

DEMONIC 1341

Chapter 1341 1341. Pyramid

Noah was in a hurry to find adventures that could force him to improve. The Land of the Fallen perfectly suited his needs, but the higher plane had many places that could entertain him while his cultivation level grew.

The library only mentioned the most noteworthy locations. It discarded old inheritances, especially those considered too troublesome to conquer.

The inheritance mentioned by Fergie was one of them. It didn't have proper trials, but it contained resources that a powerful existence had accumulated for millennia.

According to the data retrieved during its explorations, the inheritance was a vault placed in the Immortal Lands to hide items. The forces on the surface had uncovered it only after the higher plane had gone through multiple mutations, so any information regarding its creator had disappeared over time.

The dangers of vault let to believe that its creator had been an existence above the gaseous stage of the eighth rank. It contained threats that even some of the leaders in Vagona city couldn't approach.

Still, the vault had different layers of difficulty. That structure had many rooms and corridors. They led to multiple sealed areas and defenses that reflected the level of the items stored inside.

Rank 7 cultivators would usually appreciate that feature since it allowed them to avoid competing with stronger existences. Experts would go after resources that could help them at their current level, so they would ignore the weaker ones. Yet, the vault was different from a normal inheritance.

The creator of that place didn't want the items to leave. Its defenses aimed to kill any trespasser instead of testing them. That increased the overall dangerousness of the vault.

The cultivators attempting to take those items were thieves. They didn't aim to become the heirs of a forgotten inheritance. Still, disorganized groups didn't have the power to overcome the defenses, so the Balrow family easily bought the vault in an auction.

That would generally be the end of the matter. The Balrow family would invest time and effort to seize every item in the vault and pay its purchase back. However, the defenses had turned out to be quite challenging even for its forces.

The Balrow family had the power to breach the sealed aura protected by defenses in the seventh rank. A single rank 8 expert would have been enough to complete the task. Yet, a force on that level had no interest in such weak resources. It preferred to turn them into a source of income while focusing on the items in the eighth rank.

That vault had been a popular destination for hopeful rank 7 cultivators for a long time, but its fame had eventually waned. Only the forces of the Balrow family still patrolled its perimeter and attempted to obtain items. The other experts had moved toward other appealing locations.

Noah flew toward the vault. He didn't care if his ability wouldn't allow him to seize any item. He only wanted to test his power and see if he could succeed where others had failed.

He didn't mind obtaining divine items, but he didn't care if he couldn't either. The vault would act as a preparation for the Land of the Fallen, and it would also give him the time to adapt to the annoying aggression that filled the environment.

Fergie had told him everything he knew about the vault before leaving to return to his companions. Noah was on his own now, but he felt quite confident that the Balrow family would treat him well after showing his green card.

Many different sceneries went by in his eyes as he flew toward his destination. An immense lake with a wide piece of terrain at its center eventually appeared on his path, and he dived right toward it.

A series of rank 7 consciousnesses quickly focused on him, and a few guards came out of the door placed inside the surface of the island. They all wore green robes that carried the Balrow family's symbol, and they appeared quite friendly toward Noah.

"It's been a long time since anyone has attempted to steal something from this place!" One of the guards exclaimed when she saw Noah landing on the island.

She was an old-looking woman in the liquid stage. She kept her long gray hair combed into a thick braid behind her back, and wrinkles covered her face. Still, her smile appeared radiant when she looked at Noah.

"Is there an inheritance here?" Noah asked as he inspected the island.

Noah couldn't sense anything out of the ordinary in that place. It didn't seem to have anything different from the lake and its nearby areas.

"No foreplay?" The woman asked as her smile widened.

Noah took out the green card from his separate space, and the guards revealed surprised expressions at that sight. They could understand what that item meant, and they recognized the name written on its surface.

"Forgive me for not recognizing you, Defying Demon," The woman said as she performed a polite bow. "I'm Chief Etta, from the personal army of the Balrow family. We welcome you here to the Pyramid."

Noah didn't hide his surprise when he heard her words. He couldn't see any Pyramid around. The whole island appeared empty, and even the underground world didn't seem to hide anything.

Still, he had seen how the guards had come out of the ground. Noah guessed that the Balrow family had placed high-level protections that could deceive even his innate awareness. He also suspected that the place had countermeasures meant for rank 8 cultivators.

'Inscription masters sure are famous here,' Noah thought as he bowed to reply to Chief Etta's gesture.

Noah couldn't understand how a liquid stage cultivator could bow to a weaker one. Every organization in the Immortal Lands appeared in need of members, and powerful existences were even willing to lower their heads if that improved their chances of obtaining an inscription master.

Chief Etta quickly snapped her fingers when she saw his surprise, and a series of lines soon became visible on the island. The inscriptions created a net that slowly unlocked that place.

Noah expected to see a huge structure appearing out of nowhere after those inscriptions arrived, but nothing happened. The island remained unchanged. Those lines didn't change its layout.

"This way, please," Chief Etta said as she knocked on the ground, and a door materialized in that spot. She and Noah then moved through the stairs and entered an underground world full of branches and guards.

There were many rank 7 cultivators in those caves. Noah counted almost forty of them, but his instincts told him that there were greater dangers in that place.

Chief Etta led Noah toward a specific underground hall and touched its wall. The rocky azure terrain became transparent after her touch, and the tip of a huge Pyramid became visible from the other side.

"The environment inside the Pyramid is quite messy," Chief Etta explained. "You might chase a rank 7 item only to fall among threats in the eighth rank. The Balrow family won't enter to help you if you mess up, but we can offer many services that could help you in the task."

Chapter 1342 1342. Layers

The Balrow family had managed the Pyramid for millennia and had mapped most of its insides. It had also studied many of its defenses and sealed areas that no one had ever entered.

That knowledge had a price. Every cultivator could purchase it before entering the Pyramid, and Noah didn't hesitate to use his Soul Stones. The Balrow family even gave him a discount after they investigated the reason behind his green card.

The Pyramid had six layers connected in a messy array of corridors and secret passages. They had different difficulties, and Noah's cultivation level allowed him to be safe only on the lowest one.

The first layer was at the base of the Pyramid and featured defenses meant for rank 7 cultivators in the gaseous stage. The sixth was at its summits, and it could contain protections that even experts near the peak of the eighth rank couldn't cross.

The knowledge about the layers featuring rank 8 defenses was expensive. The Balrow family had opened the Pyramid to the public, so it couldn't stop any powerful existence from attempting to retrieve the most valuable items.

However, it set an astronomical price that scared away even most rank 8 cultivators from other families. Those experts could still enter the Pyramid without purchasing the knowledge accumulated through the years, but no one advised that. Moreover, they had to pay a basic fee to enter the structure anyway.

Noah had only paid for the knowledge of the first three layers. Even with the discount, he had to use one thousand Soul Stones for it. He would need far more money to obtain the reports about the upper parts of the pyramid.

"You will use the entrance to the first layer," Chief Etta said while Noah studied a map filled with details. "There are secret paths on the higher layers of the Pyramid, but we assign the entrance according to the challenger's cultivation level. It saves us a lot of trouble and keeps the weaker resources away from greedy powerful existences."

Noah nodded as he heard that explanation. The Balrow family had instated a rewarding but straightforward system around the Pyramid, and he felt glad that he didn't have to compete with anyone on the higher ranks.

