and Noah slowly walked outside of King Elbas' palace.

The luxurious corridors and the paradisiac scenery that appeared in his vision after leaving the palace couldn't disrupt his concentration. His entire being had only one goal. Noah wanted to survive the incoming assault and reach the Immortal Lands.

Sword Saint had made him understand his law, and Noah wanted to improve it now. His power had just begun to show the effects of his true meaning, but he could already see how amazing it was.

Noah's ambition could force his attacks to express a superior power. They didn't depend only on his cultivation level anymore. His law could make them become the best version of themselves.

It was a simple matter of fuel. Noah's cultivation level was lacking compared to existences at the peak of the heroic ranks, but his ambition was so intense that his blows could surpass their natural limits.

June's individuality was similar. Her centers of power could produce unlimited energy as long as she kept on fighting and her body didn't crumble in the process.

Noah was the same, with the only difference that his unlimited potential involved his abilities. He already had endless fuel, so he only needed skills that could make use of it and experience with his law.

His power couldn't reach the solid stage even when he relied on his immature law, but he could come close to that level. His ambition was too undeveloped to make him jump ranks, but that was its main purpose.

As someone who had always lived in a world filled with old monsters, Noah had finally obtained the power to match them. The only problem was that he had yet to develop it properly.

Years of peace went by. The organizations continued to pile on one defensive formation after another even after more than thirty years had passed from Noah's celebration.

King Elbas didn't show his presence anymore. No cracks appeared in the sky, and the Elders in charge of inspecting both continents didn't see anything unusual.

Noah didn't let that peace affect his mental state. Discovering his law had enhanced his worse habits, and it had taken him a while to suppress them again.

Having such an intense ambition fueling all his functions made him desire more power immediately. He had to become used to breaks again, and his patience with the inscription methods took a while to return.

Still, he had learnt to control himself in those years. The intensity of his law kept him worried even after he returned to his normal state, but he knew that he couldn't do anything about that.

He had only taken one step toward creating a law, but he had to go through a long period of seclusion to adapt already. Noah couldn't even begin to imagine how long it would take to adjust to his ambition once his existence improved.

The years of peace passed quietly until a change happened in the sky and alerted the three leading organizations' assets. Noah was the first to learn about that event thanks to his instincts, but the other higher-ups soon received warnings that informed them about that event.

A large number of troops rose in the sky from the three organizations. They directly took teleportation matrices or flew to reach the western borders of the Hive's domain.

Those areas would be the first target if King Elbas decided to attack the Hive. The western coast had become the most protected area in the new continent.

The sky trembled, and long black lines fell from random spots before vanishing into thin air. They didn't seem part of formations. Noah guessed that they were King Elbas' attempts to break through the barriers among the worlds.

The fabric of the sky eventually fell apart as those attacks continued. The various lines that had appeared fused and created a long fissure that was as thick as a man's arm.

The fissure expanded until cracks appeared in the sky and a portal formed among the air. Pure darkness was visible from the other side of the line, but a golden figure soon came out of it.

The world held its breath when it saw King Elbas coming out of the sky. Tension built among them, but the Royal seemed to have other plans. It didn't show any hatred in his expression. His face revealed only the curiosity that had always filled him.

The organizations prepared all their defenses, and countless cultivators settled inside the separate dimension. Many of them had entered only because Flying Demon's strategy saw them launching spells while going up and down from the doors filling the coast.

Chapter 1174 1174. Bridge

The whole world moved as soon as King Elbas reappeared. The Council, the Hive, and the Shandal Empire had prepared for that event, so every asset knew their role.

Cultivators from the three organizations entered the separate dimension and waited for Flying Demon to give them orders. The Hive had disclosed one of its most useful and secretive assets to the world to face King Elbas.

The hybrids moved too. They followed Skully as they took place in different spots of the separate dimension. The world appeared empty after everyone was in position.

Shining lines flickered on the surface of the various regions, but King Elbas didn't seem interested in them. He glanced at the ground for only a second before he resumed to inspect the sky around him.

The Royal appeared lost in his curiosity, but the organizations' leaders didn't dare to underestimate him. They knew that his interest could become a fatal flaw in certain situations, but they weren't willing to strike first.

King Elbas eventually focused on the new continent again. His eyes went on a neutral building where Noah, Great Elder Diana, and God's Left Hand had teleported to handle the battlefield.

Those leaders were in the same danger. They had no reason to act separately.

King Elbas smiled as he kept on staring at that building. His hand rose and gestured to those inside the structure to join him.

Noah, Great Elder Diana, and God's Left Hand exchanged a glance before the three of them exited the building to fly toward King Elbas. They didn't know what the Royal wanted, but he wasn't the type to use tricks in battle.

The trio reached the Royals' leader, but they remained at some distance from him. They trusted him, but they wouldn't risk their lives only to accommodate the whims of their enemy.

"Careful as always," King Elbas commented, but he didn't appear angered by that behavior. Instead, he seemed glad that the trio had behaved in that way.

"I'm the strongest cultivator in the world," King Elbas announced when he saw that the three powerhouses didn't say anything. "I deserve the largest piece of these Mortal Lands."

"Humans rarely get what they deserve," Noah replied before the Matriarchs could intervene. "Your family taught me that."

His words didn't seem to affect King Elbas since he continued to smile. Still, he focused on Noah, and a comment came out of his mouth.

"You have become stronger again," King Elbas said. "Even I pale in front of your impressive growth. It's a pity that you live in the same era as me. You would have been unbeatable otherwise."

King Elbas tried to taunt Noah, but he limited himself to show his usual smile. The Matriarchs' gazes moved between the two powerhouses as that exchange of words unfolded, and they both felt outsiders in that discussion.

Noah and King Elbas appeared to have a peculiar understanding with the other. They said certain words only for them to carry a completely different meaning.