Rank 8 cultivators could only enter the Pyramid from the fourth layer or above. They could still reach the lower parts of the structure through secret passages, but only the Balrow family was aware of them.

"As you can see on the map," Chief Etta continued, "We have already defeated the easiest defenses. Only the difficult ones are left, so be careful when you approach them."

When they reached the base of the Pyramid, Chief Etta unfolded her aura and created a separate domain that fended off the senses of the other guards. Noah felt immediately alerted, but his instincts told him that she didn't have bad intentions.

"I will be frank," Chief Etta said after heaving a sigh. "Even if the first layer is for gaseous stage cultivators, only experts in the liquid stage could face its defenses safely. I advise against an exploration. Even the family is about to close the Pyramid and seize all the weaker resources left inside."

Noah understood why Chief Etta had unfolded her domain at that point. She didn't want him to enter the Pyramid because it was too dangerous. The Balrow family would lose a possible promising member if he were to die there.

'Nothing ordinary could have remained undefeated for so long,' Noah thought while he stared at the concerned expression of the old-looking cultivator. 'The higher layers must have even more resources and undefeated defenses. I wonder who build it. Was it a rank 9 cultivator? Do they even exist? Where are they in the higher plane?'

Noah's mind started to wander at the thought of such powerful existences. He was a god. His mind could bend the laws of the world to his will, and entire continents would open due to his physical might. Yet, there were beings that he couldn't even look from afar.

"Don't worry about me," Noah said after he snapped back to reality. "I will remain in the first layer and only approach the defenses that suit my abilities. Besides, I want to see the insides before you close it to the world."

Chief Etta couldn't argue. She couldn't suppress the curiosity of a cultivator, especially when it came to an inscription master. She could understand his need to see what powerful experts were capable of.

"We will know if you overcome one of the defenses," Chief Etta added while winking at him, "But we won't be able to see the nature of the reward if you store it."

Her aura then condensed back inside her figure. The other guards around the Pyramid glanced in her direction to express their confusion about her gesture, but they put the matter in the back of their heads when they learnt who Noah was.

Chief Etta was giving him special treatment. She had basically told him that the world would gain a vague idea of his prowess if he overcame one of the defenses.

"I'll be going," Noah said while performing a polite bow.

Chief Etta nodded and placed a hand on one of the dark-yellow bricks of the structure. The wall moved, and a narrow path opened in a few seconds.

Noah glanced at the summit of the Pyramid before crossing the entrance. Darkness filled his vision, but that didn't affect his senses. He could hear the wall closing behind him and severing his connection with the outside world.

'I don't want to expose my strength,' Noah thought as he walked through the polished narrow corridor, 'But I can't give up on divine items either.'

Noah could only sigh at his helplessness in the matter. The Immortal Lands had organizations that were far stronger than him, so he couldn't avoid playing by their rules.

If he succeeded in seizing some items, the Balrow family would become aware of his strength. The new would then reach other organizations if he refused its invitation, triggering a chain reaction that would force him to rely on a powerful backer.

Noah could predict it. He was an expert in exploiting disadvantages, and he couldn't help but see how powerless he was about the whole situation.

He had only one way to escape that system and maintain his freedom. He had to be one step ahead of them and grow far faster than they could imagine.

'Seize something valuable here, run toward the Land of the Fallen, explore forgotten battlefields in the magical beasts' domain, grow,' Noah thought as he stopped and closed his eyes to steel his determination. 'I've done it once already. This is no different from the lower plane. The stakes are only higher.'

Noah knew how he had to move, and he had even prepared a few back-up plans already. His decision to reveal his title, his friendly relationship with the Balrow family, and his spy would become useful if he failed in preserving his freedom.

He only had to see if his growth could keep up with his ambition. That was the only variable that didn't depend on any external factors.

Darkness flowed inside the robe to change its shape. A hood grew over his head and concealed his aura before Noah resumed his exploration of the first layer.

Noah was ready, and he had already decided how to surprise the Balrow family.

Chapter 1343 1343. Swarm

The map purchased before entering the Pyramid described the first three layers in great detail. It showed every hidden door, passage, and shortcut that Noah could take to reach his targets faster.

The many defenses in front of the sealed areas also had detailed explanations. Noah could read the types of protection in front of each room and understand where his abilities could shine.

Noah intended to use the advantages given by his hybrid status, but he couldn't feel sure about his success even then. The defenses in the Pyramid worried him. They weren't protections that gaseous stage cultivators should face without a team.

Noah followed the map while he inspected the area. The Pyramid contained countless rank 8 materials in its structure. Their disposition and the inscriptions that linked them made the whole place an item capable of surpassing the eighth rank. It was a masterpiece that only a few existences in history could build.

The structure was devoid of dust, and Noah couldn't see a single crack on the corridors' dark-yellow bricks. The Pyramid appeared immune to the passage of time.

Every corner had symbols carved on its walls. Noah didn't know what language that was, but the aura that it radiated made him understand its meaning. Those signs told the number of the layer.

'There have been cases of cultivators entering the wrong trap doors and ending in the sixth layer,' Noah thought as he recalled some of Chief Etta's words. 'They have managed to avoid its defenses and come back due to these symbols. Why did the creator carve them? Are they only for style?'

The Pyramid contained many unanswered questions, mainly because no one had managed to conquer it yet. Even the Balrow family was still struggling against the defenses in the upper layers.

The structure resembled an inheritance due to some of its features. The numbers on the walls and the weaker defenses on the lower layers made the experts believe that the creator wanted to reward eventual explorers.

Yet, the defenses' dangerousness and the Pyramid's merciless layout made most believe that the creator was simply a sadistic existence that wanted to lure cultivators inside the vault.

It was strange, and Noah could see those opposite features as he walked through the dark corridors. They came from the same creator, but they seemed to carry different intentions.

'I'm still too weak to worry about the mindset of the powerful gods,' Noah sighed as he put those thoughts in the back of his mind. 'Less curiosity, more loot.'

The map was clear about the path that he had to take. Noah pressed his hand on specific bricks to move them and open secret passages that led to deeper parts of the first layer. Every floor had different areas that featured harsher defenses depending on their secrecy.

The past waves of explorers had already cleared the accessible areas, so Noah could only aim to unlock the most difficult ones in the first layer. The defenses even had a ranking that followed the labels given to cultivators. Even peak gaseous stage experts couldn't overcome the harshest one.

Yet, Noah could see how the creator had only expected humans to enter the Pyramid. The defenses were impossible to overcome for cultivators on the gaseous stage, but a hybrid had a shot at them.

Noah knocked three times on a tile, and a secret passage opened. Stairs went down and then back up to lead him in a deeper area of the first layer. He turned right, left, and left again until the corridors opened into a large door.

That was the access to one of the most dangerous areas of the first layer. The defenses would activate as soon as Noah took a step forward. A few tiles would move to release a swarm of minute metal puppets.

According to the reports, the puppets could disrupt the "Breath" inside the matter destroy any material. Even defensive items in the liquid stage crumbled against the swarm.

That protection had killed countless cultivators already, but their sacrifice had allowed the Balrow family to understand that only spells could help in that place.

The minute puppets weren't able to destroy the "Breath" if cultivators continued to fill it with individualities. Still, the intensity of the laws inside the energy had to match a liquid stage expert's power level to survive the swarm.

Attacking was also useless. Even solid stage cultivators couldn't destroy those puppets.

'Any rank 8 expert would surpass this easily,' Noah thought as dark matter came out of his figure. 'I'm lucky that the Balrow family has preferred to turn this into a source of income.'

The dark matter surrounded his figure, and Snore's massive shape also formed around him. A layer of ice and black rocks grew on the Blood Companion's skin as it laid its head across the few meters that separated Noah from the entrance to that sealed area.

Tiles moved as soon as Snore entered the invisible area of the protection. A swarm of black fly-like puppets came out of the walls and covered the Blood Companion.

Buzzing sounds reached Noah's ears and made him feel dizzy, but the dark matter around him managed to suppress part of that dangerous noise.

Snore's pain also reached his mind. Noah could sense what the Blood Companion was enduring under the assault of the swarm. Those puppets destroyed the dark matter that covered its body and even seeped in its insides.

The Blood Companion didn't manage to last for even a second. The puppets entered its body and shot toward Noah, who was still busy assessing the situation.

Then, a second wave of dark matter spread from his chest. The higher energy was denser at that time and intended to suppress those annoying puppets.

Noah unfolded the dark world while filling it with his ambition. The technique enhanced what his individuality could express and improved the Blood Companion's durability.

His cultivation level also rose during that process. Noah didn't want to keep his ambition active for too long, but it was clear that he couldn't overcome that protection without it.

The unfolding of the dark world pushed the swarm back, but the puppets quickly began to eat through its fabric again. Even the denser dark matter couldn't stop those creatures. It only managed to delay them for a few instants.

Noah didn't need more time. Those instants were enough to run through Snore and reach the other side of the corridor.

Three seconds were nothing for existences who had lived for more than a millennium, but Noah felt as if an eternity had passed when he took that single step.

The buzzing sound became more intense as he leaped through Snore's body to reach its opening mouth. Trails of puppets pierced the dark world, the defensive layers around the Snake, and its body while he was still mid-air.

Flies reached Noah's left shoulder while he was landing on the other side of the corridor. A sharp pain spread from that spot, but Noah couldn't stop himself anymore.

Snore's mouth transformed into a wave of dense gas that exploded outward. The detonation bought Noah the fraction of an instant that he needed to step on the entrance and shot in the next area.

Noah slid on the polished floor of the sealed area before crashing on the opposite wall. The bricks didn't budge during the impact, so he could stop the momentum accumulated in that reckless leap.

The dark matter in the corridor dispersed, and the flies retreated inside the closing tiles. Noah had defeated that protection. He had reached the place that entire groups of gaseous stage cultivators had failed to touch.

'My defenses when I use all my techniques should almost reach the liquid stage,' Noah thought as he inspected his shoulder. 'Most of the merit in this success goes to the density of the dark matter.'

The swarm had almost ripped off the entire arm during that short contact. The puppets were as threatening as the reports said. They weren't beings that gaseous stage cultivators could face.

Noah turned to inspect the room at that point, and his eyes widened when he saw a pile of Soul Stones amassed in a corner. The exploration of the Pyramid had already paid his initial expenses back!

Chapter 1344 1344. Statues

'Thirty, no. Forty thousand!' Noah thought as he inspected the pile of Soul Stones.

No rank 7 cultivator in the gaseous stage could have access to that amount of wealth, but it now stood right in front of Noah's eyes. His consciousness also expanded to study the room, but he didn't find any danger in place.

The pile of Soul Stones was the actual loot protected by the swarm of puppets, and it now belonged to him. Noah disregarded his injured shoulder to walk toward the gray mineral and store it inside his separate space.

'How can this not be an inheritance?!' Noah exclaimed in his mind.

That sum of money was immense for a cultivator at his level, but it was nothing for an existence capable of building the Pyramid. Noah couldn't understand the point of hiding forty thousand Soul Stones. The creator couldn't possibly find them valuable.

Noah inspected every corner of the room before sitting at its center. There was nothing else in the area, which reflected what the Balrow family had studied during those millennia. That place wasn't special, so the Soul Stones were the actual resource protected by the swarm.

'This is so strange,' Noah thought. 'Why would someone build such powerful defenses to protect futile money? What is the point of having layers meant for rank 7 cultivators? Why creating such a complicated structure if you are unwilling to see your resources go away?'

Noah could find many possible explanations for the strangeness of the Pyramid. Still, he couldn't confirm any of them. He suspected that the Balrow family knew more about the structure since its experts had explored the upper parts of the Pyramid, but he couldn't do anything with that guess.

His thoughts mostly lingered on how he could find loopholes in the Pyramid. Noah wanted to understand the creator to exploit eventual flaws. Still, everything was too vague.

'Is my mindset too distant from those powerful experts?' Noah questioned himself without managing to find an answer.

Noah eventually let go of his doubts and focused on healing his shoulder. The Pyramid wasn't something that an existence as weak as him could understand nor conquer, so he quickly stopped trying to find an answer to his many questions.

He only had to accumulate resources and leave. Noah didn't need to solve every mystery that he found. His cultivation level always had priority, and he didn't have any time to waste.

The fly-like puppets had turn flesh, muscles, and even bones when they threatened to rip off his shoulder. The damage was quite severe, and Noah couldn't heal it in a short time without the help of a spell.

Noah didn't mind waiting for his body to recover naturally, but he didn't want to waste time. The Pyramid was still neutral territory for him. The Balrow family liked him, but he couldn't rely on that vague feeling for too long.

'I wonder if they already know that I have succeeded,' Noah wondered even if he knew the answer to his question.

The Balrow family didn't place recording items because most cultivators wouldn't enter the Pyramid otherwise. Yet, it could understand when someone crossed certain defenses through a series of sensors spread among the layers.

A strand of dark matter came out of Noah's chest and spread outside of the room. The corridor didn't react to the arrival of the higher energy. The tiles remained in their place, and no puppets came out to attack the dense gas.

The Pyramid had sensed that Noah had retrieved the resource inside that sealed area, so it stopped providing energy to the swarm. That threatening defense was no more.

'They definitely know,' Noah concluded after that test.

More dark matter came out of his chest, and darkness flowed out of his dantian to fuse with his mental energy. A sword-like shell formed around him and began to accelerate his healing properties.

The injury on his shoulder would typically take years to heal, even if he were in the Immortal Lands. However, the Dark Womb spell could lower that time to some months.

Noah didn't lack food since he had spent most of his travel hunting. The stay inside the Dark Womb spell was silent and relaxing, and his shoulder quickly healed during that process.

He even cultivated once his body returned to its peak. Noah wouldn't disregard his training even there.

Then, Noah left the room to walk toward the next sealed area. The first layer had a few defenses that even his many advantages didn't allow him to overcome, so he only had three more targets in mind.

It felt odd that the Pyramid had such a variety of defenses. Some of the protection featured shockwaves that had managed to destroy the seas of consciousness of entire groups of experts. Those tests were impossible to overcome by weaker cultivators. Even Noah had to ignore them.

Noah could only aim to surpass the defenses that targeted dantians and bodies. His dark matter and hybrid status would allow him to show his superior might at that point, which gave him a chance to seize a few resources.