The Matriarchs didn't know if they were probing each other or complimenting themselves.

King Elbas' comment had been honest. He noticed Noah's new aura, and his curiosity spiked when he realized that he couldn't understand it with a glance.

Noah's ambition wasn't as simple as it sounded. King Elbas had seen it during the journey at the center of the plane, but he didn't comprehend it there either.

That was the reason why King Elbas accepted Noah as a true genius. He respected Noah even if he felt superior in far too many aspects of the cultivation journey.

"Why don't you give up on everything and focus on your ascension?" Noah asked after he and King Elbas had exchanged smiles for a while. "You have proven your power to the world already. Not even the barriers among dimensions can stop you. Go, plan your journey to the divine ranks. Leave these regions to us."

"Are you suggesting that I let you go?" King Elbas asked in a surprised tone. He didn't expect Noah to propose something like that.

"You know that we will fight as long as energy fills our centers of power," Noah replied as he shrugged his shoulders. "We can't know who will win, but we are both aware that the world will become nothing more than a wasteland if we fight."

"I know who will win," King Elbas said as his smile widened.

"No one will win," Noah continued. "Both sides will lose the world."

Noah's words made sense. King Elbas' last assault on the new continent had destroyed the snowy plain and had turned it into a charred region. It took the Royal's expertise in multiple inscription fields to restore the ground to its previous state.

King Elbas had improved since his last assault, but the other organizations had done the same. They would also fight together at that time, so the new continent would see more power unleashed on its surface.

The three organizations' experts had already estimated the damages that the new continent would suffer in a full-on battle against King Elbas.

At least half of the new continent would burn. The organizations would try their best to restrict that destruction to the still-recovering central areas, but they knew that two coasts would become wastelands in the process.

Noah and the Matriarchs were willing to make the trade if that led to King Elbas' defeat. However, they would rather find a peaceful solution. It would be perfect if they could even maintain control over their domains.

King Elbas didn't even consider Noah's offer. He continued to smile as slow words came out of his mouth. "Let's lose the world then."

King Elbas wasn't the type to place traps or trick his opponents, but Noah wasn't like him. He was a demon, and he would resort to any method to defeat his opponent.

The Royal's last line announced the beginning of the battle, so Noah didn't hesitate to act. Dark matter came out of his chest, and the dark world unfolded in less than an instant.

God's Left Hand and Great Elder Diana revealed surprised expressions at Noah's sudden gesture. They didn't plan to attack King Elbas directly, so they didn't understand Noah's plan.

Yet, a heavy pressure soon filled the entirety of the dark world. Noah's ambition spread through the dark matter, and that gas became even denser than it already was.

"I have already seen this technique," King Elbas announced as the dark matter suppressed his individuality. "It's more polished than before, and I can sense some true meaning. However, it's still the attack of a liquid stage powerhouse."

Golden flames came out of King Elbas' figure, and part of the dark world burned under their power. The Royal appeared as a sun capable of shining even in the deepest darkness.

Noah wasn't so delusional to think that the dark world alone could work against King Elbas. His real offensive was far more silent.

Noah slashed with his fingers, and portals opened at the edges of the golden flames' area. Dark matter, black lines, and corrosive smoke came out of them, but those attacks burned as soon as they touched the fire.

Snore's head appeared too. It launched a series of elemental attacks that barely crossed a few hundred meters inside the sea of flame before disappearing.

It seemed that Noah's sudden attack had failed, but his trump card had yet to make its appearance.

The Demonic Sword rose above his head, and Noah wielded it as dark matter flowed inside its form. A massive slash came out of the weapon when it descended, and the attack crashed on the sea of flames surrounding King Elbas.

Even that attack burned after a few seconds, but Noah's massive slash had managed to create a bridge of darkness through the golden flames. A shadow flew through it and disappeared before reaching King Elbas.

Chapter 1175 1175. Fires

King Elbas had studied the Night-blade Pterodactyls, but he couldn't predict Night's power.

The creature was a former divine magical beast that had kept many of its instincts after it escaped its prison. Moreover, its new body enhanced its innate abilities, and the Royal Metal inside it made Night even more threatening.

Noah's ambition affected Night's prowess too. The Pterodactyl felt its entire being brimming with power as Noah's law covered it.

Even if the effect of Noah's law lasted only an instant, Night felt as if it had become one step closer to its previous level.

One instant was all the Pterodactyl needed. It transformed as soon as it came out of the trail of dark matter created by Noah's slash, and it dived right through King Elbas' defenses.

The Royal immediately sensed the threat, and a second wave of flames came out of his figure. Yet, when he studied his body, King Elbas noticed that a small cut had appeared on his cheek.

"This one is tough," Night conveyed through its mental connection with Noah.

Its shadow had come out of King Elbas' body as soon as it sensed the new flames coming, and it had returned inside the dark world by cutting through the fiery sea around his figure.

Part of its body had suffered some damage, but the dark world quickly poured dark matter inside it. Night wouldn't return to its peak immediately, but its recovery wouldn't take long.

Night sensed Noah's intentions and returned by his side. The surprise attack had failed, so the leaders could only rely on their previous strategy now.

"Let's retreat!" Noah conveyed through the inscribed notebooks that the leaders had prepared before the battle.

God's Left Hand and Great Elder Diana didn't like how Noah's words resembled an order, and they were still pissed that he didn't warn them about the surprise attack beforehand.

However, they didn't say anything and flew toward the surface where a large formation opened a path for the secret dimension.

King Elbas barely had any time to react. Not even ten seconds had passed between Night's attack and the leaders' retreat. They retreated in the separate dimension without giving their opponent any opportunity.

The entire southeastern coast lit up as countless doors connected to the separate dimension activated. Multiple platoons made of cultivators and hybrids appeared on the surface and launched attacks toward King Elbas before the inscriptions teleported them away.