After crossing a long corridor, entered a secret path inside a wall, and turned a few tiles to uncover an underground tunnel, Noah reached his second target. It was an area at the end of a large passage that featured multiple statues fixed on its walls.

The statues depicted demon-like creatures who had short horns, sharp fangs, and humanoid features. Noah didn't recognize that species, but his instincts made him able to sense their dangerousness.

The demon-like figures wielded thick maces with both their hands and wore angry expressions pointed at the floor. According to the Balrow family's records, the statues would swing their weapons once cultivators passed through the corridor, and their strength wasn't something that humans could handle.

The maces also seemed to be special inscribed weapons capable of weakening spells. Only martial arts could express their real power there, and Noah felt eager to test them.

When it came to physical strength, Noah had no equals at his level. He was the strongest species due to the fourth center of power, so it was normal for him to feel confident about that test.

The statues began to swing their maces when Noah stepped inside the corridor. Dark-yellow trails flashed in his eyes as those massive weapons descended toward him.

The clash between the weapons and Noah created shockwaves throughout the area, but he didn't move. He didn't even stop running forward when the maces landed on him.

Noah ran toward the entrance in the distance. As long as he breached the defense, he would obtain more resources and reach a safe area.

His greed seeped out of his figure as the entrance drew near. Noah couldn't contain his excitement when he sensed pain spreading from his torso, back, and arms. The maces kept on landing on him, but they couldn't hinder his charge.

Then, when he was about to reach the entrance, an unstoppable force landed on the right side of his waist and pushed him back at the beginning of the corridor.

Noah understood what had happened only when the back of his head slammed on the floor. He felt blood rising from his throat and accumulating in his mouth, and a stabbing pain spread from his waist.

Chapter 1345 1345. Disposable puppe

Noah's waist turned purple as blood leaked from his internal organs. His black hole quickly provided dark matter to start the healing process, and a dense membrane covered his injured tissues.

The last mace was capable of far more power than the others. Noah didn't sense anything unusual from that weapon and its statue when he inspected the corridor, but there was something different about them.

Noah wondered why the reports of the Balrow family didn't mention anything about that feature, but he quickly found the answer to his doubts. The group of cultivators that had come before him didn't reach the last statue. No one was aware of that detail.

'The creator is a sadistic monster,' Noah cursed in his mind as he assessed the injuries suffered.

The mace had managed to hurt his internal organs, which usually took longer to heal. The attack had also torn his robe, which confirmed that the last statue's power surpassed the middle tier.

'I have just fixed it,' Noah cursed again when he saw the torn spots on the robe.

It took energy to fix the robe. The item could take part of it from the environment, but the process would be faster if Noah used his darkness. Still, that slowed down his training, which annoyed him.

Noah remained in that position for a while before he straightened himself and marched toward the entrance of the protected area again.

He had never been scared of pain, and the valuable items were right in front of him. He only had to deal with one insanely strong statue to obtain them.

The statues began to swing their maces again, but Noah didn't budge when they landed on his body. Groups of cultivators would struggle to fend those attacks with their martial arts, but he could withstand them with the sheer power of his physical might.

Then, Noah stopped before reaching the last statue. Maces landed on his back, but he didn't mind them. His eyes and mental waves remained fixed on that last hindrance.

'I'm too weak to see any difference,' Noah thought as maces continued to rain on him. 'The presence of rank 8 materials makes my expertise in the inscription field useless.'

After Noah reached that conclusion, dark matter flowed inside his black vessels, and a fiendish armor made of higher energy formed around his figure. Then, he activated the Divine Deduction technique as he took a step forward.

Dark-yellow light flashed in his eyes, and the ceiling of the corridor soon filled his vision. Noah found himself outside of the array of statues again, and pain spread from his right shoulder.

'I managed to salvage the robe,' Noah thought as he straightened his position and resumed his walk toward the protected area.

A rain of maces fell on him, but Noah didn't even look at them. His eyes remained on the last statue, and the armor of dark matter reappeared around him when he reached it.

A flash of dark-yellow light made the world in his vision transform again. Noah was back at the beginning of the corridor, and pain spread from his whole chest.

'I almost saw it,' Noah thought before standing again and marching back toward the protected area.

That cycle went on for a few hours. Noah did nothing but charge through the statues and return at the beginning of the corridor after the last one hit him. His body was a mess of injuries, but he took consolation in the fact that he had found a way to overcome that defense.

The last statue swung its mace as soon as he entered its range. It was too fast for him to run past it. Yet, its weapon followed the same trajectory every time.

Noah had learnt about that detail during his initial attempts to enter the protected room, but he still lacked something to overcome that defense. His senses told him that the statue performed the same attack every time, but he had to experience it multiple times to understand its actual trajectory.

The mace was basically invisible. It was so fast that his superior awareness could only catch glimpses of its shape when it attacked him. Noah couldn't dodge it until he understood its trajectory, so he had to throw himself at the statue until he understood how it moved.

Then, after facing the threatening statue thirteen times, he sat at the beginning of the corridor and activated the Dark Womb spell to heal his injuries. He had completed his tests. His next march would be his last.

Months passed again. Noah slowly returned at his peak, fixed his robe, and cultivated to improve his power. Once he felt satisfied with his progress, he left the floor to march through the corridor again.

Noah barely felt the rain of maces. He had become so used to those attacks that his mind didn't even memorize them. They were nothing more than slaps for his body anyway. It was pointless to care about them.

When Noah reached the last statue, he stepped forward and ducked. Something flew above his head, but he didn't manage to see it. Still, he knew that he had overcome the last statue.

Noah quickly leaped forward after the mace missed him, but the last statue swung its weapon again. A stabbing pain spread from his back, but he didn't see any dark-yellow light at that time.

The scenery had changed after he focused again. Noah was against a wall, and his arms felt sore. The mace and flung him forward, directly into the protected room, but he hurt himself when he tried to stop his momentum.

No anger or annoyance surged in Noah's mind when he saw that different scenery. He turned to stare at the statues outside of the room. A smile appeared on his face as his mental waves spread.

The entirety of the room soon appeared in his mind. Noah inspected every corner of that place and found only one item inside it.

The item was a small copy of the statues on the corridor. It was barely bigger than a man's fist, but it radiated an aura that made him worried.

Noah's mental waves converged on the item, and a series of information flowed into his mind as he studied the small statue. He suddenly learnt how to control that weapon, and he didn't hesitate to spit some blood on it.

Even more pieces of information flowed into his mind at that point. A mental connection also formed between Noah and the statue. He had successfully bound it to his existence, and his eyes shone with a cold light when he understood its power.

'A disposable weapon with power at the bottom of the middle tier!' Noah exclaimed in his mind. 'This will finally give me some survivability among the other monsters!'

Noah couldn't contain his happiness. He stored the small statue in the separate space and sat on the floor to start healing his injuries.

The last attack had hurt him badly again, and his robe also needed some repairs. Still, Noah was ecstatic. The Soul Stones had been a great reward, but they couldn't compare to a weapon that could keep a liquid stage cultivator at bay for a few exchanges.

Chapter 1346 1346. Impossible

Noah didn't move from the room until he returned to his peak. The statues on the corridor had disappeared while he recovered. They had nothing to defend, so the Pyramid had taken them back.

'Two left,' Noah thought as greed seeped out of his figure.