King Elbas waved his hand, and his flames burned every attack flying at him. Thousands of spells had converged toward him, but even their joint power wasn't enough to make him flinch.

It couldn't be helped. The platoons only had rank 4 and 5 assets. Even if they could launch an offensive capable of making entire regions crumble, they couldn't do anything against King Elbas.

"You have united a world against me," King Elbas said as he watched the formations shining again. "You have my most sincere gratitude."

The platoons came out of the teleportation matrices and launched another wave of spells before disappearing from the surface.

They couldn't touch King Elbas even with their second offensive, but their task was a success every time the Royal made use of his golden flames.

Noah, God's Left Hand, and Great Elder Diana knew that beating King Elbas in a frontal clash was impossible. Yet, the Royal had to burn himself to create his golden flames, so they could hope of tiring him out.

"You made the world the last stepping stone before my ascension," King Elbas announced as he spread his arms. "I can't ask for a better last enemy in the Mortal Lands."

Everyone inside the separate dimension could hear his words. The organizations had deployed many sensors through the sky and ground before the battle to keep track of King Elbas' condition.

His words made God's Left Hand and Great Elder Diana's expressions turn ugly, but they didn't lose their battle intent. On the other hand, Noah continued to show his cold smile as he watched the images of the fight happening in the outside world.

Noah didn't care about King Elbas' arrogance. He didn't mind if the Royal ascended before him as long as he left the world.

Still, Noah wasn't willing to suffer a massive defeat in the hope that the event could push King Elbas into the divine ranks. He would use every trap that he had prepared.

King Elbas continued to unleash golden flames to stop the rhythmical offensive of the weaker assets. The platoons would appear from different formations, launch their spells, and disappear right after. There wasn't a proper strategy to stop that type of offensive.

Yet, they couldn't do anything against King Elbas. They were nothing more than flies for King Elbas' defense.

"Keep attacking," Noah conveyed through the inscribed notebook connected with the army. "Keep the sky golden."

The Matriarchs couldn't hold back their voice anymore when they saw him ordering the troops around without even consulting them. God's Left Hand didn't have any friendly relationship with the Hive, so she was the first to give voice to complaints.

"Who put you in charge?" God's Left Hand said. "You aren't the leader of this army. Stop behaving like that."

"Have I ever given an order that you didn't agree with?" Noah asked without moving his eyes away from the screens that depicted King Elbas.

"You attacked without consulting us," Great Elder Diana stepped in that discussion to express her opinion.

"That wasn't an order," Noah replied. "Also, I've left a mark on his face. That should slow down his improvements for a while."

Every powerhouse in the world knew that King Elbas' individuality grew together with his achievements. The fact that a liquid stage expert had wounded him was a blow to his arrogance.

Of course, Noah's actions would be useless if the world didn't manage to defend against the attack. Nothing would be able to stop King Elbas anymore at that point.

King Elbas began to descend while arrays of spells continued to converge in his position. That offensive didn't slow him down, and the Royal had all the time to prepare his counterattack.

Flames condensed in his palms to take the shape of long spears. King Elbas let them fall toward the ground as he descended, and long trails of golden flames followed them.

"Full retreat!" Noah shouted through the inscribed notebook, and all the platoons returned inside the separate dimension to avoid the incoming attack.

In their place, an army of magical beasts appeared on the surface and took care of their task.

The organizations didn't dare to slow down their offensive for even an instant. King Elbas had to be under constant pressure, and he couldn't take breaks to fix the injuries caused by his higher energy.

The main goal of the defenders was to exhaust him. Giving him some time to recover would only make that threat unbeatable.

"You did it again!" God's Left Hand complained.

"I'm faster," Noah replied without showing any slyness in his expression. "And I'm the leader of the strongest organization in these Mortal Lands. Most defenses come from the Hive, so I don't see anyone more suitable to be the shot caller in this room."

The trio was in an isolated part of the separate dimension. Almost everyone had access to screens that played the images in the sky, but only the leaders had so many inscribed items around them.

Various objects meant to evaluate the current power of a cultivator and analyze their existence surrounded the leaders. That was a proper control room.

"Warn us if you are about to do something reckless again," Great Elder Diana said to put an end to that discussion.

She didn't mind that Noah had decided to call the shots, but she didn't like when he deviated from their main strategy. She could have helped during the surprise attack if she knew that Noah wanted to execute that strategy.

The spears landed on two different regions while the army of beasts created through the Copying Technique continued its assault. Massive fires unfolded on those territories as King Elbas' attacks touched the ground.

Chapter 1176 1176. Turn

King Elbas' might was unstoppable. The sea of flames protected him from every attack, and his spells had the power to set fire to entire regions.

That was the prowess of a cultivator at the peak of the heroic ranks. King Elbas deserved his title of "strongest in the world".

Noah didn't let fear fill his mind at that sight. Every cultivator had limits, and King Elbas wasn't an exception. The only problem was how much the world would lose to exhaust that threat.

King Elbas landed on the ground while the sea of flames still surrounded his figure. The Copying Technique had never stopped creating armies of magical beasts, and attacks of various nature had continued to converge in his position.

As long as they forced King Elbas to defend, Noah didn't mind spending an insane number of resources to keep the Copying Technique active.

God's Left Hand and Great Elder Diana seemed to have accepted Noah's leadership after their brief discussion. They didn't complain about his behavior anymore, but he had to admit that there was truth in their words.

Great Elder Diana was right. She could have helped during Noah's sudden attack, and the same went for the other Matriarch.

Noah wasn't fighting alone, but his mind kept on making him believe otherwise. His ambition was too intense to let him consider others whenever he made a decision.

"Activate the traps," Noah whispered at his inscribed notebook, and the Matriarchs nodded. There was nothing else that they could do in that situation.

King Elbas had just landed on the ground when an earthquake filled the entire region. Cracks spread on the terrain before a detonation reduced the whole territory to a broken mess.

Countless explosions resounded in the area as the Instabilities hidden under the surface activated and engulfed King Elbas in their destructive might.

A storm of saber-shaped runes came out of the vast gray cloud that had covered the entire region. The whole area had fallen into chaos, but the golden light of King Elbas' flames never flickered even during that mess.

Noah had hidden hundreds of Instabilities in the sixth rank in that region, but their detonation didn't seem to affect King Elbas in the slightest.

The Copying Technique stopped to create magical beasts to make room for the platoons. The cultivators and hybrids started teleporting outside of the separate dimension again to launch attacks.

The new array of attacks dispersed the gray cloud and revealed King Elbas still protected by his golden flames. A storm of saber-shaped runes infuriated around him, but nothing seemed able to pierce his defenses.

The platoons' attacks suffered from the same fate. They burned as soon as they touched the golden flames.

Nothing appeared able to stop King Elbas, but Noah was fine with that. He was willing to sacrifice regions to make his opponent waste more energy. He had prepared other countermeasures in the sixth rank, but he wanted to deploy them only after the Royal showed signs of exhaustion.

King Elbas started to walk through the land. His goal was unclear, but the defenders didn't care about it. They only wanted to kill their target.

They didn't care about the damages that the world would suffer during the battle. They had an escape route settled, so they could push all their efforts into stopping King Elbas.

A series of dark lines began to shine after the Royal had walked for a few kilometers. A dense aura fell on his figure and tried to restrain his movements.

Yet, the sea of flames around him blocked most of the negative effects after a few seconds. King Elbas had promptly modified their structure so that they could stop that new trap.

King Elbas' flames became denser under the pressure's effects, but they couldn't move as freely as before. His overall defense had improved, but Noah and the others had already predicted a similar outcome.

"Start with the counters," Noah ordered, and the platoon replaced some of their members to make room for new cultivators and hybrids.

Noah, Elder Julia, and Skully had prepared battle formations for every occasion, and the current situation required spells that had excellent piercing properties.

King Elbas' flames had become denser in exchange for maneuverability. That opened the path for specific types of attacks, and Noah knew that far too well.

A torrent of lightning bolts, massive ice-arrows, and spears flew toward King Elbas, who was still trying to understand how to destroy the formations generating that pressure.

Burning everything didn't always work, and King Elbas still had his curiosity to suppress. The expert didn't mind spending a few rounds of attacks studying the dark lines.

Noah had shown Thirty-seven part of the Death Area spell to create that defense. The pressure generated by the dark lines was only a consequence of the power blocked by the flames. Their real effects would typically weaken the bodies of any cultivator until they collapsed.

Yet, the flames protected King Elbas from the dark lines' most dangerous effects, making them almost useless.

King Elbas continued to advance as countless attacks kept on converging toward him. The formations couldn't stop him, and all the other traps containing Instabilities barely managed to slow him down.

"Should we deploy the heavy weapons?" God's Left Hand asked, but Noah shook his head.

It was too early. King Elbas didn't show any sign of exhaustion even after more than forty arrays of spells had fallen on him. He had also ignored the Instabilities and formations, so he was still too strong for the other rank 6 defenses.

"What are you waiting for?" Great Elder Diana asked. "Three regions have already become nothing more than fiery debris. Why should we lose more?"

"If we attack now," Noah said, "He will fend off our rank 6 assets with a wave of his hand. There is only us after those defenses, and we all know that we don't stand a chance."

"Most of those regions belong to the Hive," Great Elder Diana said.

"Let them burn," Noah replied.

Great Elder Diana had shown some concern for him and his organization, but Noah didn't want that. Regions and territories could heal, but the Hive wouldn't keep the world if King Elbas were to take it over.

Noah had decided to sacrifice the lands even before he saw how strong King Elbas had become. He didn't care about the regions in the slightest.

The Copying Technique and the platoons launched a long and incessant offensive that forced King Elbas to keep his flames active. Still, the Royal continued to march toward the opposite coast without showing any struggle in his expression.

Regions took fire, exploded, or crumbled during the exchanges and the activation of the defenses. The Hive's expenses and losses were already immense, but the other organizations weren't better off.

King Elbas would deviate at times. He would start walking through the territories of the Council before returning to the Hive's domain.

It was as if he was enjoying that situation. There was an entire world attacking him, but he could walk around freely, without ever being in deadly danger.

Noah and the Matriarchs had continued to stare at the screens, and hope eventually appeared in their vision. It was subtle, but the three of them saw a sudden change in King Elbas' skin tone. He seemed paler than before, and a comparison with a previous picture confirmed that.

The defenses were working. King Elbas was finally showing some flaws.

Noah glanced at the two powerhouses at that point, and they nodded to accept his strategy. They had understood each other immediately after they noticed King Elbas' limit.

"It's your turn," Noah said through an inscribed notebook, and King Elbas stopped his tracks when he saw a tall Ape walking toward him.

Chapter 1177 1177. Technique

"I must have damaged your mind the last time," King Elbas said as his smile widened at the sight of the Ape God. "Your memories must be off. I have already defeated you."

The Ape God stopped at some distance from the Royal. The creature didn't dare to enter the range of his flames.

The world around them was a charred mess covered in cracks and holes. The continuous exchanges between King Elbas and the defenses had destroyed every region where he had walked.

King Elbas' might was clear to anyone who had witnessed the battle, but the Ape God showed no fear when it faced him. Many humans couldn't see the emotions radiated by its expression, but Noah could see its determination.

The Ape wasn't fighting for itself, and it didn't care about the organizations in the slightest. Its determination came from its desire to provide a future to its species.