He had been inside the Pyramid for almost two years, but he had already gained enough to consider the exploration worthwhile. The Soul Stones were incredibly useful, but the disposable statue was on another level.

A battle against a liquid stage cultivator wasn't a dream anymore now that he had obtained the small statue. His superior power and his disposable puppet could finally give him a chance against existences stronger than him.

Moreover, the first layer wasn't over. It still had two protected areas that Noah could overcome with his physical superiority and higher energy. They could potentially give him more valuable tools, and he couldn't wait to get his hands on them.

Noah left the corridor and followed the indication of the map to reach his next target. Tiles moved, walls opened, and trapdoors appeared out of nowhere after he performed specific actions. In less than a day, he reached another corridor that led to a protected room.

'This one should be the same as the statues,' Noah thought as he studied the seemingly empty corridor.

According to the reports of the Balrow family, the tiles in that corridor would move, and weapons would shoot out of them as soon as someone stepped inside their range.

The weapons had the same features as the maces. They could completely ignore most spells and stop only in front of powerful martial arts. Yet, no group had ever come close to reach the end of the corridor, so Noah expected something dangerous to be there.

Snore and the fiendish armor made of dark matter covered his figure as he shot forward. Layers of black ice and rocks materialized around the Blood Companion as the dark world filled the corridor.

Noah didn't hold anything back. The dangerousness of the last statue had taught him how sadistic the creator of that place was, so he couldn't underestimate any defense.

Spears and swords of various shapes came out of the floor, walls, and ceiling after their surface opened. They stabbed toward Noah as they pierced the dark world. The technique could only hold them back for a fraction of an instant.

The weapons pierced Snore's defensive layers and stabbed its body. Their unique features made them cut through the dark matter easily, but they could only stop when they reached Noah's skin.

They were the same as the maces. The dark world, the copies elements, and Snore came from techniques that didn't involve his body, making them unable to stop the weapons.

Instead, they couldn't do anything against Noah's body. They didn't even leave marks on his skin. A metallic sound echoed through the corridor whenever a weapon landed on him, but that didn't slow down his charge.

The Balrow family had ranked that defense higher than the statues, but Noah felt it to be easier. However, his survival instincts began to scream when he reached the end of the corridor, and he couldn't help but stop his charge before the last protection.

The tiles and bricks around him had moved, but weapons had yet to come out of those empty spots. However, Noah felt that he would die if he took a step forward. Even his hybrid body wouldn't save him if he advanced.

'How is this possible?' Noah thought as weapons stabbed from behind him.

Metallic noises echoed through the corridor as Noah studied the path ahead of him. The protected room was less than five meters from him. He could cross that distance in less than a second, but his instincts told him that he wouldn't survive if he tried to leap.

'Maybe there is a trick again,' Noah wondered as he took a step back and came out of Snore's body.

The Blood Companion followed his orders and stuck its tongue into the range of the last protection, but it suddenly disappeared. Noah didn't see what had happened. He couldn't even see the shadows of what had cut Snore.

Noah activated the Divine Deduction technique and made Snore stick part of its mouth inside that last area. A hiss of pain followed the disappearance of a chunk of its head, but dark matter promptly flowed inside the snake to fix the damage.

'They must be arrows,' Noah concluded after witnessing the scene for the second time.

Snore's tough body had allowed him to see the true nature of the weapons in the last part of the corridor. They were thick arrows that flew at an unimaginable speed and destroyed everything on their path.

They also came from every direction, which left him without a blind spot that he could exploit. That seemed a perfect defense, and Noah felt that he didn't have the power to overcome it.

Of course, Noah didn't give up so easily. He waited for Snore to reform and pushed it back into the last part of the corridor.

The Snake hissed in pain again as an even larger chunk of its head disappeared. Noah did some math in his head, and the result was that he wasn't fast enough to dodge the arrows.

'What now?' Noah thought as weapons continued to land on his back.

Snore opened its mouth and spat a wave of violent dark matter that reached the other end of the protected room. The attack didn't manage to damage the structure, and the same applied to the arrows. They would directly cut through the dark beam and continue on their path.

Noah conducted more tests. He launched spells, used his dark world, sacrificed pieces of Snore, calculated Night speed, and performed martial arts.

Nothing was faster than the arrows, and they would fire at anything that entered the last part of the corridor. The short delays caused by his techniques and arts didn't give Noah enough time to overcome that defense. Noah couldn't see any hope in that corridor.

Noah performed more tests, but nothing worked. The arrows always pierced everything that he threw at them. Nothing in his arsenal could help him defeat that defense.

His unwillingness eventually vanished and allowed him to turn back. His armor dispersed as he sat at the beginning of the corridor to evaluate the issue.

There had to be something precious in that room, but Noah couldn't obtain it. His abilities were a bad match for those arrows. His instincts told him that he couldn't win there, and the Divine Deduction technique made him reach the same conclusion.

After a bit of hesitation, Noah left the corridor to march toward his last target. He still had another shot at increasing his gains, and he didn't want to waste it.

Another series of secret passages and strange moments on the walls followed. Noah used the map's instructions to reach his target, and greed spread from his figure when he found it.

That corridor was slightly different from the others. It was darker, and it had a series of lit torches stuck in the walls. The room at its end was the farthest place from the entrance in the first layer, and that meant something according to some of the past explorers.

Chapter 1347 1347. Staircase

The layout of the Pyramid had a tight connection with the difficulty of the protections. The harder it was to reach an area, the harsher its defenses would be.

The dark corridor led to the deepest protected room in the first layer, which was on the opposite side of the entrance. The aura that surrounded the place was different, and its torches created an eerie halo with the faint red light radiated by their flames.

According to the Balrow family's reports, the torches' fire would expand once cultivators stepped inside the protected area. It would fill the entire corridor and burn everything. It wouldn't differ between energy and flesh.

Noah was in a pickle there. The reports said that the flames could consume even some weaker items in the middle tier. It wasn't something that gaseous stage cultivators should be able to face.

However, he had the dark matter and a body that surpassed the hybrids. His individuality could also boost his strength. His power could reach levels that gaseous stage cultivators couldn't touch.

That gave him some hope, but the defense featured another difficulty that made the matter even more troublesome. The door at the end of the corridor wasn't open. He couldn't sprint to the flames to seize the resources contained in that area.

Weaker experts from the Balrow family and other cultivators had performed various tests in that corridor. They had tried to defeat the flames, blast the door open from afar, and even attempted to find a secret passage that could lead them toward the valuable items.

Still, nothing seemed to work. The torches were almost indestructible and would continue to generate flames as long as something stood in the corridor. The door was the same since it had similar materials in its structure.

As for alternative paths, the experts had formulated a few theories about that corridor. Most of them believed that the door would open after they seized the items contained in every other protected area of the first layer.

Others thought that the real entrance for that room was in the superior layer, but a few believed that the fire was a trial that tested an existence's endurance.

Noah couldn't enter that room had complicated conditions. He couldn't clear every protected area in the first layer. Also, he didn't think that he could find a secret passage when hordes of experts had failed to locate it.

He could only bet on the fact that the fire wanted to test his endurance.

'I will try only once,' Noah thought as his ambition surged.

Noah sat cross-legged on the floor as his cultivation level rose. He intended to push his power to its limits and activate all his defensive abilities at once.