The history of the Kesier species had plenty of atrocities and death, but the Ape God now had a chance to end that trend. With the Hive as its backing, its species could flourish away from the cruelties that had always accompanied it.

"Magical beasts aren't inferior to humans in terms of willpower," The Ape God announced as the world kept its eyes on the creature. "We are more focused, stronger, and purer. Heaven and Earth have placed restrictions on our kinds, but we strive for the same sky as everyone else."

The beast conveyed those words so that the entire world could hear them. Many couldn't understand the reasons behind that gesture, but Noah could sense the more profound meaning that the speech carried.

The Ape God was ready to die to keep its side of the deal, but it wanted to make sure that the human world knew about its vision. After losing so much, the creature only wanted the acknowledgment of its hated enemies.

It wanted to express its belief to the human world. Magical beasts weren't inferior. They were unlucky to have only one center of power.

"Your words are nothing more than empty complaints," King Elbas commented after the Ape finished its speech. "The world doesn't care about you. Don't use your species to justify your weakness."

"It's easy to say this when you are a human," The Ape God replied.

King Elbas chuckled when he heard that answer. His aura surged as he shook his head. The flames surrounding his body became violent as his mental waves filled the region.

"Easy?!" King Elbas shouted as his flames raged on the destroyed region. "You refused to ascend! You didn't dare to prioritize your interests over your species! You have chosen to wallow in your hatred rather than stepping into the divine path!"

King Elbas appeared angry. The words of the Ape God had triggered some painful memories of his past, leading to his outburst.

The leaders couldn't help but feel happy about that reaction. They liked seeing King Elbas wasting more of his power. Still, that sight made them a bit pensive.

King Elbas' history was mysterious. Nobody truly knew how such a mighty expert had managed to reach the sixth rank under the previous Royal family's attentive eyes.

They guessed that he had to sacrifice a lot before reaching his current status. He wouldn't be so angry about the Ape God's words otherwise.

The Ape God's eyes widened when it saw the violent tongues of flames stretching in its direction. Its consciousness expanded, and an invisible force clashed with them to stop the advance of the raging fire.

However, King Elbas' higher energy was far denser than those mental waves. The Ape God's innate ability didn't appear able to suppress the golden flames.

The Ape God had to shoot in the air to avoid the incoming attack. A torrent of golden light exploded in its previous position and expanded to create a fiery sea.

Flames rose from the sea to fly toward the escaping beast, but the Ape God decided to become serious at that point.

King Elbas had restored part of the creature's power after he captured it. The Ape God was now a proper quasi-rank 7 magical beast with no drawbacks when using its abilities.

Its power didn't depend on its remaining divine aura anymore. The Ape God had completed the heroic ranks again and was now half-step into the divine realm.

Its attacks couldn't reach its previous peaks, but the Ape didn't have to worry about depleting its energy anymore. In terms of sheer battle prowess, the beast was far stronger than before.

The Ape's consciousness became denser, and the air around its figure started to tremble as the invisible force invaded the environment. The golden flames flying in its direction slowed down as they entered the area under the creature's control.

Golden specks came out of the flames and dispersed into the air. The Ape God used its consciousness to destroy King Elbas' higher energy and open a path where it could counterattack.

The destruction spread. The trails of golden flames dispersed due to the invisible force, and the same eventually happened to the sea of fire on the ground.

King Elbas smiled, and the flames around him condensed in his palm as he aimed his open hand toward the creature flying above him. Yet, the separate dimension' lights suddenly shone, and a series of platoons appeared to launch their offensive.

The troops hidden inside the separate dimension didn't waste that precious chance. King Elbas had lowered his defenses to focus on the Ape, but that battle wasn't a one versus one.

A wave of spells flew toward King Elbas and forced him to deploy even more golden flames. His defenses returned and fended off the attacks, but the Ape God exploited that moment of distraction to destroy the energy accumulated in his palm.

The invisible force tried to wrap itself around King Elbas' hand after it made the higher energy vanish, but the Royal's aura surged, and a torrent of raging flames engulfed his figure.

The flames surged toward the sky and broke its fabric, creating large areas connected to the void. It was as if King Elbas was an erupting volcano, and nothing around him survived his might.

The platoons retreated inside the separate dimension even if the flames were far away. That enemy was too strong for them, so they prioritized their safety to remain useful in the battle.

The Ape God didn't even try to destroy those flames. The invisible force pushed it outside of their range, and it condensed mental waves as it waited for King Elbas' figure to become visible again.

"I know what your plan is," King Elbas' voice came out of the torrent of flames. "You think that you can exhaust me if you sacrifice enough territories."

The raging flames shrunk as his words echoed in the environment. They became denser as they condensed around King Elbas to give birth to pieces of equipment.

Once the shrinking process ended, King Elbas wore a fiery golden robe and wielded a long spear that radiated an oppressing aura. A blinding crown shone on his head, and the air around his figure bent under his pressure.

'Dammit,' Noah thought at that sight.

He was the first to realize what had happened. One of King Elbas' weaknesses was his lack of techniques that made use of his higher energy, but it seemed that the Royal had fixed that issue during his banishment.

Chapter 1178 1178. Struggle

King Elbas had used his higher energy in a technique. His flames weren't only violent surges of energy anymore. They had taken an orderly form, and the sheer power they radiated brought the air to its structural limits.

His figure was blinding, and his power was unfathomable. King Elbas appeared unbeatable already when the golden flames surrounded him, but now he seemed even stronger than before!

God's Left Hand and Great Elder Diana glanced at Noah after witnessing that event. He was more knowledgeable about the higher energy, so they hoped he could evaluate King Elbas' new power.

However, Noah had no words for them. The robe, spear, and crown surpassed what his mind could study. Their level was too close to the divine ranks for him to understand their power.

'This might be too much,' Noah thought as he stared at the screens transmitting the battle on the surface.

Beating King Elbas had never been an easy feat. Even with all the forces of the world working together, Noah didn't feel sure that they could stop him.

That feeling had become more intense after the Royal unleashed his technique. Except for his stamina, King Elbas didn't seem to have any weakness.

That was an existence close to the divine ranks. King Elbas appeared to be at the very peak of the heroic path. His strength set the limit that a cultivator could reach while remaining a powerhouse.

He would still be inferior to the Ape God if he used normal "Breath". Yet, his higher energy pushed his power in the same realm of the creature, where he could use the humans' superiority to his advantage.

King Elbas pointed his spear toward the Ape God, and the sole movement of the weapon created a wave of flame that shot from the line traced by its tip.

It was as if the Royal had launched a slash. That casual movement was enough to create an attack that many experts would find it hard to block.

The Ape God felt a dangerous sensation filling its mind, but it didn't stay in one spot to evaluate the threat. The invisible force surrounded its body and made it shoot far away.

King Elbas tilted its spear to keep its tip pointed at the beast. Those slow movements created more golden slashes, and the whole weapon began to vibrate after it locked its target.

The Royal bent before throwing the spear at the escaping magical beast. Golden light came out of the weapon and engulfed the entire region with its halo, making it impossible to see his attack's effects.

A cry eventually echoed among the blinding light. The world returned to its usual color only to show that the Ape God had lost its right arm and that most of its fur had burned in those short seconds.

King Elbas still wielded the spear. It wasn't clear if he had thrown it at all or if his previous movement had projected the weapon toward his target. Yet, the power that it could unleash was terrific.

Noah and the others didn't manage to analyze the attack with the investigative methods that filled the new continent. King Elbas' power was too intense for those sensors to study it.

The leaders couldn't rely on their senses either since the screens had gone crazy when the golden light had filled the region. They didn't manage to transmit most of the technique.

The Ape God roared in pain, but its invisible force moved to close the injury. Blood stopped flowing from the wound, but the creature didn't appear relieved about that fact.

Its eyes went on King Elbas, who was still showing his broad smile. His skin tone had paled a bit after that attack, but he seemed to be nowhere near his limit.

Noah and the others could see that too. King Elbas had just unleashed an attack capable of destroying a quasi-rank 7 beast's limb, but he didn't suffer any evident repercussion.

There was only one explanation for that outcome. That was King Elbas' base power, and that shocking attack was something that he could launch repeatedly.

Noah didn't believe that King Elbas could unleash so much power without suffering any repercussions. Strong techniques had drawbacks, especially if they could cross the limits of the ranks.

Yet, even if the drawbacks existed, King Elbas managed to hide them well. After all, the defenders could only use his skin tone to keep track of his exhaustion.

The Ape God was even more surprised than the leaders. It had fought against King Elbas when it was weakened and among the sea of magma, so the Royal's growth astonished it to no end.

King Elbas was only a newly advanced solid stage powerhouse when he reached the Ape God, but now he stood at the very peak of the heroic ranks.

The raw laws alone couldn't explain that extraordinary growth. King Elbas' individuality must have been ready to advance for a while already!

God's Left Hand's determination was the first to waver. She couldn't see a path toward victory when their opponent was that monster.

The Ape God was on the same level as the winged beasts' leader. Shandal had to intervene the last time to defeat the creature, but King Elbas appeared able to handle those types of threats on his own now.

He could accomplish what Shandal had done while remaining a powerhouse. King Elbas had already surpassed what God's Left Hand considered as beatable.

"Maybe we should-," God's Left hand began to speak, but Noah's sharp consciousness suddenly filled the room and interrupted her line.

Both Noah and Great Elder Diana had understood God's Left Hand's intentions from the changes in her expression, and he had decided to act before his ally.

"We will continue our offensive," Noah said. "You might be used to kneeling toward stronger beings, but I prefer to do everything in my power to prevent that outcome before even considering it."

"Don't compare King Elbas with the Almighty," God's Left Hand replied as her consciousness expanded and fought Noah's mental waves back.

"I didn't," Noah answered without moving his eyes from the screens. "A heroic cultivator has limits that divine entities can ignore. King Elbas isn't an exception. We only need to find them."

"And how do you suggest to do it?" Great Elder Diana asked. "I'm with you, Defying Demon, but we need to decide how to deal with his technique."

Noah inspected the three fiery items with the Divine Deduction technique before deactivating the ability and sighing. Nothing came to his mind. Even his mental skill couldn't lead him to a plan capable of stopping King Elbas.

"We don't deal with it," Noah eventually said. "Let him burn everything."

"You want to condemn our world!" God's Left Hand complained, but Noah and the other Matriarch ignored her.

The alliance's leaders had a different relationship, and they could force God's Left Hand to agree with everything they said. The Shandal Empire was too weak to have a say on matters that concerned the world's future.

"Are you willing to sacrifice the new continent to have a chance of stopping him?" Great Elder Diana asked.

"I'm willing to sacrifice much more than that," Noah replied as his cold smile vanished. His eyes went on the Matriarch's, and the two exchanged a long stare.

Great Elder Diana could only sigh and nod. The situation had changed after King Elbas revealed his technique. The organizations had initially fought to obtain a better future, but now they needed to struggle to prevent the worst possible outcome.

Chapter 1179 1179. Ashes

Fighting for a better future and struggling to prevent the worst were quite different mindsets, but Noah and the others didn't get to choose in that situation.

King Elbas was too strong. Nothing they did slowed down his offensive, so they could only keep throwing attacks and traps at him. They would have to deal with the damages after they managed to win.

"Slow down the pace," Noah conveyed through his inscribed notebook after he reached a silent agreement with Great Elder Diana. "Stay alive. This will last a while."

Noah's simple orders were enough to change the strategy of the army. The Ape God retreated even faster than before, and the Copying Technique activated to facilitate its escape.