That was his last chance to obtain something from the Pyramid, and he didn't know when the Balrow family planned to close it to the public. He couldn't hold anything back.

Dark matter filled the black veins in his tissues as his individuality forced his centers of power to grow. Noah's cultivation level crossed the halfway mark of the gaseous stage and neared the peak of the stage.

He couldn't touch the peak, but he could come close to it. His long training sessions had improved the effects of his ambition. Noah could now wield the power of an expert that had already set the foundation for his breakthrough.

Corrosive smoke and dark matter flowed out of his figure and surrounded him in two defensive layers. A fiendish armor soon covered him, but the gasses didn't stop expanding after completing his defensive technique.

Noah unfolded his dark world and contained the corrosive cloud inside it. The technique created a third defensive layer around his armor, and Snore soon formed to help in the task.

The Blood Companion transformed into a statue covered in ice and black rocks as it enveloped his figure. Black flames that radiated a silver halo also spread through the dark world and created another layer of protection.

Noah felt like a turtle hidden in its tough shell when he inspected the defenses around him. He had used everything in his arsenal and had expressed his real power. It was only a matter of endurance now.

Noah used the dark world to move inside the corridor. The fire inside the torches expanded when Snore's statue crossed the invisible dividing line, and an inferno unfolded in the area.

Faint scarlet flames filled the corridor and burned the edges of the dark world. Noah felt the area under his control shrinking as the defense attacked his techniques.

The dark world seemed able to endure the power of the flames for a while. They didn't manage to pierce Noah's domain quickly and could only burn it slowly as they expanded toward him.

Noah didn't bother to keep track of the passage of time. He wouldn't revisit the Pyramid, so he didn't need to accumulate pieces of information that the Balrow family could use.

He would remain there. He would even let the flames burn part of his body to test that theory. If that sacrifice didn't grant him access to the room, he would leave the Pyramid and fly toward the Land of the Fallen.

The flames eventually burned the entirety of the dark world and reached Snore's figure. They pierced the rocky layer and melted the black ice before reducing the Blood Companion to ashes.

Black flames and corrosive smoke unfolded in the area at that point. Snore even reformed as those abilities made Noah gain a few valuable seconds.

The Blood Companion crumbled again, together with the black flames and the deadly smoke. Nothing seemed able to stop the torches' fire, but that gave Noah hope.

Some defenses in the Pyramid would fall under tricks and unique methods. The more impossible they appeared, the more likely it was that they required a secret approach.

Those secret methods risked bringing the cultivators closer to their death, but they were the only available approach for weaker existences. Noah was doing the same. He was trying to use his advantages to find paths among those otherwise uncrossable defenses.

The fire reached the fiendish armors. The layers of corrosive smoke and dark matter slowly burned. Noah eventually found himself without any protection.

His middle tier robe and his skin burned at the same time. Pain filled Noah's mind, but his greed suppressed every other feeling. Noah didn't even care that he was suffering injuries. He only desired more resources.

As his skin burned, the door at the end of the corridor began to move. It slowly opened, and Noah promptly leaped forward to pass through the narrow passage.

His mind threatened to go dark as the flames continued to injure him, but his greed preserved his awareness and forced him to press forward.

At some point, the flames vanished. Noah heard the door slamming on the walls of the corridor behind him. He had crossed the entrance when he was under the effects of his greed.

Noah didn't allow himself to relax just yet. He inspected the room with his mental waves, but he soon noticed that it didn't contain any inscribed item. There weren't even Soul Stones inside it.

The lack of resources didn't mean that Noah didn't find anything interesting in the room. One of its walls featured a narrow staircase that led somewhere not recorded in the map purchased from the Balrow family.

Chapter 1348 1348. Emotions

Noah's condition didn't allow him to think properly. The drawbacks of his ambition fell on his centers of power and made his mind feel sluggish. Drowsiness also filled his mental sea and forced him to sit down.

The injuries suffered while he endured the fire worsened his condition. He couldn't assess the strangeness of that room properly while he went through those painful sensations.

Noah decided to sit on a corner and close his eyes. He didn't sleep, but his awareness wavered as his mind struggled to remain wary of his surroundings.

His black hole filled his body with dark matter. The higher energy worked together with his innate regenerative abilities to heal his injuries and disperse the stress accumulated while his ambition was active.

No one disturbed Noah while he was in that weakened condition. Months passed quickly as confused thoughts filled his dizzy mind.

Noah continued to think about the Pyramid while pain and tiredness filled him. He had always felt that there was something off with that structure, and every expert who had the chance to explore it had felt the same.

That feeling had only become more intense after he saw the narrow staircase. The torches were defending something that didn't involve resources. Something told him that he was resting in front of the answers to his doubts.

His curiosity and greed stirred his centers of power to heal more quickly. They were mere feelings produced by a tired mind, but his existence reacted to them and did its best to get Noah out of that weakened condition.

Complete clarity slowly returned to Noah's mind, and hunger soon replaced his other feelings. He had to refill the energy depleted to heal his injuries and disperse the stress. Luckily for him, he had a large stash of rank 7 magical beasts in his separate space.

Noah noticed that Snore, Night, and the Demonic Sword were in different corners of the room when he took out pieces of flesh from his separate space. His companions had come out during that period of weakness and had protected him in silence.

They didn't make a sound when he started to move again. Their connection with his mind made them understand that he still needed to recover, so they remained in their spots to inspect the perimeter.

Even if other explorers were to reach that room, they wouldn't be able to enter. No gaseous stage cultivator could defeat those dangerous creatures.

Noah ate quickly, but he didn't linger of the beautiful sensation caused by the energy that flowed back into his tissues. His eyes remained fixed on the staircase. He couldn't wait to explore the areas that even the powerful Balrow family didn't reach.

Once his body returned to its previous peak, Noah called back the Demonic Sword to cultivate and increase the amount of primary energy contained in his spherical rune.

His centers of power returned to their previous might and began to grow. The emotions felt during the last months had made his potential improve again. His cultivation was smooth and without hindrances.

After he completely recovered, Noah stood up and called back his other companions. He didn't waste time in useless thoughts and walked directly toward the staircase.

He had already spent entire months evaluating every hypothesis. It was time to find the answers to his doubts now.

The narrow staircase made sharp turns. Noah kept track of his movements and compared them with the map from the Balrow family. That path seemed to be inside the Pyramid's external walls and kept on climbing until it crossed a few superior layers.

Noah didn't know where he was going, but worry filled him when he sensed that he had crossed the third layer in terms of height. The staircase had followed the Pyramid's peripheral walls through a secret path that no one had ever found.

The staircase moved past the fourth and fifth layers. Noah felt worried that the secret path could lead toward defenses that even peak rank 8 cultivators couldn't defeat, but he didn't stop. He couldn't retreat without even knowing what he had uncovered.

Then, the staircase made him cross the sixth layer. Most cultivators would escape at that point, but Noah couldn't shake the feeling that something was off about that place. His instincts also reassured him, so he proceeded slowly.

The Demonic Sword flew in his hand when he saw a change in that dark-yellow environment. The narrow path led to a dark room that radiated white flashes on a constant rhythm.

The light was harmless, so Noah decided to approach the room. He crouched as he walked past the last steps of the staircase, and his eyes widened when he gazed at the scenery inside that secret area.