An army of magical beasts appeared at some distance from King Elbas and charged toward him while launching countless attacks.

That would typically force the Royal to unleash his sea of flames, but the attacks burned before they could even reach his figure. The pressure radiated by the golden crown was too intense for those weak abilities.

The copied beasts then tried to use their bodies to stop him, but they suffered from the same fate of their innate abilities. Their figures turned into ashes due to the passive effects of King Elbas' technique.

Nothing seemed able to come near him. The heat and pressure radiated by the three fiery items were too intense for anything under the sixth rank.

Elder Julia was in charge of the Copying Technique, and she also had a screen that allowed her to keep track of the battle. Seeing that King Elbas' technique had made him untouchable forced her to deploy the strongest beasts trapped under the forest of White Woods.

Ravaging Demon, the White Ape, and the Flying Snake appeared near King Elbas, and multiple copies filled the area.

Elder Julia didn't need Noah's approval to resort to that display of power. She had understood that the situation was far more tragic than they had predicted.

King Elbas stopped tracking the Ape God to stare at his new opponents. There were more than twenty rank 6 existences around him, but none of them was able to cause the slightest amount of fear in his mind.

They were nothing but puppets meant to slow him down and make him deplete energy.

"I will play your game," King Elbas announced. "I will destroy everything and everyone you throw at me. Numbers can make up for the difference of power at times, but I will show you that this doesn't apply to me."

King Elbas waved his spear after he finished speaking, and long trails of golden flames shot out of the line that he drew with the weapon's tip.

The rank 6 beings' copies tried to dodge the flames, but their figures ended up engulfed in that raging sea. They didn't even manage to resist for a second under their power.

Elder Julia quickly summoned new copies, but another wave of flames engulfed them before they could even fully form. King Elbas only needed to pass them when he moved his spear. The golden flames coming out of the trajectory traced with the weapon did the rest.

Those exchanges repeated themselves a few times before King Elbas had enough room to point at the place where the Ape God had disappeared. The golden halo filled the entire region again, and a fuming pit replaced the teleportation matrix used by the beast.

King Elbas knew that he was fighting in the enemy territory. The defenders had a clear advantage since they didn't mind the condition of the new continent.

Still, King Elbas could easily take care of the teleportation matrices and doors connected with the separate dimension. He only needed to take his time destroying all of them.

Elder Julia never stopped summoning the three rank 6 guardians. The Council and the Shandal Empire had redirected resources toward the Copying Technique before the battle, but its expenses already surpassed their wildest imagination.

King Elbas attacked the ground only when he managed to take care of the rank 6 copies fast enough. His strategy was slow, but the Royal inevitably cleared a large area from its inscriptions.

Then, he began to move toward the next region. He never flew, but he managed to cross entire kilometers with a casual sprint.

The traps placed beforehand activated whenever he reached a designated spot. Instabilities unleashed a storm of saber-shaped runes in the sky, and other peculiar inscribed items showed their power to stop King Elbas.

The Royal could ignore the saber-shaped runes, but some of the traps released a strange liquid that managed to suppress part of his flames for an instant.

That was one of Thirty-seven's creations. It was an azure liquid that tried to imitate King Elbas' flames to counter them.

Of course, the liquid couldn't do much, but King Elbas had to deplete a bit more energy to restore his items to their peak, so the leaders considered that a win.

However, nothing truly managed to stop King Elbas, and Noah had to deploy the Ape God again to slow down the destruction unleashed by the Royal.

The platoons' attacks made of hybrids and cultivators barely managed to get near King Elbas' figure, and the Copying Technique was too ineffective for the energy that it depleted.

The defenders needed more time, and Noah wasn't willing to deploy the powerhouses just yet. The death of only one of them would start a chain reaction that would end with their defeat.

The Ape God reappeared in the distance and unleashed a series of raging winds toward King Elbas. The Royal didn't hesitate to point his spear at the creature, and the golden halo covered the region again.

When the light dispersed, a large fuming hole had replaced the beast's teleportation matrix, and the Ape God was in a different area, ready to launch another attack.

Those types of exchanges continued for a while. The creature now knew how fast King Elbas' attacks were, so it could act according to that timing. Noah did the same since he ordered the platoons to attack whenever he found the right chance.

King Elbas' offensive had finally slowed down once the Ape God had stepped forward. The quasi-rank 7 creature kept the Royal busy for entire hours before he suddenly changed approach.

The rank 6 copies appeared around King Elbas once again, and he began to move his spear toward them as usual. The Ape God used that chance to launch its violent invisible force, but the Royal stopped his movement and redirected the weapon at the creature.

The copies charged at King Elbas, but the crown radiated a heatwave that turned their bodies into ashes. Then, the golden halo filled the entire region again.

The golden light remained in place for a few seconds at that time, and a peculiar scene appeared in the experts' vision once it dispersed.

King Elbas had left his previous position and was now in front of the Ape. His hand was around the creature's neck, and he floated at a few meters above the ground, enough to lift the beast from the terrain.

The Ape God had lost all its limbs. Both its legs and remaining arm had disappeared while the golden halo filled the region, and its expression was empty. There wasn't even pain on it.

"I guess this is your strongest asset," King Elbas said as he glanced at the Ape God one last time before golden flames covered its figure.

In a few seconds, the tall body of the quasi-rank 7 creature became nothing more than ashes.

Chapter 1180 - 1180. Openings

The world couldn't believe what it was witnessing. A quasi-rank 7 magical beast, the strongest creature on that plane, had died under King Elbas' unstoppable offensive.

Desperation spread among the defending troops. They had done their best and deployed every asset in their arsenal, but they had barely managed to put a dent in King Elbas' technique.

The Royal didn't suffer any injury since Noah's surprise attack. A whole world's efforts didn't appear to be enough to stop that mighty being's assault.

"I wonder what Defying Demon wants to do now," God's Left Hand said. She tried to mock Noah with her tone, but her voice carried helplessness that she didn't manage to hide.

God's Left Hand wasn't a coward. Her initial suggestion came from a cynical analysis of their situation.

King Elbas was too strong. Nothing the organizations did had brought any result. Their struggles to fight the Royal had only led to the destruction of a large chunk of the new continent.

There wasn't enough land for all the cultivators in the world anymore. Noah's decision to press forward had worsened the already bad issue related to the overcrowded regions.

"It must be easy to live without being worried about your safety," Noah commented without looking at the Matriarch. "You spent your cultivation journey under the divine aura of your Patriarch, and you even shaped your character to suit your leader."

God's Left Hand wanted to reply, but Noah's intense aura filled the room again and forced her to remain silent. The sharpness that he radiated was too threatening for her.

"Tell me," Noah continued as he turned toward God's Left Hand, "Have you ever been in danger? Did you ever fear for your life with Shandal watching over your back the whole time?"

God's Left Hand remained speechless for a second, but she eventually stuttered an answer. "W-what are you even asking? Every cultivator who has reached this stage has faced death many times! I was with you inside the separate reality!"

"You were there indeed," Noah said as a sigh escaped his mouth. "Why are you so afraid then?"

"I'm not afraid!" God's Left Hand shouted. "We can't win this fight. Sealing a deal with King Elbas is the only way to ensure a future for our organizations."

"A future as slaves," Great Elder Diana commented. She partially agreed with God's Left Hand's vision, but she would do anything to avoid that outcome.

Both Matriarchs turned toward Noah at that point, and he remained silent as he inspected the screens in the room. The Copying Technique and the platoons had resumed their assault, but King Elbas directly ignored them to focus on destroying the formations.

Without the Ape God limiting his movements, King Elbas eradicated formations from entire regions in a matter of minutes. He appeared even stronger than before.

"I fell in Twilboia Cliff when I still didn't have a dantian," Noah said at some point. "The valley at its bottom was a rank 5 danger zone that nobles ignored due to its dangerousness. I fell there after my father sent me on a suicide mission. I guess he didn't like that I survived."

Noah appeared pensive as memories filled his vision. He still recalled those events. Even he found it hard to believe that he had survived a direct meeting with the rank 5 Albino Snake.

"What's the point of this speech?" God's Left Hand asked. "Do you want to compare your struggles with mine? Fine, you had a worse life, but this doesn't help us."

Noah recalled the helplessness felt in front of the rank 5 magical beast when he still didn't have a dantian. He remembered the condition of the weaker snakes in its pack, and he couldn't help but shake his head at those memories.

That was true desperation. That was real helplessness. When Noah compared his current situation to that of the weaker snakes in the past, he didn't feel doomed.

"I've sneaked past a rank 5 magical beast when I still lacked a dantian," Noah said as he waved his hand at the screens to turn them off. "Our enemy is only a stage above us, and we have the best assets of the world on our side. I didn't give up back then. I surely won't right now."

Noah began to walk toward the room's exit, but God's Left Hand questioned him before he could leave. "Where are you going?"

Noah turned and shrugged his shoulders before answering her. "I'm going to fight King Elbas. I'm not the type to manage a war from outside the battlefield anyway."

"That's suicidal!" God's Left Hand complained. "The Ape God didn't manage to defeat him. What makes you think that you will make any difference?"

"I've defeated the Ape God before King Elbas," Noah replied. "I wasn't even in the sixth rank back then."

Then, he left, and the light of a teleportation matrix soon shone on the Matriarchs' faces.

God's Left Hand and Great Elder Diana exchanged a glance, but the Matriarch of the Council soon chose to follow Noah.

"You too?" God's Left Hand asked. She couldn't believe that those leaders were so reckless.

"For someone who has an unshakable faith in her leader," Great Elder Diana said without stopping, "You surely have no respect for the experts around you. Remember that you are alive because a cultivator weaker than you has sacrificed his life to banish King Elbas."

Great Elder Diana left, and the light of the teleportation matrix soon shone on God's Left Hand's face. The Matriarch remained alone in the dark room inside the separate dimension.

God's Left Hand cursed inside her head as she tried to turn the screens on again, but she eventually punched the table filled with inscriptions when she saw that they didn't answer her commands.

The separate dimension didn't belong to the Shandal Empire. The Hive had opened its doors to the other organizations, but Noah remained the only one capable of controlling its functions.

Before she could even realize it, the Shandal Empire had become connected to the Hive. Its fate depended on Noah's benevolence. Nothing could stop him if he decided to kick all of them outside of the separate dimension.

Even if God's Left Hand didn't want to admit it, Noah had become her superior. He held the keys to the only place capable of protecting them from King Elbas, and he would share it only with those who followed him.

God's Left Hand eventually left the room and activated the teleportation matrix that the other leaders had used. She found herself in a large area inside the separate dimension after the light vanished, and the other powerhouses were there with her.

True Speed, Elder Regina, Elder Laura, and the other powerhouses of the Hive were all there. Only Elder Julia was missing since she was busy managing the Copying Technique.

Faith and Daniel were in the hall too, but God's Left Hand ignored why peak rank 5 cultivators would join that meeting.

The cultivators' eyes were on Noah, who inspected them with a cold gaze. An icy-blue light came out of his irises as the Divine Deduction technique pushed his mental faculties to their limits.

The black hole in his chest rotated at full speed and pushed his mind toward its peak. Noah couldn't think faster than that even if he relied on specific drugs.

"King Elbas might appear in perfect condition," Noah began to speak after God's Left Hand arrived, "But that's only an act. I don't know where his limit is, but it should be quite close. We can create two opportunities. Unleash everything you have during those openings."