A swarm of fly-like puppets flew through the room while carrying minute materials. They amassed them in a pile at the back of the area, and a white light shone from its insides at a steady rhythm.

White lines lit up and went dark on that pile of black materials. It resembled a dune made of metallic sand that shone whenever it accumulated enough resources.

Noah didn't enter the room, but he continued to peek to studied the process. The puppets were building something, and shock filled his mind when he recognized some features among that pile of minute materials.

A flash of light filled the area, and a claw appeared on the pile's base. The room lit up again, and a second talon formed next to the previous one.

The light seemed to indicate the moments when the materials fused. The pile of grain-sized metals transformed as the flashes continued to fill the room.

A creature slowly took form. Noah's eyes remained glued to the process until he saw the swarm of minute puppets retreating and revealing a humanoid beast covered in metallic feathers.

The beast's head made him think about an eagle-like creature, but Noah could see that it wasn't an actual lifeform. The flies had created a tall puppet that radiated power in the middle tier.

The eagle-like humanoid puppet didn't move. Faint white light shone from inside it and illuminated the room, but it remained immobile as if waiting for something.

Noah sat on the staircase at that point. An idea had begun to form in his mind, and his hands itched to test it. He believed that the Pyramid had created that puppet for him.

'Is this a real inheritance then?' Noah wondered as he studied the puppet.

The flies didn't use rank 8 materials when they built it. They had created something slightly stronger than the torches' fire. Noah didn't believe that to be a case, but his doubts forced him to wait until he inspected the whole situation properly.

There was no one else in the room. Noah sat on the staircase and studied the immobile five meters tall puppet. His thoughts soon converged toward a single question. He wondered whether he could defeat that creature.

'I am the strongest type of existence,' Noah thought as his eyes remained glued on the creature. 'I stand above magical beasts, humans, and hybrids. I have a living weapon that features the same advantages by my side, an improved version of the deadliest creature, and a Snake capable of pure destruction.'

Noah had to admit that no gaseous stage cultivator could even come close to match his power. He had three divine creatures by his side and was an existence that regular labels couldn't describe.

The puppet resembled a magical beast in the middle tier made of precious materials. Its power was clearly above what gaseous stage cultivators could handle, but Noah knew that he had a chance to defeat it.

His ambition began to improve his centers of power before he could reach a conclusion, and he sighed as he straightened his position. His individuality had decided. His existence wanted to see if he could defeat the puppet.

Chapter 1349 1349. Violent battle

Black smoke flowed out of Noah's figure as his ambition empowered his centers of power. The two layers of fiendish armor formed, and the dark world expanded.

The dark matter couldn't cross the room. There was an invisible barrier that divided the staircase and the secret area, but Noah couldn't sense it with his mind.

Something told him that he had to enter the room to affect its insides. That test wouldn't allow any cheat or tactic. It wanted Noah to fight the puppet on an even field.

'Fine then,' Noah concluded before cutting away any useless thought.

The puppet was a creature in the middle tier. Its materials made it stronger than an average magical beast, but its power was within the range of Noah's prowess.

The light coming from inside the puppet intensified when Noah entered the room. The invisible barrier didn't affect him, and it didn't even hurt the abilities prepared beforehand.

A flash of white light filled the room and blinded Noah for an instant. The puppet began to move after that event, and screeching noises resounded in the area as it stretched its metallic body.

The puppet's eyes lit up and white lines formed on its body. The creature then turned toward Noah, and its beak opened to release a high-pitched scream.

Everything around Noah trembled when the soundwave reached him. His dark world absorbed part of those vibrations, so his fiendish armor managed to remain intact. However, he became aware of the puppet's power when its scream landed on his abilities.

The puppet seemed to stand on the line that divided the stages. It was too strong for any gaseous stage cultivator, but it was one step away from entering the realm of liquid stage experts.

Noah itched to see if he could defeat such a creature. His muscles tensed as he crouched to prepare a sprint. However, the puppet acted before him.

A shadow ran through the room and pierced through the dark world. The area was less than twenty meters wide, so the clash happened in an instant.

Noah instinctively raised his sword, and a reptilian head also began to form in front of him when he sensed the arrival of the puppet. An immense force then landed on him, and he lost his foothold as he flew backward.

Blood flowed in Noah's mouth when he crashed on the dark-yellow walls. He suddenly noticed that the passage to the staircase had disappeared after he entered the room. He had to defeat the puppet if he wanted to survive.

Noah sensed something moving again, but he slashed before it could reach him at that time. The Demonic Sword grew during the attack. It had transformed into a massive blade when it crashed on the puppet.

A massive force landed on Noah's arm as the puppet tried to fend the blade back. A draconic roar came out of his mouth as his dark matter flowed inside his black vessels to improve his physical power.

A high-pitched scream resounded in the area as Noah completed the slash. A crash followed his attack. The puppet had slammed its back on the opposite wall.

Noah and the puppet exchanged a glance. The creature's shining eyes seemed able to pierce the dark world to stare at his vertical pupils.

When facing a magical beast or a cultivator, Noah would understand part of the emotions that filled his opponent's mind. However, he couldn't feel anything when he sensed the puppet's gaze on him.

That creature was a mindless weapon. It felt no pain, and it wouldn't stop attacking until it had destroyed its opponent.

Noah spat a wave of black flames as he shot forward. The puppet screamed before charging at him, and a clash soon happened at the center of the room.

The puppet waved its long claws, but Snore's head bit on its arm before it could finish the attack. Noah slashed at the creature's head, but its free hand blocked the blade before it could land on its metallic skin.

Noah's leg shot toward the puppet's stomach, but the creature lifted a knee to stop his attack. It then tried to stab Noah with its beak, but a cut appeared on its pointy mouth and deflected the attack.

Violent dark matter gathered in Snore's mouth while it restrained the puppet's arm, and the Demonic Sword began to tremble as it accumulated energy. Night dived back toward its mouth in an attempt to destroy its beak.

The puppet slashed with its free leg, but Noah used his foot to stop the attack before it could reach him. More flames then came out of his fiendish mouth and filled the room with his threatening innate ability.

Snore launched its beam, and the puppet screamed as the attack ravaged its left arm. Yet, it didn't try to retreat. It used its immense physical strength to dig through the Blood Companion's body and get closer to Noah.

Its beak broke at that point, but the damage didn't seem to faze it. Cracks opened on its left shoulder as it tried to create a path through Snore's body, and the dark beam eventually consumed its arm.

The puppet used that chance to stab its cracked shoulder in Noah's chest. The two layers of armor prevented it from digging too deep in his flesh, but it still managed to pierce his lung.

Snore bit on the creature's head at that point, and Noah threw punches at the cracked shoulder to pull it out of his body. The Demonic Sword began to launch slashes that slowly dug through the puppet's hand, but its claws managed to damage the blade's structure.

The battle appeared slow in Noah's eyes, but only a few instants had passed since the two of them had begun to fight. He and the puppet were throwing everything they had at each other in the hope that their opponent would fall first.

There was no need for tactics or strategies in that battle. Noah couldn't use his speed on that small battlefield, so he had to overpower the puppet with his abilities.

On the other hand, the puppet didn't care that its body suffered damages as long as it managed to injure Noah. It was a selfless charge that disregarded everything but its opponent.

Noah's cultivation level continued to grow as he remained entangled with the puppet. His physical strength had initially been lower than his opponent, but it was slowly reaching it under the effects of his ambition.

His desire to defeat the creature and the power generated by his survival instincts made his ambition more intense and revealed what his divine individuality could really achieve.

Roar and screams echoed in the room. The Demonic Sword eventually cut the puppet's hand, but the creature used its remaining claws to stab Noah's abdomen.

Cracks appeared on the puppet's neck as Snore launched another dark beam while it kept its head inside its mouth. Still, the feathers on the creature's body stood up and allowed it to pierce the Blood Companion.

The puppet crashed on Noah, and its sharp feathers pierced his armors before stabbing his body. Waves of dark matter flowed out of his injuries while small cuts opened on the creature's body.

Snore reformed to bite at the creature's waist. The Blood Companion didn't care that the feathers pierced its body. It only wanted to relieve Noah of some pressure.

Noah slashed at the puppet's head multiple times. The Demonic Sword never stopped falling on the creature, and it slowly managed to pierce that sturdy metal.

Night helped wherever it could. It had the power to sever part of the puppet's fabric, so it enlarged all the damages that its companions created.

Noah eventually let go of the Demonic Sword and stabbed his clawed fingers on the puppet's damaged head. A vertical crack began to open on the creature as he pulled with all the physical strength he could muster.

The feathers stabbed in his body enlarged his injuries as the puppet struggled, but Noah didn't care. He only wanted to rip the creature in half.

Chapter 1350 1350. Paths

The puppet had lost its left arm and its beak during the previous exchanges, but that didn't stop it from injuring Noah. Its maimed hand had pierced his abdomen, its damaged shoulder had stabbed his chest, and the sharp feathers on its body had sliced his whole torso.

Noah had his clawed hands stabbed on the puppet's head. He spread his arms to enlarge that crack, uncaring of the fact that the feathers stabbed in his torso would hurt him in the process.

Snore launched its dark beam, and a wave of violent dark matter engulfed the puppet's torso. Part of the attack reached Noah and damaged his waist, but he did nothing to stop his companion.

The Blood Companion could feel Noah's determination. After millennia spent together, Snore had learnt how Noah fought and had attuned its mind to his battle style.

His pain didn't matter. His injuries didn't matter. Destroying his enemies was everything, and Snore understood that.

Night was inside the puppet's fabric and severed the laws that kept its materials together. The Demonic Sword attacked on its own with slashes fueled by dark matter.

Noah's ambition empowered him and his three companions. The Demonic Sword obtained the greatest benefits due to its tight connection with his existence, but Snore and Night also saw their power rise under the influence of his individuality.

Four beings with power nearing the peak of the gaseous stage were attacking the feathered puppet with all they had. Their joint force managed to pierce its tough body and fill it with injuries.

Pieces of black metal fell on the floor as that offensive continued. The puppet's head eventually gave in to Noah's physical strength and shattered, taking chunks of his flesh with it.

A vertical crack opened on the puppet's torso, and Noah didn't hesitate to stab his clawed hands inside it. He pulled to enlarge the wound, and the feathers tore apart his flesh in the process.

Noah felt the pressure on his legs vanishing at some point. Snore's dark beam had finally managed to destroy the puppet's waist, and the creature lost control of its lower body once that happened.

The Blood Companion then bit the shredded piece of the torso and gnashed its fangs to destroy it. Noah's arms were on its path, so it couldn't launch the dark beam since it would weaken his offensive.

A web of cracks suddenly spread from the vertical fissure and detached the puppet's maimed body from its feathers. Night had exploited that moment of weakness to destabilize the creature's structure.

The Demonic Sword destroyed the destabilized parts with its slashes, and Snore bit off a large chunk of the maimed torso. The puppet continued to move even if it was nothing more than a small metal piece that featured one damaged arm. Yet, its power had fallen to the point when Noah could completely overwhelm it.

Noah tore the remaining torso open and slammed its pieces on the floor. Punches and slashes flew toward the moving chunk of metal, and black shards shot everywhere in the room during the impact.

The offensive slowly revealed the source of the white light. It was an oval shape that acted as the core of the puppet and radiated intense energy.

Noah stopped punching to grab the oval and rip it away from the messy pieces of metal under him. Invisible energy kept it attached to what remained of the puppet's body, but it didn't manage to resist Noah's physical strength.

A snapping sound resounded in the room when Noah severed the oval away from the black metal. The puppet finally stopped moving at that point, and a faint white light spread in the area.

Noah stored the item and grabbed the Demonic Sword to inspect his surroundings. He didn't know what that light meant, but he prepared for the worse.

Luckily for him, nothing came in his direction. Still, two openings appeared on different walls to create passages. The arrival of the light had only signaled the end of that trial.

One of the passages led to the staircase. Noah could use it to retreat and exit the Pyramid. Instead, the other was dark, and he couldn't quite understand where it would bring him.

'Are there more trials?' Noah wondered as a sense of weakness filled his centers of power.

A waterfall of blood fell from his torso once his ambition stopped empowering him. His dark matter quickly sealed the injuries, but it couldn't stop the arrival of intense dizziness.

Noah felt confused, but his instincts kept him on his feet. The resilience of the magical beasts' world didn't allow him to faint. He would die before falling prey to his weakness.

'I might win against a liquid stage cultivator if I use the disposable puppet,' Noah thought as he sat on the floor.

The pieces of metal that had flown through the room converged toward his chest and entered the separate space as he crossed his legs to focus on recovering.

He had yet to analyze his gains, but healing came first. He couldn't lower his guard in that strange place. He didn't trust the sadistic creator of the Pyramid.

Noah focused on recovering. He dispersed the stress accumulated by his centers of power and ate to fill his body with energy. He then cultivated to enlarge his dantian. Only his mind continued to improve through the whole process.

Once his centers of power returned to a decent state, Noah activated the Dark Womb spell to heal his body more quickly. He had suffered severe injuries during the battle, so the simple accumulation of energy wasn't enough in his situation.

Even with the Dark Womb spell, Noah had to remain in the secret room for an entire year before he could heal completely. Still, he didn't mind spending so long in that situation since he felt stronger than ever afterward.

Noah felt that his existence had improved after the battle and that long period of recovery. It seemed that using his ambition made his potential grow quickly. The benefits gained after training his individuality to affect the environment couldn't compare to those obtained in that process.

'I need to find a way to exploit my ambition without suffering such heavy drawbacks,' Noah thought as he evaluated how quickly his dantian improved during his training.

The power of his individuality was insane. It acted like a secret art that could empower all his assets at the same time. It also depended on his potential, which didn't put fixed limits to its effects.

Any cultivator would pay immense sums of money to obtain items capable of the same effects. Even if the empowerment was temporary, it allowed Noah to surpass his limits and defeat opponents that experts at his level couldn't even approach.

The uniqueness of his individuality was what made it so hard for him to remove the drawbacks. Such a strong ability required after-effects to exist. Everyone would rely on secret arts otherwise.

Noah put the matter on the back of his mind after he recovered and improved. That wasn't the time to think about his power. He was in a strange structure that could give him valuable items, and that was his priority for now.

The new passage made him curious, but Noah wanted to inspect his gains first. The black metal seemed valuable, but the white oval had captured his attention since the end of the battle.

